

HONG KONG.

REPORT

BY THE

LABOUR OFFICER  
MR. H. R. BUTTERS

ON

LABOUR AND  
LABOUR CONDITIONS  
IN HONG KONG

PRINTED BY  
NORONHA & CO., LTD., HONG KONG.  
GOVERNMENT PRINTERS & PUBLISHERS.

## CONTENTS.

---

CHAPTER.	PARAGRAPHS.
1. General Introduction ... ..	1-24
2. China ... ..	25-46
3. Societies in Hong Kong ... ..	47-65
4. History of Social Legislation in Hong Kong... ..	66-93
5. Legislative Interference with Freedom of Contract, and Emergency Legislation ... ..	94-113
6. Factories and Workshops ... ..	114-138
7. Wages and Cost of Living ... ..	139-159
8. Housing ... ..	160-179
9. Accidents, Medical Treatment and Compensation ... ..	180-202
10. Education ... ..	203-213
11. Cases ... ..	214
12. Summary and Recommendations ... ..	215-241

**REPORT ON LABOUR AND LABOUR CONDITIONS  
IN HONG KONG.**

by

**Mr. H. R. Butters, Labour Officer.**

**General Introduction.**

1. The Colony of Hong Kong is situated between latitude 22° 9' N. and 22° 37' N. and longitude 113° 52' E. and 114° 30' E.\* It consists of the island of Hong Kong (32 square miles) and, across the harbour from the City of Victoria, a stretch of mainland to the North including the peninsula of Kowloon, New Kowloon (together 18.7 square miles) and the New Territories to which belongs a number of islands, one of which, Lan Tau, is larger than the island of Hong Kong and is about as sparsely populated as Hong Kong was when ceded to Britain in 1841. The total area of land is about 391 square miles (249,885 acres), mostly hills; only 46,080 acres are cultivated.

2. Hong Kong is geographically a part of China and is connected with Canton by a railway, a road of sorts opened in the emergency of 1937, when the Colony's road system was connected with that of Kwangtung by a bridge over the Sham Chun river, and several steamship lines.

3. The climate is hot and humid in summer and dry and cool in winter with a range of temperature from about 95° F. to 40° F. The average rainfall is 85 inches. Arable land is seldom out of cultivation while in the towns the climate enables a portion of the population (the "street sleepers") to dispense with housing accommodation during most of the year, and a labourer's summer clothing may consist of a pair of cotton trousers with or without a singlet.

4. The population according to the Census to 1931 was 849,751 and on the basis of the increase during the previous decade is estimated at 1,006,982 in 1937. To this arithmetical increase must be added some quarter to half million refugees from the present hostilities in China.

5. The population in 1931 was distributed as follows:

	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Island of Hong Kong . . . . .	247,967	162,954	410,921
Kowloon Peninsula . . . . .	146,618	118,057	246,675
New Territories . . . . .	50,147	48,758	98,905
Population afloat . . . . .	47,126	28,124	75,250
	<u>491,858</u>	<u>357,893</u>	<u>849,751</u>

Of these nearly 97% were Chinese. Of the civil population 97.7 were Chinese.

6. The population of the New Territories is a settled population evenly divided into males and females living in village communities and supported mainly by primitive rice cultivation. The bulk of the remainder is concentrated in the urban area of Hong Kong island, including the City of Victoria† built on the lower hill slopes and reclamations on the northern shore, and in Kowloon, where the foot-hills have been levelled.

\* Vide section 39 of the Interpretation Ordinance No. 31 of 1911. The figures given yearly in the Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Colony of Hong Kong appear to refer to Hong Kong prior to the lease of the New Territories in 1898.

† The "City of Victoria" or "Victoria" is never so described in common speech but as "Hong Kong." Hereafter in this Report where "Hong Kong" is not obviously used to describe the Colony as a whole it will mean Hong Kong island, and in particular the urban portion thereof.

This population is to a considerable extent transient. The males exceed the females in number but the disparity, which in 1931 was small in comparison with previous Census years, continues to decrease as the Chinese labourer inclines to make his home in the Colony rather than to sojourn for purposes of work leaving his wife and children in the country and returning there when out of employment. Certain local associations, however, instead of employing the words "Hong Kong" in their name still use "Kiu Kong" meaning that their members regard themselves as only temporarily resident in Hong Kong. Here they have no abiding home. And by Chinese law based on the *jus sanguinis*, persons of Chinese race, even if born in Hong Kong, are regarded as Chinese subjects. Such persons have therefore dual nationality.

7. There is normally a daily ebb and flow of Chinese population amounting to about 8,000. In 1936 the daily average in respect of Canton alone was 2,442 arrivals by rail and 2,033 by river, and 2,303 departures by rail and 2,169 by river. The immigration of Chinese is in practice unrestricted. Most of the immigrants come from Kwangtung Province. For a number of years there have been Shanghai workers in the silk factories in Kowloon and the Sino-Japanese hostilities have caused the transfer to Hong Kong from various parts of China, especially Shanghai, of factories together with their specialized employees. Certain occupations also traditionally recruit their workers from particular districts.

8. Hong Kong has little agriculture and that merely village cultivation. Its fishing industry is primitive and inadequate to meet its requirements.† Its mineral resources are believed not to be great: the report on the geological survey undertaken in 1923 by the late Mr. R. W. Brock has not yet been received. Hong Kong depends for its prosperity on its position and function as a port and entrepôt for South China. Four-fifths§ of its external trade is such re-export.

9. As the Economic Commission\* reported in 1935, "The real basis of the Colony's commercial existence is, and must continue to be, the handling of the trade of China" and the staple industries are connected directly or indirectly with shipping, and ship building and repairing. In the absence of mineral resources there is little prospect of other development in heavy industry. Sugar refining, rope making, and ginger preserving (a purely seasonal trade), and cement manufacture are established industries of lesser importance. Of recent years there has been a growth of knitting factories and works for the manufacture of electric torches and batteries and rubber shoes. Many such articles are made of Empire material and enjoy Imperial preference.

10. Of the total population of 849,751 in 1931, 470,794 were occupied in pursuit of gain. Of those so occupied:

111,156	were occupied in	Manufacture‡.
71,264	„ „ „	Transport and Communication.
64,430	„ „ „	Fishing and Agriculture.
97,026	„ „ „	Commerce and Finance.

The gainfully occupied constituted 71.28% of the male population and 27.58% of the female, together 52.87% of the whole population. Of the male employees 19.5% including 21,500 carrying coolies were engaged in transport and communication, 15.3% including 13,000 hawkers, in commerce and finance, 14% in personal service including 32,579 in private domestic service. In the primary productions, agriculture and fishery, only 5.1% and 4.4% were respectively employed.

† The only modern fishing boats are fifteen Japanese trawlers which make Hong Kong their base.

§ The Honourable Financial Secretary informs me that he regards this figure, which is taken from the Report of the Economic Commission, as exaggerated.

\* "Commission appointed by His Excellency the Governor of Hong Kong to inquire into the Causes and Effects of the Present Trade Depression in Hong Kong and make Recommendations for the Amelioration of the Existing Position and for the Improvement of the Trade of the Colony." Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1935. Described briefly in this Report as the "Economic Commission."

‡ But see number of employees in registered factories and workshops, paragraph 121. The term appears to be employed in its widest sense.

11. Of the females 28.5% (or 28,088) were engaged in personal service and 24.8% (or 24,468) in agriculture and 7.3% in fishing. Those employed in transport and communication were 12.6% including 4,390 carrying coolies and 7,841 boatwomen. Textile workers were 5.3%.

12. In respect of child labour the following figures were given.

Occupation.	5-10 years		11-13 years		Totals		Grand Totals.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Fishermen .....	128	102	738	572	866	674	1,540
Agricultural Occupations .....	147	172	383	703	530	875	1,405
Persons employed in Transport and Communication .....	79	96	511	497	590	593	1,183
Persons engaged in Personal Service .....	—	89	316	478	316	567	883
Out of a total in all occupations of .....	363	508	2,367	2,515	2,730	3,023	5,753

The largest figures are in respect of fishing and agriculture which are family occupations in which children assist their elders. So transport and communication include children assisting their parents on boats and barges. The statutory minimum age of female domestic servants is now twelve (*see* paragraph 86).

13. Since 1931 there has been a great development in local industry, and the number of registered factories and workshops has increased from 403 in 1933 to 829 in 1938. While most of the heavy industry such as the docks, cement works, and sugar refinery and the established public utilities, such as Hong Kong Tramways, Electric, Gas and Telephone Companies, are European owned and managed, with, of course, Chinese shareholders in the case of public companies, more recently founded companies, like the bus companies and most of the factories, are purely Chinese.

14. Owing to the hilly nature of the Colony, land suitable for building and convenient for factories is dear, land charges being three times higher than on the outskirts of London\*. Most of the factories are situated in Kowloon, and a large number has been erected in the North Eastern district of Hong Kong. But many factories commence and frequently continue operations in tenements designed for housing purposes only, and such are to be found in many residential areas.

15. As a great entrepôt with a deficiency in primary products and comparatively few manufacturers Hong Kong has maintained a free trade status, import duties being imposed only on liquor, motor spirit, perfumed spirits, and tobacco.† The economic dependence of the Colony on China was stressed by the Economic Commission which attributed the trade depression of 1935 in part to the erection of a high tariff wall by China (while Hong Kong with little raw materials or agriculture was unable by tariffs to defend itself and its standard of living.) Hence the Commission insisted "Social reforms based on Western models should only be introduced into Hong Kong in reasonable conformity with those enforced in neighbouring countries" and again "The introduction of legislation for the betterment of working conditions should be cautious and not over ambitious, lest it defeat itself."

\* Appendix II to Report of the Housing Commission 1935.

† There is a special licensing fee of 15% value in respect of foreign motor cars when first registered.

16. Hong Kong must therefore be regarded as geographically and economically attached to China from which it is separated politically as a British Crown Colony administered by a Governor with the assistance of an Executive and a Legislative Council of the former of which there is one Chinese member out of nine (six officials and three unofficials) and of the latter three out of seventeen (nine officials and eight unofficials, one of whom is nominated by the Justices of the Peace and another by the Chamber of Commerce) all appointed by the Governor, there being no popular representation. (The Secretary for Chinese Affairs who is a member of both Legislative and Executive Councils represents the Chinese point of view, and in addition to the advice of the Chinese members of Council has the assistance of several Chinese committees. The Urban Council, which, subject to an overriding power in the Legislative Council, has power to make by-laws under the various Health Ordinances and the Factories and Workshops Ordinance, has four Chinese members out of thirteen, five of whom are *ex officio*, six appointed by the Governor, and two elected. The influx of Chinese into Hong Kong is caused not only by the search for work which is frequently not available and the possibility of which must in the nature of things be limited, but by the pursuit of the benefits of law and peace and the flight from insecurity. Many wealthy Chinese find Hong Kong a suitable place of retirement. The result of this excessive immigration is over-population, housing congestion, poverty, disease, unemployment and an unlimited supply of unskilled labour.

17. Although immigration is in practice unrestricted and persons of Chinese race (which term is undefined) are exempt from the provisions of the Registration of Persons Ordinance No. 3 of 1934 and from the provisions dealing with passports and travel documents of the Immigration and Passports Ordinance No. 8 of 1934, Part I of that Ordinance provides for the examination of immigrants and landing restrictions, and enumerates various classes of persons who may be prevented from landing or expelled, which include those who cannot show that they have definite employment awaiting them, or that they have a reasonable prospect of obtaining employment or that they have in their possession, or are physically able to earn, the means of decently supporting themselves and their dependants, or who are likely to become a charge upon the public or any public charitable institution. Moreover, under Regulation 4 of the Emergency Regulations, persons who appear to the Commissioner of Police to have no regular employment may be summarily expelled from the Colony, as was done during the strike and boycott of 1925-26. It is understood that this regulation is being rescinded.

18. It is difficult to see how with Hong Kong's proximity to China immigration can be successfully controlled. Even criminals and undesirables deported under the provisions of the Deportation of Aliens Ordinance No. 39 of 1935 are frequently not deterred from returning by the possibility of a year or more imprisonment.

19. Excessive immigration depresses the standard of living of the workers, and with the impossibility of a tariff defence it is feared by many, such as the Economic Commissioners, that any improvement in working conditions will in economic competition with a less socially developed China end in depriving the workers of work and that, as it has been expressed, excessive factory legislation may leave the Colony with the legislation but without the factories.

20. In contrast with the unrestricted immigration of Chinese into Hong Kong it is of interest to note the control exercised over their emigration as labourers through Hong Kong to other places by the Asiatic Emigration Ordinance No. 30 of 1915, which provides that no emigrant ship shall carry other than free emigrants, that is emigrants who are not under a contract of service, or proceed to sea without a certificate from the Emigration Officer. All emigrants must be medically inspected.

21. With the large supply of labour available there is no question of forced or conscript labour, and ordinarily no necessity to go beyond the Colony to recruit, and no occasion has been found to develop labour exchanges although one or two small privately owned employment bureaux exist. The non-local labour in the

Colony is specialized labour brought to the Colony with the transfer thereto of certain industries, such as silk weaving from Shanghai and more recently banknote printing and the manufacture of wireless apparatus. Certain employers of such labour have contracted to repatriate it on discharge. There is no legal provision for repatriation except in a regulation of the Miscellaneous Licences Ordinance No. 25 of 1933, the application of which regulation is confined in practice to Shanghai dancing hostesses. A small number of specialized Indian labourers was recruited for the construction of the Shing Mun Dam, but such importation of labour is very rare. When trade in the Colony is bad many labourers return to their homes in China.

22. Although the great majority of factories is situated in urban and sub-urban areas, well furnished with roads and bus services and a tramway from end to end of the urban area in Hong Kong and ferry services between Hong Kong and Kowloon, most workers cannot afford transport expenses and are compelled to live in proximity to their place of employment. Certain of the larger employers provide housing accommodation near their works.

This concentration of population may be undesirable from a health point of view, but until town planning and proper zoning are instituted little can be done in the matter. Section 49 of the Tramway Ordinance No. 10 of 1902 provides for workmen's cars and workmen's tickets. Various difficulties appear to have been experienced in the working of the section, and no workmen's tickets have been sold since 1913.

23. The housing of labourers in lines at the New Territories mines presents a different problem and will be dealt with in a later paragraph.

24. The working classes are immune generally from direct taxation. They are subject to the incidence of such indirect taxation as tobacco duties (1939 Estimates—\$4,600,000) and the most productive form of revenue, assessed taxes (rates), (\$6,212,000) affects their rent, as although the rate (at present generally 17 per cent.) is an occupier's rate, in the case of tenements used by the labouring classes it is paid by the owner and recovered in the rent. In the matter of indirect taxation it may be noted that the Bus Companies, the Hong Kong Tramways and the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company all pay royalties to Government.

### China.

25. China has an estimated population of 450,000,000 and is the largest reservoir of labour in the world. For centuries it enjoyed the benefits of a stable civilization without hereditary aristocracy or castes, where the scholars became the rulers as the result of a competitive examination, as administrative officers were once chosen for the Eastern Colonies, and the subordinate classes were the farmers, artisans, and merchants, in that order. *Laissez-faire* was exalted to the principle that the government governs best that governs least, and Confucius inculcated that social order depends on every man knowing his place and acting accordingly.

26. It is estimated that at least three quarters of this population live a hand to mouth existence and the average individual wealth is about one five hundredth that of a citizen of the United States of America. The population is mainly agricultural, but flood, famine, and war have driven increasing numbers into the industrial labour market. Ancestor worship, the maintenance of the male line, and the belief that of all unfilial things the greatest is to have no posterity, led to over-population which made Dr. Sun Yat Sen exclaim "At present China is suffering from over-population which will bring impending danger in its wake. How are we to appease the hunger of swarming millions?" Families are large and the standard of living low. Uncurbed procreation with the inability at times to support the offspring has led occasionally to infanticide in the case of female infants and more frequently to their sale as "mui-tsai." This problem will be referred to later.

27. China has been described as not a state but a society, and the Chinese as a familial and not a political animal, "society being merely the family writ large." The family as the basis of society has been not inappropriately referred to as a com-

munistic unit with "Do what you can and take what you will" as its guide. This accounts for the ability of the individual both in China and Hong Kong to survive periods of distress in the absence of poor relief, unemployment benefit or old age pension. Devotion to the family at the sacrifice of truth, justice, and loyalty to the state bred the vices of nepotism and corruption. China had many moral philosophers but no metaphysics. With the preservation and perpetuation of the family exalted as the supreme end of man, anything that appeared to be conducive thereto was inevitably regarded as virtue. The enrichment of one's self and one's relations was not only the perquisite but the duty of the ruler. It belonged to his status. In modern times union officials have frequently shown themselves susceptible to the influence of tradition.

**28.** Agitation by the governed for reform was as improper and contrary to the nature of things as for the governors to interfere in the private life of the governed. The result was a static society where the virtues of toleration, compromise, and acceptance of the rightness of things as they are, thrived as helpful to survival.

**29.** The family merged in the clan. There are to this day in Hong Kong associations of men with the same surname. And in China there were guilds and societies many of them secret, the most famous or notorious being the Triad Society or Heaven and Earth Association\*. It was traditionally established in A.D. 1674 and its object originally was to overthrow the Tsing Dynasty or Manchus and restore the Ming Dynasty. It possessed an elaborate ritual based on the fabulous history of its founders, which is described in considerable detail in Stanton's book. It was concerned in most of the rebellions in China for over two hundred years, and has survived the overthrow of the Manchus, its professed *raison d'être*, and either substituted as its object the overthrow of imperialism or degenerated into simple racketeering. Gangs of bullies who sell "protection" frequently bind themselves together in a debased imitation of Triad forms.

**30.** The guilds divided society vertically not horizontally as do the modern trade unions. The apprentice in a handicraft guild might in time become a master and influential in the regulation of his trade. The guilds were supreme within their own respective trades but did not concern themselves with the Government of the country. Some of the powerful commercial associations had branches in all important towns to which their members when travelling might go as to a club.

**31.** Into this civilized and cultured but mediæval society with its clans and guilds and secret societies broke the western world of the nineteenth century swollen with the industrial revolution. China resisted, accepted, and imitated. Before the end of the century cotton factories were erected in Shanghai and China came to be known as an employer's paradise with plentiful, cheap, and industrious labour. In these factories owned by Chinese, Japanese, and European companies child labour was common and the old arguments were resurrected in defence of the practice.

**32.** Dissatisfaction with the incapacity of the Manchu Government took the traditional form of the formation of more secret societies. The "Society for the Regeneration of China" or Hsin Chung Hui was founded by Dr. Sun Yat Sen in Honolulu in 1894 with the avowed object of driving out the Manchus and regenerating China. The headquarters of the Society were later transferred to Hong Kong. In 1905 the Hsin Chung Hui combined with other revolutionary societies to form the Tung Meng Hui. The purpose of the new society was to expel the Manchus, regenerate China, establish a republic, and enforce land nationalization. The revolution, which was finally successful, started on 10th October (now Chinese National Day) 1911, and Sun Yat Sen became Provisional President on 1st January, 1912. In 1912 the headquarters of the Tung Meng Hui were moved from Tokyo to Nanking, and the party was re-organized with Sun Yat Sen as director. By this time the party have adopted state socialism and international equality among its professed objects. Later in the same year the Tung Meng Hui combined with certain other political parties to form the Kuomintang, from whose profession of policy state socialism was dropped. The Kuomintang developed into the political

---

\* The Triad Society or Heaven and Earth Association by William Stanton, Kelly & Walsh Ltd., 1900.



opposition to Yuan Shih Kai who became President of China in 1913 and who was accused of being a traitor to the Republic. The Kuomintang was dissolved by Yuan Shih Kai, and was re-organized by Sun Yat Sen at Tokyo in 1914. Yuan Shih Kai died in 1916 after an attempt to restore the monarchy with himself as emperor, which consolidated the opposition of the Kuomintang. That party was again re-organized in 1919 as the "Chinese Kuomintang." In 1920, a National Government was proclaimed in Canton with Sun Yat Sen as President, and its objects became the enforcement of the "Three People's Principles" or "San Min Chu I" of Sun Yat Sen, and the establishment of his Five-Power Constitution. It is interesting to observe that the oath of initiation into the party required members to swear obedience to orders and the observance of secrecy.

**33.** After various vicissitudes the party established itself at Canton, and its avowed objects became more and more socialistic and anti-foreign. In 1924, Russian assistance was imported by Sun Yat Sen to re-organize the Kuomintang. The party split into two factions of which the more extreme approximated to the Communist party, advocated the unification of China by military force, and encouraged the formation of unions of peasants and labourers to that end.\* During the same year the pro-Communist or Communist section of the Kuomintang established itself firmly in Canton, having suppressed the opposition of the Merchant Volunteers.

**34.** The country was in a state of ferment. A National Labour Conference was held in Canton in May, 1925, with 250 delegates said to represent 570,000 organized labourers. An All-China Labour Federation was formed and it was decided to affiliate with the Red International of Labour Unions. There were serious incidents at Shanghai (30th May), at Hankow and Kiukiang, and Shameen, (the British Concession at Canton) (23rd June). This was followed by the Canton-Hong Kong Boycott and General Strike during which about a hundred thousand labourers left Hong Kong, and which lasted till 10th October, 1926. Meanwhile, on 9th July, 1926, the Northern Expedition was inaugurated under Chiang Kai Shek who had been principal of the Whampoa Military Academy, and was appointed commander-in-chief of the Kuomintang forces, which had been trained and were directed by Russians. In August, a quarrel between the right and left wings of organized labour in Canton led to the passing of regulations by the Canton Government for the settlement of disputes among the labourers. These regulations prohibited the use of arms by labourers. On 23rd September the Political Council of Canton decided to terminate the boycott of Hong Kong. After considerable military success, a split between the moderates and extremists in the Kuomintang culminated in April, 1927, with the expulsion of the Communists from the party by Chiang Kai Shek, the closing of the Shanghai General Labour Federation, and the suppression of the Communists in Canton. In December, 1927, occurred a Communist *coup d'état* at Canton, which received no popular support and was quickly suppressed.

**35.** Prior to the inception of the Republic there were no trade unions in the modern sense, and their history for the last twenty-five years is a history of Chinese politics with their rise to power in the radical revolution of 1925-6 and their subsequent decline to practical impotence. In 1926, there were 180 labour unions in Canton† of which only 74 originated from guilds, the remainder being new organizations. They were mostly under two labour federations, the Kwangtung Provincial Federation of Labour Unions and the Labour Congress, which were the Right and Left or Communist Wings. The total union membership was 290,620. Of these 77,932 were members of the Kuomintang. These figures may be contrasted with those of a survey made in 1937 when in 43 Chinese cities 1,051 unions were found with a total membership of 912,399.¶

**36.** The first modern strikes occurred in 1913. In 1919, China after signing the Treaty of Saint-Germain became a member of the International Labour Organ-

---

\* By article 224 of the Provisional Penal Code of the Chinese Republic to organize or take part in a strike was a criminal offence. This article was repealed by the Kwangtung Provincial Authorities.

† Y. L. Lee. "Some Aspects of the Labour Situation in Canton."

¶ "Chinese Labour Conditions in 1937" (in Chinese).

ization.† In 1920, Labour Day was first observed in Peking and Canton and the same year the Chinese Communist party was organized in Shanghai. The unions, which had developed out of societies like the Triad rather than the craft guilds, took on more and more a leftish complexion and became frankly revolutionary, nationalistic, and anti-foreign. After the split between the Kuomintang and the Communist party in Shanghai\* the unions lost their newly acquired political power and were generally regimented under the Kuomintang to which they became entirely subordinate.

**37.** The Kuomintang established a nationalist government in Nanking in 1927. The dictatorship of the unions was ended and the Communist party driven into opposition and civil war, only terminated with the present united front against Japan. It should be noted in passing that the leaders of the unions were politicians and frequently careerists who were not members of the particular trade which they professed to represent and that there was a lack of qualified leaders from the ranks of labour itself. As a result social amelioration was subordinated to revolutionary nationalism, and frequently the funds of the unions were diverted into the pockets of the agitators in control.

**38.** Once in power the Nationalist Government established a Labour Bureau which was soon incorporated in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, later known as the Ministry of Industries. The Labour Division comprised three departments for Labour Administration, Labour Protection, and Labour Welfare.

**39.** Provisional regulations for the settlement of disputes between employers and employees were promulgated in 1928 and later revised and promulgated as a national law. A Labour Union Law developed from the regulations concerning the organization of labour unions was promulgated in 1929, and regulations were passed regarding the organization of special trade unions such as seamen, miners, postal workers, railway workers and telegraph workers.

**40.** In 1929, a factory law of seventy-seven articles was passed and became effective from 1st August, 1931. The law prohibited the employment of children under fourteen years of age, with certain concessions to existing circumstances, and regulated the employment of women and children; laid down the principle of an eight hour day, again with certain concessions, and limited overtime to forty-six hours a month; provided for equal pay for male and female workers, and a day's holiday in every seven with a vacation of seven to thirty days every year. Articles setting out the conditions governing the dismissal of workmen were included. Provision was made for leave with full wages, or in certain cases half wages, for women workers before and after child birth, and for the institution of factory councils consisting of representatives of employers and employees in order to promote harmony between capital and labour.

A factory inspection law was promulgated in 1931 and five periods were set out for the enforcement of the factory law.

**41.** China ratified the following conventions of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations Nos. 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 32, and 45, that is those dealing with Minimum Age (Sea), Right of Association (Agriculture), Weekly Rest (Industry), Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers), Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea), Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation), Seamen's Articles of Agreement, Repatriation of Seamen, Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery, Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels), Protection against Accidents (Dockers) (Revised 1932), and Underground Work (Women). The provisions of certain other conventions were incorporated in legislation.

**42.** It is to be feared that enthusiasm for reform and the pursuit of modernity encouraged the Government to ratify conventions and pass laws before possessing the machinery necessary for their enforcement. The difficulties in applying the

---

† It was not until the twelfth session (May 1929) that China sent a complete delegation: it advocated the abolition of extraterritoriality as a necessary preliminary to the successful application of labour laws.

\* See André Malraux "La Condition Humaine", and "The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution" by H. R. Isaacs.

factory law were recognized and acknowledged in the provisions made by the Ministry of Industries for the training of factory inspectors and the decision to enforce the reform programme by stages. The difficulties were enormous in the absence of uniform government control throughout the country and the lack of properly trained officers. Under-capitalized enterprises, precariously established, dreaded the expense of improvements as leading to bankruptcy. Difficulties also arose concerning the application of these laws in the foreign concessions, such as Shanghai, which enjoyed extraterritorial rights. In September, 1931, M. Camille Pône and Dame Adelaide Anderson, two representatives from the International Labour Office at Geneva, arrived in Shanghai at the invitation of the Minister of Industries of the Chinese government to advise upon the question of factory inspection\*. Difficulty was experienced in giving effect to their recommendations owing to the conflict between China's claim of sovereign rights and the Municipal Council's claim to administrative control within the Settlement. "In the situation now obtaining national legislation exists and although this is extremely far-reaching there is evidence that the Chinese authorities are willing to follow the recommendations of M. Pône and begin with basic questions of health and safety. The Council has endeavoured to apply these basic principles in the Settlement by the most practical method of applying them uniformly and effectively within its jurisdiction. In the meantime the Council will continue its efforts to improve factory conditions generally in so far as may be practical within the scope of its powers and taking into consideration the somewhat peculiar problems, political and otherwise, with which it is confronted." From the report for 1937 of the Shanghai Municipal Council, it would appear that the factory inspection issue between the Council and the Chinese authorities was still unsolved by the time the Sino-Japanese hostilities broke out.

43. By 1937 China possessed a considerable body of social and industrial legislation dealing occasionally with the most trivial details and interspersed with pious exhortations to employers and employed. The legislation represents an ideal to which the approach from actual conditions must be necessarily by slow stages. As an example of the disparity between theory and practice I would quote the case of a Chinese industrialist, contemplating the erection in Hong Kong of a factory in place of one fallen into the hands of the Japanese, on whose behalf I was approached with the request that local legislation should be modified to enable him to employ shifts of women workers throughout the whole twenty-four hours in order that his machinery should never lie idle and that he might compete with similar factories in China where the night employment of women prevailed. Otherwise, he would not risk his capital.

44. Chinese factory law describes an ideal to be slowly attained rather than a set of conditions to be enforced: although the Factory Law became effective in 1931 the only district factory inspection office established in 1937 was in Shanghai "while those in Kwangtung and Szechuen provinces were under contemplation."†

45. The hostilities in 1937-8 have led to the Chinese government authorizing the Commission of Military Affairs to administer farming, mining, industrial and commercial enterprises during war time in accordance with some twenty ordinances specially proclaimed by the Government. Strikes, suspension of business, slackness and intimidation are forbidden under penalty of seven years' imprisonment.

The chief change, however, is that in order to rouse the patriotic enthusiasm of the workers and increase production the Government has reversed its policy and given orders to the various provincial cities that the organization of labour unions is to be encouraged.‡

46. Before the outbreak of hostilities in August, 1937, there were said to be over a million unemployed workers in China, although during the first half of 1937 industry was generally thriving. In Shanghai there was considerable labour unrest, one strike involving the whole silk weaving industry.

---

\* "Regulation of Industrial Conditions" reprinted from Shanghai Municipal Council Annual Report, 1933.

† "Chinese Labour Conditions in 1937" (in Chinese).

‡ Ibid.

### Societies in Hong Kong.

47. The history of societies and trade unions in Hong Kong runs parallel with that in China. As early as 1845 it was found necessary to pass an ordinance to curb the activities of the Triad and other secret societies.† “The ordinance was necessarily severe, branding being provided for, and causing much discussion, but in October following, doubtless upon instructions from Home, an amendment was effected by which branding was done away with and the ordinance not made applicable to any secret society other than the Triad.”

48. The direct descendant of that ordinance through the Triad and Unlawful Societies Ordinance 1887 was the Societies Ordinance No. 47 of 1911, which was passed in order to control the political activities of certain associations. Under the Ordinance all societies were compelled to register or obtain exemption from registration.

Section 4 (4) reads :

“The Governor in Council shall not refuse permission to any society to be registered under this Ordinance unless it shall appear that such society is likely to be used for unlawful purposes incompatible with the peace or good order of the Colony or that its action and proceedings are calculated to excite tumult or disorder in China or to excite persons to crime in China.”

✓ 49. A schedule of exempted societies was appended. This contains besides two Chinese general merchants' associations, namely the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese Commercial Union, thirty-four Chinese masters' trade guilds and societies, three of which included workmen as well, and only seven guilds of workmen, the Brass-smith Guild, the Carpenters Guild, an Eating House Employees Guild, the Ginseng Workmen's Guild, a Gardeners Club and two guilds of Waiters.

50. A schedule was published annually till 1919 when there were thirty-six masters' trade guilds or societies exempted, five of which included workmen, and thirty-five guilds of workmen. In addition, twenty-four trade guilds and societies were included in the list of registered societies. Among the exempted guilds there were no less than six brass-smiths guilds, six masons guilds, and three teahouse guilds, showing the lack of organization and unity among the workmen of the various trades.

51. Both exempted and registered societies might at any time be ordered to furnish information to the Registrar of Societies, who was the Registrar-General, as the Secretary for Chinese Affairs was then called, concerning the constitution and rules of the society, its office bearers, and the number of its members. As a vehicle for obtaining reliable information about, and control over, the societies the Ordinance was a failure and frequently a cause of embarrassment to Government.

52. The Societies Ordinance No. 8 of 1920 reversed the policy. Registration was abandoned and the only societies declared to be unlawful were :

- (a) the Triad Society :
- (b) all societies which use a Triad ritual :
- (c) all societies which have among their objects unlawful purposes or purposes incompatible with the peace and good order of the Colony.

It is lawful for the Governor in Council in his absolute discretion to declare to be unlawful any society which in his opinion—

- (a) has among its objects unlawful purposes or purposes incompatible with the peace and good order of the Colony, or
- (b) is being used, or is likely to be used, for unlawful purposes or for purposes incompatible with the peace and good order of the Colony, or
- (c) is by reason of its actions or proceedings calculated to excite tumult or disorder in China or to excite persons to crime in China.

† Norton-Kyshe “History of the Laws and Courts of Hong Kong.”

✓53. The first general strike\* in Hong Kong took place in 1922 following a dispute over seamen's rates of pay for which there was some economic justification. Most of the men's demands were granted and the Chinese Seamen's Union obtained a considerable amount of power and glory which it immediately set about to exploit. The second general strike took place in 1925. It had no economic justification whatsoever and was merely an attempt at revolution fomented by the General Labour Union and the Chinese Seamen's Union in sympathy with similar activities in Canton and Shanghai. This was the heyday of labour power in Canton and the boycott of Hong Kong continued well into 1926. The general strike was a complete failure and in 1927, while the powers of labour unions were being drastically curtailed in China, the General Labour Union of Hong Kong was proscribed under the Emergency Regulations, and the Chinese Seamen's Union was declared unlawful under the Societies Ordinance, 1920.

✓54. In 1927 the Illegal Strikes and Lockouts Ordinance, based on the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, 1927, was passed. This Ordinance, Ordinance No. 10 of 1927, was the first enactment in Hong Kong dealing expressly with trade unions. Besides declaring that any strike is illegal if it has any object other than or in addition to the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in which the strikers are engaged, and is a strike designed or calculated to coerce the Government, either directly or by inflicting hardship upon the community or any substantial portion of the community, and making it an offence for any person employed in the service of the Crown under the Government of Hong Kong or employed in certain essential public services, to break an agreement of service if the probable consequence would be to hinder or prevent the discharge of the functions of Government, it contained a section forbidding the control of any Hong Kong union by any trade union or other organization outside the Colony, and the use of union funds for political purposes outside the Colony. There are no political purposes inside the Colony to which they might be applied. This Ordinance has never been invoked.

✓55. After the failure of the general strike and boycott and the proscription of the Seamen's Union and the General Labour Union conditions rapidly returned to normal and the surviving Hong Kong unions became little more than friendly societies concerned more with the provision of funeral expenses for the dead than the improvement of the conditions of the living.

56. Twelve societies have been declared unlawful under the Societies Ordinance 1920 and three organizations proscribed under the Emergency Regulations.

List of societies declared unlawul under Societies Ordinance 1920.

Name.	Government Notification Number.
The Hong Kong and Wuchow Steamers Industrial Association.	412 of 13.10.22
The Hip Tsun Tsung Kung She (Hotel Boys and Cooks Guild).	542 of 15.12.22
The Kau Lung Ch'a Kui Kung Sheung Lun Hop Wui (Kowloon Teahouses Union) ... ..	42 of 2. 2.23
The Chung Wa Hoi Yuen Kung Ip Lun Hop Tsung Wui, otherwise known as the Chinese Seamen's Union ... ..	315 of 27. 5.27
The Chik Tso Kung Wui, otherwise known as the Chik Tso Yin Kau Wui, otherwise known as the Knitters' Union ... ..	731 of 16.12.27

\* A mechanics' strike involving about 9,000 workers occurred in 1920.

Name.	Government Notification Number.
The Kau Kong Luk Kwán Ping Ka Lo Tung P'ing Yi Ngoi Yu (Military employees) ... ..	71 of 10. 2.28
The Kiu Kong Ping Fong Tso Tin Kung Sz (Military Employees) ... ..	do.
The Heung Kong Ping Ka Kung Sheung Tsui Tsap Sho (Military employees and contractors) ... ..	do.
The Ki Tuk Kau Wui Siu Nin Tuen (Christian Youths Group).	158 of 30. 3.28
The Ch'a Kui Tsung Kung Wui (Teahouses General Union) ...	629 of 23.11.28
The Heung Kong Kiu Sheung Sz Wo Ch'eung Shang Yee Wui (Funeral Benefits Association) ... ..	165 of 18. 3.32
The Kiu Kong Lei Fat Tung Yip Wui (Barbers Union) ... ..	417 of 8. 5.36

List of organizations proscribed under the Emergency Regulations (Emergency Regulations Ordinance No. 5 of 1922).

Name.	Government Notification Number.
The Kiu Kong Kung T'un Tsung Ui (General Labour Association of Hong Kong) ... ..	188 of 1. 4.27
The Wun Yin Kung She or Barbers Guild ... ..	636 of 9.10.31
The Hong Kong Seamen's Union ... ..	71 of 28. 1.38

57. No action was taken against the Hong Kong Seamen's Union, which professed to be unconnected with the proscribed Chinese Seamen's Union, until it became clear that its objects were purely political. The causes of proscription though not declared have generally been subversive or political activities.

58. Since 1927 there has been no major labour dispute in Hong Kong. The boycott of 1925-6 left the unions impoverished and unpopular. The restrictions imposed on unions in China depressed the spirit of unionism in Hong Kong, and several years of trade depression were not conducive to their recovery.

59. The hostilities between China and Japan have established a common front in place of civil war between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party and the revival of unions in China as a matter of government policy has its repercussions in Hong Kong where the local unions are moved by patriotism to renewed activity chiefly of a political and nationalist character. Many unions which for ten years have appeared to be extinct have been recently revived. In addition, the imported workers from Shanghai and elsewhere have brought with them their own unions and agitations. The only dispute of any importance in the last twelve months occurred among such Shanghai workmen.

60. It occurred in the banknote printing department of the Chung Hwa Book Company, Kowloon, and involved about fifteen hundred workers. There had been unrest for several months, the root cause of which was a feeling of insecurity among the workers, many of whom had left their families in Shanghai, and who felt themselves strangers in the Colony, where their future was obscure. Two trivial incidents brought matters to a head. The management declared a lockout—with pay, and dismissed sixty-nine men whom it regarded as ringleaders. When the works were opened the other workers returned and, adopting an equally novel technique, seven hundred in one department commenced a combined sit-down and hunger strike.

The trouble was settled amicably on the intervention of the Labour Office whose offer to arbitrate the management had at first declined.

The peculiar circumstances of this Company, however, contain the seeds of further trouble, as the contract which affords employment for the majority of the men will be completed in a few months.

61. So far as is known, and for such information as is available I am indebted to the Police Department, there are at present about three hundred associations in Hong Kong with a nominal membership of 111,400. These include twenty-eight merchants' guilds with a membership of 2,700; twenty-eight craft guilds or guilds which include both masters and men, with a membership of 12,000; four clan associations or societies of persons having the same surname, membership 3,000; thirty-six district associations or societies of persons from the same district with a membership of 40,000; eighty-four labour unions, membership 44,000; and eighty-nine clubs some of which are purely social while others approximate closely to labour unions, membership 7,000, and thirty-one seamen's clubs, lodging houses and employment agencies with a membership of 2,700.

62. The association with the largest membership, namely 20,000, is the Sung Tsing General Association, a kind of clan association, which has been in existence for about eighteen years and whose members are Hakkas. It is the only Hakka association in the Colony. This association has branches in New York, San Francisco, Honolulu, and Amsterdam. It supports six free schools for the benefit of Hakka children.

63. The Chung Shan Commercial Association whose members are natives of Chung Shan has about 4,000 members; the Tung Sai Commercial Association, composed of masters of various shops, brokers, and employees of European firms, 1,200; the Plasterers' Guild (Kwong Yee Tong), about 3,300; the Printers' Union, about 3,000; the Cargo Coolies Guild, 1,500; the Shing Fat Stonebreakers Guild, about 1,270; the Building Construction Workers Guild, 2,700; the Tung Tak Chung Kung Wui, a coolies guild, 2,000; the Market Stall Meat Coolies Guild, 1,500; the Bricklayers Guild, 3,000; the Wai Yeung Merchants' Club, formed by merchants and workers of Wai Yeung District, 3,000; the Fong Yin Kung Wui, composed of boarding house workers, 1,400; the Wong Kong Ha Tong Clansmen Association, consisting of members of the Wong clan, 1,000; the Yeung Mo Kung Wui—Foreign Employees Guild\*—composed of boys employed in European residences, 2,000; the Hong Kong Sai Yee Boat-Builders Guild, 1,250; the Hoi Ping Merchants Association, merchants from Hoi Ping district, 1,000; the Chung Wah Lam Sai Ho Tong or Lam Clansmen Association, 1,200 all surnamed Lam; the Toi Shan Commercial Association, 1,200, natives of Toi Shan District, and the Chinese Engineers Guild, which is one of the oldest trade unions in the Colony and which most closely approximates to the English model, 1,500.

64. Each association has its own rules and regulations regarding membership, privileges and duties, organization, meetings, maintenance expenses, and frequently funeral money.

---

\* This contains a section of women members—amahs—which is the only organization of female workers in the Colony. A few unions admit women as ordinary members.

✓ Most of the trade unions being composed of members whose wages are small have no large funds. The Chinese Seamen's Union has in its time been wealthy and the Pork Butchers Guild supported its anti-Hong Kong activities in 1925 by funds collected from a levy of 1% of the price of pigs purchased by pork dealers (called the "ninety-nine" system), while the proscribed Barbers Union sought to levy an additional percentage on the price of haircuts nominally to finance anti-Japanese activities.

✓ 65. What information is available regarding unions at the present day is largely the result of detective work. The present position is anomalous as though registration is no longer required application is still frequently made to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs for permission to establish a union, a permission which is gratuitous but which implies a certain acknowledgment of the union's activities without giving any measure of control.

#### ✓ History of Social Legislation in Hong Kong.

66. "The first legislative steps—British people may be thankful for it—actually taken in the Far East for protection of Chinese workers in factories were taken by the Government of Hong Kong, not by the International Settlement of Shanghai."† And it might be added, not by the Government of China.

67. In 1919 a resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Sanitary Board (now the Urban Council) requesting in the interests of public health that the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903, be amended to empower the Sanitary Board to make bylaws regarding the employment of children.

During the same year the Board also made certain bylaws to prevent overcrowding in factories, but these never received the confirmation of the Legislative Council.

✓ 68. Finally, in 1921 a Commission\* was appointed to inquire into the conditions of the industrial employment of children in Hong Kong and the desirability and feasibility of legislation for the regulation of such employment.

69. The Commission found that the number of children employed varied according to the nature of the industry. In some factories there were children engaged in such work as packing whose output was greater and wages smaller than those of adults. In other cases children were tolerated in factories as an act of grace as their mothers when employed in the factories had nowhere else to put the children.

70. The hours of labour appeared to be universally excessive and in few cases amounted to less than seventy a week. Wages were paid almost entirely by piece rates and it was noted that the low wages paid to children must depress the general standard of remuneration of adults. The Commissioners commented on the absence of factory amenities such as rest rooms, eating rooms and wash houses for the workmen, and remarked that the arrangements for medical attention in case of accidents were of the scantiest. In glass factories in particular labour conditions were unsatisfactory and the physique of the workers poor. It may be noted in passing that in spite of a general improvement in conditions glass factories remain in a generally unsatisfactory condition. The physique of the workers is still poor and the boys who hold the moulds all appear to be stunted in growth. A current explanation is that they were employed in China as children in glass factories before coming to the Colony.

71. ✓ The Commissioners animadverted on the employment of pseudo-apprentices and the system of sub-contracting both of which will be referred to later in this report. || The most difficult problem which they had to face was stated to be the employment of children outside factories in (casual and unskilled work.) and especially in burden bearing, in particular the carrying of bricks and other materials

† "Humanity and Labour in China." An Industrial Visit and its Sequel (1923-26) By Adelaide Mary Anderson D. B. E., M.A.

\* Sessional Paper No. 11 of 1921.



to the Peak and Hill Districts. The Commissioners have been proved correct in their opinion that the real solution of the question lay in development of mechanical transport. I have, however, seen a number of children employed in stone breaking and carrying at a quarry in Shaukiwan.

**72.** The Commissioners made certain recommendations including the compulsory registration of children by employers; the prohibition of the employment of children under the age of eleven years (Chinese), that is, roughly ten years (European), in any factory or in any form of casual labour; limitation of the hours of work for children to fifty-four per week; the prohibition of their employment between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. and for more than five hours consecutively, and the provision of one day's rest in seven. It was also recommended that children should not be employed in glass factories, or in engineering works on the work of boiler chipping, or in dangerous trades generally, and that accommodation should be provided which could be used by workers during meal hours, and as a rest house for children taken to factories by their mothers. While local factory legislation in the last fifteen years has advanced far beyond the desiderata of the Commissioners only one such rest house for children is known and it is of the crudest. The provision of first aid appliances and the equipment of factories with approved sanitary conveniences was also advocated.

**73.** The Commissioners declared that their intention was to avoid introducing a series of factory regulations which would merely lead on the one hand to "squeeze" and on the other to police court prosecutions, and they recommended the appointment of inspectors for all classes of child labour, the inspectors to be persons of standing, knowledge, tact, and sympathy. It was suggested that they should include Chinese representatives as well as British, women as well as men, and voluntary workers as well as government servants. (One of the Commissioners offered as a solution of the problem the compulsory education of Chinese children by government.)

**74.** As a result of these recommendations the Industrial Employment of Children Ordinance No. 22 of 1922 was passed which forbade the employment of children in any dangerous trade, under the age of ten years in any factory, and under the age of twelve years in carrying coal, or building material, or debris. A child was defined as a person under the age of fifteen years. The owner and the manager of every factory were compelled to keep a running record of all children at any time employed in such factory. Hours of work were limited to nine hours per day and five hours continuously. One day's rest in every seven was to be allowed every child and employment of children between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. was prohibited. No child was to be allowed to carry any weight which was unreasonably heavy having regard to the child's age and physical development or any load exceeding forty catties\* in weight. The Ordinance also provided for the appointment of a protector and inspectors of juvenile labour. The Secretary for Chinese Affairs became Protector of Juvenile Labour and one male and one female inspector were appointed. The female inspector retired after a short time and was never replaced.

**75.** The Factory (Accidents) Ordinance No. 3 of 1927 provided for the appointment of inspectors and assistant inspectors of factories. The Governor in Council was empowered to make regulations for the purpose of preventing accidents in factories. The existing inspector of juvenile labour undertook the work of factory inspection.†

**76.** Ordinance No. 24 of 1929, the Industrial Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Amendment Ordinance, 1929, included women within the scope of the Industrial Employment of Children Ordinance, 1922, which was amended accordingly, in order to regulate the employment of women in certain industries.

---

\* A catty is a pound and a third.

† The Steam-boilers Ordinance No. 32 of 1909 providing for the periodical inspection of steam-boilers and prime movers has never been enforced owing to the lack of regulations and inspectors. Further legislation is under consideration.

The Gasholders Examination Ordinance, No. 1 of 1933, provides for the periodical examination of Gasholders.

**77.** A consolidating ordinance entitled the Factories and Workshops Ordinance 1932 was passed as Ordinance No. 27 of 1932. In it child was defined as a person under the age of sixteen years. The employment of children in dangerous trades (boiler chipping, the manufacture of fireworks, glass working, lead processes, and vermilion manufacture) and the employment of any female young person or woman in such trades without the written permission of the Protector, was prohibited. The employment of any child under the age of twelve years in any industrial undertaking was prohibited as was also the employment therein of any woman or young person between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. A list of factories and workshops regulations was appended to the Ordinance as Schedule B.

As from 1933 the Factories Inspectorate was increased to two by the secondment of a second officer from the Sanitary Department.

**78.** By Ordinance No. 30 of 1936, the Factories and Workshops Amendment Ordinance, 1936, the Protector of Labour was empowered to exempt any industrial undertaking from any regulation under the Factories and Workshops Ordinance or to order the adoption of additional and special precautions. The existing law is consolidated in the Factories and Workshops Ordinance No. 18 of 1937. The Protector of Labour who was previously the Secretary for Chinese Affairs is declared to mean the Chairman of the Urban Council or any person appointed by the Governor to be Protector of Labour, and the Urban Council is empowered to make bylaws in respect of industrial undertakings. No such bylaw has been made since the passing of the Ordinance. Dangerous trades are by bylaw extended to include processes involving the use of arsenic, manganese,\* mercury, phosphorus or any compound of any of these or of lead. Child is defined as a person under the age of fourteen years, and young person as any person of or over the age of fourteen years and under the age of eighteen years.

**79.** The following are some of bylaws in the schedule to the Ordinance :

- No. 3. No person shall employ any child in any dangerous trade.
- No. 4. Except with the written consent of the Protector, no person shall employ any woman,\* young person under the age of 16 years or any female young person in any dangerous trade.
- No. 5. No person shall employ any child in any industrial undertaking.
- No. 6. No young person shall be suffered to carry any weight which is unreasonably heavy having regard to the age and physical development of such young person, and no young person under the age of 16 years shall be suffered to carry any load exceeding 40 catties in weight.
- No. 7. No female, whatever her age, shall be employed on underground work in any mine.
- No. 8. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) no woman or young person shall be employed in any industrial undertaking between the hours of 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.  
(2) The Protector may in exceptional cases authorize the employment of any woman or young person of 16 years or over for not more than 60 days in any year between the hours of 8 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- No. 9. No young person under 16 years of age shall be employed in any industrial undertaking—
  - (a) between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.
  - (b) for more than 9 hours in any period of 24 hours;
  - (c) for more than 5 hours continuously;

---

\* I have seen women preparing manganese for the manufacture of batteries for electric torches.

- (d) unless after every spell of 5 hours continuous work and before his next spell of work there is an interval for relaxation of not less than one hour, or after a spell of less than 5 hours, such interval as may be reasonable in all the circumstances;
  - (e) unless in every seven days he is allowed one day's rest.
- No. 10. (1) The proprietor of every industrial undertaking shall keep a register of the young persons employed in such undertaking.
- (2) Such register shall be in the form and contain the particulars shown in Appendix I to these bylaws.

**80.** Bylaws dealing with the prevention of accidents and notification of accidents, and the prevention of and escape from fire are also included which empower the Protector to require the provision of fire escapes in any factory in which more than twenty persons are employed and prohibit a tenement factory or workshop to be situated above a dangerous goods store. The question of tenement factories will be dealt with later.

**81.** It will be observed that these bylaws give effect to the provisions of certain conventions of the International Labour Office such as Convention No. 4 concerning the employment of women during the night; Convention No. 5 fixing the minimum age for admission of children to industrial employment; Convention No. 6 concerning the night work of young persons employed in industry; Convention No. 41 concerning the employment of women during the night; and Convention No. 45 concerning the employment of women on underground work in mines of all kinds.

**82.** Other conventions are given effect to by separate ordinances—Convention No. 26, concerning the creation of minimum wage fixing machinery, by Ordinance No. 28 of 1932, the Minimum Wage Ordinance, which empowers the Governor in Council to fix a minimum wage for any occupation in which he is satisfied that the wages paid are unreasonably low. To conduct any necessary inquiry a Board of Commissioners consisting of five persons may be appointed. Up to date no such Board has been appointed and no minimum wage fixed. Convention No. 7, fixing the minimum age for admission of children to employment at sea, is given effect to by the Employment of Young Persons and Children at Sea Ordinance No. 13 of 1932, which restricts the employment of children under fourteen years of age to vessels where only members of the same family are employed, or to junks or sampans where the child is placed in the charge of an approved relative who is also a member of the crew. The registration of members of crews who are under sixteen is required.

**83.** Convention No. 8 concerning unemployment indemnity in case of loss or foundering of the ship, Convention No. 15 fixing the minimum age for the admission of young persons to employment as trimmers or stokers, and Convention No. 16 concerning the compulsory medical examination of children and young persons employed at sea, have been given effect to with minor modifications by the Merchant Shipping (Hong Kong) Order 1936 and the Merchant Shipping (Hong Kong) (Amendment) Order 1936.

**84.** The existing law of the Colony already satisfied the requirements of certain other conventions such as No. 22 concerning seamen's articles of agreement and to some extent No. 21 concerning the simplification of the inspection of emigrants on board ship. In respect of Convention No. 11 concerning the rights of association and combination of agricultural workers there is no discrimination against agricultural workers.

**85.** Legislation to give effect to Convention No. 32 concerning the protection against accidents of workers employed in loading and unloading ships is under consideration.

**86.** The employment of female domestic servants is to a certain extent controlled by the Female Domestic Service Ordinance, 1923, and the subsequent amendments thereto. By the amending Ordinance No. 15 of 1938 no person shall

thereafter take into his employment any female domestic servant under the age of twelve years. The Female Domestic Service Ordinances deal chiefly with the employment of "mui-tsai" which term is defined as including (a) every female domestic servant whose employer for the time being shall have made, directly or indirectly, within or without the Colony, any payment to any person for the purpose of securing the services of such female as a domestic servant; (b) every female domestic servant whose employer for the time being shall, within or without the Colony, have acquired the custody, possession or control of such female from, or upon the death of, any former employer who made any such payment as aforesaid.

87. The subject of "mui-tsai" has been one of acute controversy during the last fifteen years. The custom is one of immemorial antiquity in China whereby a poor family surrendered a daughter to enter a richer family which made a money payment for the transfer and brought up the child as a domestic servant or attendant providing her with food and lodging but no wages and marrying her off at a profit on maturity.

88. Various attempts have been made to argue that "mui-tsai" are in many cases really adopted daughters. The adoption of females is as irrelevant in Chinese Law as in Roman Law, as the line is only continued through male descendants or adopted male children. All existing "mui-tsai" had by a certain date (31 May, 1930) to be registered at the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs and it is an offence to employ an unregistered "mui-tsai", or to bring one into the Colony.

By section 31 of the Protection of Women and Girls Ordinance No. 5 of 1938 whenever any person adopts as his own and obtains the custody of the child of any other person, such child being a girl under the age of 21 years, the legal guardianship of such child while in the Colony shall vest in the Secretary for Chinese Affairs unless the custody of the child was given to the adopter by order of a competent court.

✓ 89. The maintenance of sanitary conditions in factories is the duty of the Urban Council and is covered by the Public Health (Sanitation) Ordinance No. 15 of 1935, the relevant sections of which read as follows:—

Section 61. Whenever it appear to the Council that any factory or workshop is damp or that it is not adequately lighted or is not ventilated in such a manner as to render harmless, as far as practicable, any gas, vapour, dust or other impurity generated in the course of the work carried on therein, or is not maintained in a cleanly condition, or is so overcrowded during the time in which work is carried on as to be dangerous to the health of the persons employed therein, the Council may, by written notice, require the owner thereof to take such steps as the Council may consider necessary to prevent such dampness, or adequately to light or ventilate the premises, or to render harmless as far as practicable any gas, vapour, dust or other impurity, or to cleanse the premises, or to prevent the same from being overcrowded.

Section 62. Every factory and workshop whatsoever employing not less than twenty persons shall be provided by the owner thereof with proper latrine accommodation on the premises, for the separate use of persons of each sex, to the satisfaction of the Council.

Section 63. Every factory and workshop shall be kept in a cleanly state.

Section 64. (1) All the ceilings and inside walls of a factory or workshop shall be limewashed at least once a year. If these have been oil painted or varnished they shall be washed with hot water and soap once every fourteen months. (2) The council may by special order grant exemptions from requirements as to limewashing or washing.

Section 65. Every factory or workshop shall be kept free from effluvia arising from any drain, latrine, urinal or other nuisance.

Section 66. When less than 250 cubic feet of air space per person are provided in a factory or workshop such factory or workshop shall be held to be so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of those employed therein.

\*Section 67. In every factory and workshop a notice must be affixed specifying the number of persons which can be employed in each room.

Section 68. In every room in every factory and workshop sufficient means of ventilation must be provided and maintained.

90. The Urban Council also regulates dangerous, unhealthy and offensive trades and occupations. "Dangerous trade" for the purposes of the Sanitation Ordinance means any manufacturing process or handicraft in which lead, arsenic, mercury, phosphorus or any other poisonous substance whatsoever is used. "Offensive trade" includes:—(a) the trades of blood-boiling, tripe-boiling, soap-boiling, fat-boiling, tallow-melting, resin-boiling, bone-boiling, bone-crushing, bone-burning, bone-storing, rag-picking, rag-storing, manure manufacture, blood-drying, fell-mongery, leather-dressing, tanning, glue-making, size-making, gut-scraping, storing, dressing, preparing sharks' fins, hair-cleaning, feather-storing, feather-cleaning, and pig-roasting (except the roasting of pigs in any domestic building or restaurant for consumption in such domestic building or restaurant by the inmates or visitors thereof); (b) any trade, business or manufacture which is declared by the Council by bylaw to be an offensive trade; (c) any trade, business, or manufacture which is carried on in such a way as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of persons engaged in it, or in such a way as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of persons residing in the neighbourhood; and (d) any other noxious, offensive, noisome or unhealthy trade, business or manufacture whatsoever. Offensive trades are confined by the Council to certain areas and the Council has issued detailed regulations for their control.

91. Although there has been in Hong Kong no conciliation nor arbitration machinery in the form of boards of inquiry and arbitration, conciliation and arbitration have been recognized as part of the functions of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and the settlement of various industrial disputes during the last twenty years has been facilitated by his agency. Various problems as they arise have been investigated by commissions specially appointed for the purpose such as the commission referred to above which was appointed to inquire into the conditions of the industrial employment of children in Hong Kong. In 1927 a Labour Sub-department was established in the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs to deal with guilds, labour disputes, and cost of living. After about two years existence its activities were curtailed owing to shortage of staff and the general quietude which descended in Hong Kong as in China over labour matters.

92. About the same time as the special labour department was created a Labour Advisory Board was appointed. This Board still exists and in 1938 consisted of The Secretary for Chinese Affairs (Chairman), The Secretary and Cashier of His Majesty's Naval Yard (representing the Commodore), The Assistant Director of Supply and Transport of the China Command (representing His Excellency the General Officer Commanding), a representative of the Public Works Department, the Manager of the Taikoo Dockyard, the Manager of the Hong Kong Electric Company, and the Manager of the Taikoo Sugar Refinery, with the Chief Assistant to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs as secretary. It will be observed that the members consist entirely of representatives of large Government Departments and employers of labour. There are no workers' representatives and it may be presumed that the purpose of the Board was largely to correlate the attitude of Government and other large employers of labour. The Labour Advisory Board rarely functioned and was convened last in 1936 on a comparatively small matter submitted to it by Government regarding the Chinese New Year bonus to its lower paid employees.

93. While it functioned the Labour Sub-Department at the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs performed a considerable amount of work in investigating the activities of existing guilds and unions. Although registration or exemption there-

---

\* This regulation appears not to be enforced.

from was abolished by the Societies Ordinance, 1920, many guilds and unions, evidently under the impression that the requirements of the Societies Ordinance, 1911, still persist, voluntarily supply the Secretary for Chinese Affairs with a certain amount of information regarding their activities. This is frequently of little value and occasionally consists of applications for permission to hold "sing songs" which is granted conditionally on a district watchman (a member of a subsidiary police force supported by voluntary contributions from the Chinese community) attending the meeting to see that nothing unlawful transpires. This attitude on the part of the public is not surprising in view of the powers of censorship\* possessed by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and his powers under the Emergency Regulations. These will be discussed later.

### **Legislative Interference with Freedom of Contract, and Emergency Legislation.**

✓ 94. The conditions of this Colony with an unlimited supply of free labour and no immigration restrictions, and with workers employed and residing in urban areas as private citizens, have not necessitated any statutory enactment, such as a Labour Code, which would be appropriate rather to imported labour employed on estates and housed in compounds.

95. The recent development of mining in the New Territories, however, has occasioned the passing of certain regulations under the New Territories Regulation Ordinance No. 34 of 1910 which provide for the erection and maintenance to the satisfaction of the Director of Medical Services of lines for labourers, which term is defined as including every person employed for the purpose of personally performing any manual labour, except a domestic servant, gardener, or agricultural labourer. The scope of this regulation, which is confined to the New Territories, includes the housing of coolies employed on public works, such as roads and water catchments, who have in the past been housed in matsheds with little regard for sanitation or anti-malaria precautions.

96. Although there is no labour code, there is a considerable body of law qualifying in various ways the principle of freedom of contract. The prohibitions and restrictions enforced are largely in the interest of the employee, and many have already been referred to in connexion with the Factories and Workshops Ordinance, 1937; the Employment of Young Persons and Children at Sea Ordinance, 1932, which, together with the Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1899, the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and the Orders in Council already mentioned, regulates the conditions of the employment of seamen; Regulation 22 (a) of Part VII of the regulations made under the Miscellaneous Licences Ordinance, 1933, providing that the licensee of a dance hall shall in the case of employees induced by him to enter the Colony defray the cost of the employee's repatriation on the termination of his services; and the Female Domestic Service Ordinance, 1923, regulating the employment of "mui-tsai."

97. Contracts of service are dealt with by the Employers and Servants Ordinance No. 45 of 1902, as amended by the Employers and Servants Amendment Ordinance, No. 10 of 1932, which abolished penal sanctions. The definition of servant though wide is not exhaustive and only persons over the age of sixteen years may enter into a contract of service under the Ordinance. In the absence of any agreement in writing to the contrary, every contract of service (except in the case of hire by the day, job, or journey) shall be deemed to be a contract for one month renewable from month to month, and may be determined by one month's notice, or the payment of one month's wages in lieu thereof. A contract of service for more than one month shall be in writing and shall be executed in duplicate in the presence of a magistrate, or in the case of persons engaged for service on any cargo boat or fishing or trading junk before the European police officer in charge of the police station of the district in which such contract is made. The contract must be explained to the servant, indorsed accordingly, and a duplicate delivered to him. The duration of such contracts is limited to five years if made beyond the Colony, and three years if made within the Colony. A contract entered into by

\* Summary Offences Ordinance No. 40 of 1932 s. 3 (17): notices and proclamations.

a person beyond the Colony to serve within the Colony may be executed in the presence of two witnesses and subsequently indorsed by the magistrate.

**98.** Every such contract shall clearly express therein the time for which it is to endure, the wages to be paid, the nature of the service to be performed, the sum of money (if any) to be chargeable against and deducted from the wages, and that the employer is bound to provide regular work at stipulated wages for the servant.

Questions between the parties are to be determined by a magistrate in a summary manner.

**99.** In practice, and I can speak from several years' experience as a magistrate, the execution of a contract before a magistrate is unknown. There are, however, in the Colony at the present time, especially in the case of skilled labour imported from Shanghai, many contracts of service. In view of the failure to comply with the provisions of the Employers and Servants Ordinance one may query the validity of such contracts.

**100.** The Ordinance is only invoked occasionally by individual servants who claim wages due or compensation for dismissal without notice. There were only eleven such cases in the police courts of Hong Kong and Kowloon in 1938 and in most cases the claim was for less than ten dollars.

**101.** There is, however, a body of law in the Colony generally enforceable only in times of emergency which it is necessary to examine.

**102.** Section 37 of the Offences against the Person Ordinance No. 2 of 1865 described in the marginal note as deriving from 24 & 25 Vict. c. 100, s. 41, reads :

“Every person who, in pursuance of any unlawful combination or conspiracy to raise the rate of wages, or of any unlawful combination or conspiracy respecting any trade, business, or manufacture, or respecting any person concerned or employed therein, unlawfully assaults any person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two years.”

This would appear to be a survival of pre-1871 legislation. The proposed repeal of the section is referred to in paragraph 231.

**103.** The proclamation of the peace under the Peace Preservation Ordinance, No. 10 of 1886, brings into operation certain provisions of the Ordinance.

Section 12 reads :

“Every person who, during the continuance of any such proclamation—

(1) unlawfully combines to procure a stoppage of the sale or transit from place to place of provisions or other articles; or

(2) unlawfully combines to procure shopkeepers, dealers, or other persons to discontinue the sale or transit from place to place of provisions or other articles; or

(3) prevents or endeavours to prevent any person from purchasing or being supplied with any such articles,

shall upon summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars, and to imprisonment for any term not exceeding three months.”

Although the section refers only to “provisions or other articles,” presumably *eiusdem generis*, the marginal note reads “Combination to stop trade.”

The ordinance was last brought into operation in September, 1931, by Proclamation No. 3 of 1931, which was cancelled in June, 1932.

**104.** In 1912 as a result of the boycott of the Hong Kong Tramways, which insisted on its fares being paid in Hong Kong currency and not in Chinese subsidiary coins, the Boycott Prevention Ordinance No. 41 of 1912 was passed. By section 2 (a) “Boycotting” means and includes the use of any words, or the

importing, making, printing, reproducing, having in possession, having under control, placarding, posting, disseminating, or in any other manner whatsoever dealing with any printed, written, or otherwise produced documents, papers, matter, or pictorial representations, or the doing of any acts, intended or calculated to persuade or induce any person or persons—

(i) not to let, hire, use, make use of, or occupy any immovable or movable property in any lawful manner; or

(ii) not to deal with, trade with, work for or hire in any lawful manner any person or persons in the ordinary course of trade, business, occupation, employment or undertaking; or

(iii) not to carry out or comply with the requirements of the law; or

(iv) to refuse to comply with or to interfere with the administration of the law.

The Ordinance also defines "society" as including any company, corporation, club, guild, or any combination or association of any kind whatsoever consisting of more than two persons whether such combination or association be known or designated by any distinctive name or not, and section 3 provides that every person who is a member of or takes part in any society which uses violence, threat, intimidation to or towards any person or persons with the view of causing any person or persons either to do any act which such person or persons has or have a legal right to abstain from doing or to abstain from doing any act which such person or persons has or have a legal right to do shall be deemed to have committed an offence against the provisions of the Ordinance.

Under this Ordinance the Governor in Council is empowered to proclaim that any area in the Colony shall be deemed to be a boycotting area and to levy a special rate upon such proclaimed area.

**105.** The operation of the Boycott Prevention Ordinance was suspended by Proclamation No. 3 of 1913. As it was not found necessary to rescind this order even during the general strikes of 1922 and 1925, the retention of the Ordinance in the statute book would appear to be unnecessary, apart from any question of its desirability.

**106.** All necessary powers to deal with an emergency appear to be contained in the Emergency Regulations Ordinance No. 5 of 1922, but it is submitted that it is anomalous to keep regulations under this Ordinance, which is designed to cope with occasions of emergency, in operation, as was recently done, from 1925 to the time of writing.\* Any legislation found necessary for such a prolonged period should more properly be incorporated in the general legislation of the Colony: action along that line is already under contemplation by Government. While emergency regulations have occasionally been issued respecting such things as the importation of milk, and the collection of shellfish during a cholera epidemic, the general purport of the regulations is to prevent disorder.

**107.** The power of summary expulsion under regulation 4 of any person having no regular employment in the Colony has been referred to in paragraph 17.

**108.** By regulation 5 the holding of any meeting which is likely to be conducted in a seditious or disorderly manner, or at or during which seditious or disorderly words are likely to be uttered or seditious or disorderly publications are likely to be exhibited or at or during which a general strike is likely to be advocated or promoted, may be prohibited by order published in the Gazette.

**109.** Without the permission in writing from the Secretary for Chinese Affairs no meeting whatsoever shall be held on board any vessel (not being or having the status of a ship of war), or on any pier or wharf. This regulation (7) reflects the influence exercised by the Seamen's Union during the strikes of 1922 and 1925.

---

\* They were re-enacted in 1931 and 1938.



**110.** By regulation 16 any organization whether within or without the Colony which, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, is an organization which has among its aims, or is being used for, the promotion of a general strike or disorder of any kind, or of the spread of sedition within the Colony, may be proscribed.

**111.** By regulation 21 no printed matter in the Chinese language (other than a *bonâ fide* trade advertisement) may be printed, or published, or distributed, unless it has previously been submitted to and passed by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs.

**112.** Regulation 22 (1) reads:—

“No person shall import, print, publish, reproduce, have in his possession or under his control, post up or distribute any newspaper, placard, pamphlet, writing or pictorial representation calculated or tending to persuade or induce any person or persons, whether individually or as members of the general public to refrain from dealing with, trading with, working for or hiring any person or persons in the course of trade, business, occupation or employment.”

This is scarcely compatible with the rightful activity of trade unions, and a recommendation for its amendment has been submitted to Government.

**113.** A trade union is a society for the purposes of the Societies Ordinance No. 8 of 1920. The only ordinance specifically relating to trade unions is the Illegal Strikes and Lockouts Ordinance 1927, already referred to, the purpose of which is rather to suppress the illegal activities of unions than to encourage their legal ones. Recommendations for the amendment of the existing law governing trade unions will be made in a later paragraph.

#### Factories and Workshops.

**114.** Under the Factories and Workshops Ordinance, 1937, every factory or workshop must be registered at the office of the Protector (since 1.1.1938 the Chairman of the Urban Council) and such registration must be renewed annually. Before a factory is registered, or registration is renewed, the requirements of the Factories Inspectorate, Health Officer, and Fire Brigade must be satisfied. In the form of application for registration it must be stated whether women, girls, and young persons under the age of sixteen years are to be employed.

**115.** The following is an up-to-date list, arranged according to trades, of registered factories and workshops.

DESCRIPTION.	Hong Kong.	Kowloon and New Territories.	Total.
Aerated Water .....	2	1	3
Bakelite Ware .....	1	—	1
Batteries, Dry .....	2	15	17
Bleaching Powder .....	1	—	1
Breweries .....	—	1	1
Brick Works .....	—	2	2
*Bulbs, Electric .....	1	3	4
Buttons .....	—	2	2
<i>Carried forward</i> .....	7	24	31

\* Two bulb factories have recently failed owing to Shanghai competition.

DESCRIPTION.	Hong Kong.	Kowloon and New Territories.	Total.
<i>Brought forward</i> .....	7	24	31
Carbon Sticks .....	—	2	2
Cement .....	—	1	1
Cement Tiles .....	1	1	2
Chemicals .....	1	1	2
Cloth Printing .....	—	3	3
Coal Eggs .....	1	—	1
Concrete Products .....	—	3	3
Confectioneries and Biscuits .....	17	11	28
Cotton Quilts .....	2	—	2
Cracker Factories .....	—	1	1
Dairy Supplies .....	1	1	2
Dyeing Factories .....	—	14	14
Electro-plating .....	16	9	25
Embroidery .....	—	3	3
Enamel Wares .....	—	1	1
Engineering .....	9	15	24
Face Powder .....	—	3	3
Feather Works .....	3	2	5
Fertilizer .....	1	—	1
Flour Mills .....	3	12	15
Foundries .....	—	6	6
Furniture .....	8	5	13
Gas Masks .....	—	2	2
Glass Mirrors, Bottles, etc. ....	9	9	18
Gourmet Powder .....	—	1	1
Green Peas .....	3	1	4
Gunny Bags .....	1	—	1
Handkerchiefs and Garters .....	4	4	8
Hats (Felt and Cork) .....	2	7	9
Ice and Ice Cream .....	4	1	5
Ink, Printing .....	3	2	5
Ivory Wares .....	1	—	1
<i>Carried forward</i> .....	97	145	242

DESCRIPTION.	Hong Kong.	Kowloon and New Territories.	Total.
<i>Brought forward</i> .....	97	145	242
Joss Sticks .....	—	8	8
Knitting Factories .....	4	129	133
Laundries .....	4	2	6
Leather and Fibre Bags .....	5	7	12
Marble and Terrazzo .....	1	—	1
Matting and Grass Rope .....	1	3	4
Medicine .....	3	2	5
Metal Sheet Mill .....	1	—	1
Metal Wares .....	10	15	25
Molasses .....	—	1	1
Mosquito Sticks and Insect Powder..	—	5	5
Neon Lights .....	—	1	1
Newspapers .....	16	—	16
Noodles .....	1	2	3
Ore Refineries .....	3	5	8
Ornamental Stones .....	—	1	1
Paint and Lacquer .....	2	1	3
Paper Boxes .....	1	—	1
Paper Dyeing .....	—	4	4
Peanut Oil .....	1	4	5
Pencils .....	—	1	1
Perfumery .....	7	1	8
Petroleum .....	1	3	4
Piano .....	1	—	1
Picture Frames .....	—	1	1
Plaster Work .....	—	1	1
Preserves .....	2	17	19
Printing .....	53	14	67
Public Utilities .....	5	4	9
Radio Parts .....	1	1	2
Rattan .....	2	3	5
Rope Factory .....	1	—	1
<i>Carried forward</i> .....	223	381	604

DESCRIPTION.	Hong Kong.	Kowloon and New Territories.	Total.
<i>Brought forward</i> .....	223	381	604
Rubber Shoes .....	2	5	7
Sausages .....	1	—	1
Sandal Wood, Gypsum Powder, &c. ....	1	4	5
Sesamum Seeds .....	1	2	3
Shipbuilding and Repairing .....	4	7	11
Shirts and Garments .....	11	16	27
Simplex Gypsum Products .....	—	1	1
Shoe Makers .....	4	1	5
Soap Factory .....	3	—	3
Soy and Sauce .....	1	4	5
Stockings, Silk .....	—	17	17
Sugar Factories .....	2	2	4
Tea Packing .....	1	—	1
Telephones (Assembling) .....	—	1	1
Thread Factories .....	1	1	2
Timber Mills .....	10	6	16
Tin Can Making .....	9	3	12
Tobacco Factories .....	8	1	9
Tooth Brushes .....	—	2	2
Tooth Picks .....	—	2	2
Torch Factories .....	13	9	22
Toy Works .....	—	1	1
Twine and Tape Makers .....	—	1	1
Umbrella Sticks and Frames .....	1	3	4
Vacuum Flasks .....	1	—	1
Vermilion and White Lead .....	2	4	6
Water Pipes .....	1	—	1
Water-proof Cloth .....	—	1	1
Weaving Factories .....	3	79	82
Total (February, 1939) .....	303	554	857

**116.** The distribution of male and female workers in certain of the more important industries is shown in the following table. The figures are approximate only as they fluctuate with business prosperity.

INDUSTRIES.	Male.	Female.	Total.
Batteries. Dry .....	200	650	850
Breweries .....	52	48	100
Cement .....	423	10	433
Confectionery and Biscuits .....	575	815	1,390
Electric Torches .....	600	2,000	2,600
Electro-Plating .....	650	166	816
Engineering .....	674	4	678
Furniture .....	790	—	790
Glass and Mirrors .....	600	95	695
Hats, Cork and Felt .....	190	575	765
Joss-Sticks .....	108	663	771
Knitting Factories .....	1,710	5,035	6,745
Metal Wares .....	1,756	2,170	3,926
Newspapers .....	743	2	745
Oil Refineries .....	449	12	461
Peas, Green .....	26	570	596
Preserves .....	454	971	1,425
Printing Factories .....	3,664	703	4,367
Public Utilities .....	1,152	—	1,152
Rubber Factories .....	1,050	2,790	3,840
„ „ (outworkers) .....	—	1,760	1,760
Shipyards .....	10,390	36	10,426
Shirts and Garments .....	869	542	1,411
Spinning and Weaving Factories .....	1,597	4,554	6,151
Stocking Factories .....	124	491	615
Sugar Refineries .....	871	81	952
Tobacco Factories .....	500	1,500	2,000

117. The great variety of factories will be observed, and the large number of knitting and weaving factories in which female labour predominates. The figures may be compared with those of Shanghai, including the International and French Concessions, where in the first half of 1937 there were 22,376 factories and workshops with about 600,000 workers.\*

118. In pea-sorting and ginger preserving, which are purely seasonal trades, young persons are commonly employed. A register of such employees is kept.

119. There are four mines, a lead mine at Lin Ma Hang, a wolfram mine at Needle Hill, an iron mine at Ma On Shan with no underground workings except

\* Chinese Labour Conditions in 1937 (in Chinese).

some cuttings for wolfram prospecting, and at Cha Kwo Ling a kaolin mine. Only the first two are worked on modern lines. The crushing mill at Lin Ma Hang is being registered as a factory. The total number of miners is about a thousand.

**120.** As female labour is cheaper than male labour, female labour preponderates in those trades where dexterity rather than physical strength is required. Chinese girls employed as packers in tobacco factories, etc., are quite up to European standards of proficiency. On the other hand male miners have not the necessary physique, and although their wages are lower than those in Europe or America, their output is proportionately less, so that they cannot be said to be really cheaper than European labour. Much the same may be said of Chinese riveters in shipyards where four men will be seen handling a machine that would be worked by one European. While in these instances the explanation of inadequate physique may be sufficient, yet in many forms of work it is frequently necessary to employ several men to do the work of one. The plumber's mate has proliferated into a gang of assistants whose service is often only to stand and wait. As a result, instead of one man drawing a reasonable wage we find several existing at subsistence level, which may avoid unemployment but debases the standard of living. This diffusion of work is obviated in many factories by the introduction of the piece work system. In the large industrial undertakings, such as the dockyards, one has no difficulty in distinguishing the departments in which piece work or time work prevails.

**121.** In the factories and workshops registered there is an estimated total of 28,470 male and 26,220 female workers, making in all a total of 54,690.

**122.** These figures of course only cover a portion of the labouring population. Apart from those engaged in fishing, agriculture, and domestic service, there are large numbers of casual workers, such as coal coolies and stevedores and street hawkers, licensed and unlicensed, and the innumerable fokis to be found in every shop who often work for little more than their board and lodging. The number of licensed hawkers was 16,087 in 1936, 13,211 in 1937, and 11,722 in 1938. An itinerant hawker's licence costs four dollars per annum. Many have been paid for from the poor box at the magistracies as a form of relief to the infirm and aged. The decrease does not represent a diminution in the number of hawkers, but merely in the number of those licensed. In 1938 as a result of the influx of refugees there were probably five unlicensed hawkers for every licensed one.

**123.** Most of the labour employed in factories other than shipyards is on a direct basis, skilled labour being frequently employed at monthly rates and unskilled on piece work. This is a rough generalization only as one can find skilled labour on piece work and unskilled on time work. Some factories pay a fixed wage with a bonus on production. Coolie labour in building construction and road making is paid by the day. The shipyards retain a certain number of skilled men on a permanent basis, but the major part of ship-building and repairing is let out to contractors. Although the Hong Kong Mines at Lin Ma Hang employ all labour direct, the Marsman Mine at Needle Hill engages its labour through a labour contractor. Coal bunkering and transporting coal and stevedoring in general are let out to contractors. Sub-contracting is rampant in building construction, reclamations, and any scheme which involves the employment of large numbers of coolie labour.

**124.** Within limits there are certain advantages in the system as in shipyards where there is no constant amount of work and the labour contractor may be able to switch his men from one job here to another there as occasion demands, and to tide them over periods of unemployment with free food and lodging, but it becomes vicious in building construction where it is not a question of splitting a contract among several sub-contractors but of subletting a whole contract through several intermediaries who all take their profit until the actual contractor who does the work may receive so little that he scamps his work or goes bankrupt and is unable to pay his labourers. The standard form of Public Works Department contract contains a clause forbidding the subletting or assignment of a contract or any portion of it without the consent of the engineer, but it is to be feared that in practice this is seldom adhered to.

**125.** Labour trouble in connexion with the construction of the catchments at Shing Mun Valley investigated by the writer were found to be due to the sub-contracting system under which payment to the actual labourer was constantly in arrears and frequently deficient.

**126.** The chief vice in the sub-contracting system is the excessive commission drawn by the contractor. A recent petition from certain ricksha coolies in Kowloon, who complained that the charge for which rickshas were hired to them by the day had been increased, disclosed, on investigation, the existence of certain sub-contractors who hired the rickshas at forty five to fifty cents a day each and sublet them at seventy five to eighty cents a day. This parasitic growth is being eliminated and action is being taken to control the rate at which contractors, who license their rickshas with the Police Department, hire them to the individual coolies.

**127.** Another questionable feature of local labour is the apprentice system which was adversely criticized by the 1921 Commission and since then has undoubtedly decreased with the elimination of child labour in industrial undertakings. While there are genuine apprentices learning their trades as in the dockyards, the system is frequently an excuse to obtain cheap labour in return for little or no wages but with the provision of food and lodging. Several years' apprenticeship may be demanded in what would appear to be largely an unskilled trade, the secrets of which could be mastered in a month. The apprentice system is for boys what the "mui-tsai" system is for girls. It extends into domestic labour where a cook may require a "makee-learn" to do his work for him.

**128.** It may safely be said that the employment of child labour in factories in the Colony has been eradicated, although an occasional child may still be found who has wandered in to be near his mother. In 1938 there was only one prosecution for employing children under fourteen years of age.

**129.** The employment of children, however, even to the early hours of the morning as pages and bell boys (or girls) in local hotels persists, and children are still employed to carry the paraphernalia in Chinese funeral processions. Legislation to extend the prohibition of child labour now in force in factories (age 14), in domestic service (age 12), and at sea (age 14), to all employments would not cover the many child hawkers and newspaper sellers who throng the streets: no one could be proved to "employ" them. One form of child labour, the carrying of building material, has practically disappeared in recent years with the extension of roads and the development of motor transport.

**130.** Little is known for lack of investigation concerning the conditions of outworkers, such as seamstresses and the women and girls who stitch the canvas uppers of rubber shoes.

**131.** Conditions in factories vary considerably from those approximating to a garden city as at the Hume Pipe Company at Tsun Wan and the Hong Kong Brewery further along the coast, where the employees are excellently housed and provided with hot and cold baths, to converted tenements in what are little better than urban slums where few or no amenities are provided for the workers.

**132.** One of those inspected, a tailoring establishment, was so overcrowded that one male worker engaged in ironing was found suspended from the roof on a beam with his ironing board suspended in front of him. Conditions in printing establishments and in many Chinese newspapers, most of which are concentrated in old property in the central district of Hong Kong, are generally bad.

**133.** Workers are adequately housed at the Hong Kong Mines, Lin Ma Hang, and lines are being erected at Needle Hill, which are described by Mr. Kershaw in his report\* as "far above the standard in use in the Federated Malay States, and other places in the East." He is of the opinion that the requirements of the medical authorities in this instance are excessive. The housing of labour on temporary works at any distance from town as in the catchment works already referred to still leaves

\* Report by the Senior Inspector of Mines, Perak, Federated Malay States, on the subject of the control measures which the Hong Kong Government should adopt in respect of local mining. Sessional Paper No. 14 of 1938.

much to be desired. Arrangements have, however, been made by the Public Works Department to insist on the requirements of the Director of Medical Services being complied with by Government contractors.

✓ **134.** In the urban areas workers, except in certain trades like glass blowing, camphorwood carving, dress-making, and printing, are not generally provided with housing, but the importers of Shanghai and other non-local labour have as a rule made special housing provision for it, and certain firms, like the Taikoo Dock, house some of their employees. Such housing is generally free to the workers. The Taikoo Dock Company exceptionally charges rent but not on the present day economic basis. Food is provided free in certain establishments, and the Hong Kong Mines provide a free meal each shift.

**135.** Adequate fencing of machinery has been achieved in all registered factories. The question of accident compensation will be dealt with in a later paragraph.

**136.** The chief criticism that may be made against existing factories is that most of them were not designed as such but have been converted from tenement floors built for housing purposes. In Hong Kong there are 113 factory type buildings as against 409 converted tenement floors, and in Kowloon 180 factory type buildings against 1,041 converted tenement floors. In Kowloon eighty per cent. of the converted tenements are situated in the Shamshuipo, Taikoktsui, and Mong Kok areas. In sixteen instances the number of floors rented by certain factories exceeds ten, in one case as many as thirty floors having been converted into one factory. It may be possible in time to segregate factories in certain areas as is at present done in respect of offensive trades. The root of the difficulty of tenement factories is that tenements are generally available while factories have to be built, and uncertainty as to the future, and deficiency of capital, lead to the choice of the lesser financial risk though greater inconvenience of converting existing property.

✓ **137.** The usual hours of work in factories are seven to twelve and one to five. Overtime, 6 p.m. till 8 p.m., is normal in knitting, rubber shoe and electric torch factories. In certain factories (chiefly European managed) Sundays are holidays, but the worker in Chinese owned undertakings has usually only about seven days off in the year. Overtime is generally paid at time and a half or time and a third and serves to eke out the low wages of certain piece workers. The hours are long but not so in comparison with China, and seven a.m. to five p.m., a nine hour day, is becoming standardized. Conditions as to hours are certainly worse in the knitting factories, which are in direct competition with similar factories in China.

✓ **138.** There is no restriction on the hours during which adult males may be employed. It may be observed that of the forty five prosecutions undertaken in 1938, while only one (already referred to) was for employing children under fourteen years of age, and two for permitting the overcrowding of workers, twenty three were for permitting women and young persons to work during prohibited hours, and nineteen for operating unregistered factories. Twenty four prosecutions were in respect of knitting and weaving factories. Convictions were obtained in all cases.

#### **Wages and Cost of Living.**

**139.** No adequate survey has yet been made of the cost of living of the labouring classes in Hong Kong and although index numbers of wholesale prices are published by the statistical office of the Imports and Exports Department no index numbers of retail prices or cost of living are prepared. This deficiency is at present being remedied. Questionnaires regarding family budgets have been issued through various associations and the results are being collated by the Department of Commerce, Hong Kong University, which hopes at an early date to be in a position to produce index figures of cost of living in respect of the working class.

**140.** The following table shows the course of wholesale price changes in certain foodstuffs since 1924:—



1922=100.

	1924*	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Beans .....	100.3	130.9	118.6	101.3	83.9	78.7	121.4	145.4	135.9
Beef .....	116.9	218.0	152.3	173.2	121.3	128.0	161.1	188.9	178.2
Eggs .....	94.5	131.1	104.5	96.7	86.0	73.6	93.0	107.7	103.3
Flour (Wheat) .....	96.4	114.0	98.5	85.7	75.8	66.3	104.4	141.2	116.1
Salt Fish .....	87.6	125.9	150.0	153.4	137.1	113.9	97.5	106.9	100.2
Fruits, Fresh .....	123.4	306.7	274.5	250.1	233.0	201.5	256.2	310.0	303.2
Lard .....	106.9	138.0	114.7	101.2	78.5	82.7	113.2	146.2	105.6
Peanut Oil .....	111.6	117.1	122.1	101.7	73.1	84.7	131.3	151.3	111.6
Pork .....	103.6	133.8	119.8	109.6	87.3	77.3	97.3	151.9	124.4
Poultry .....	111.0	175.2	147.7	117.0	88.8	86.1	92.2	124.7	118.1
Rice (Broken) .....	112.3	126.1	118.3	88.9	66.1	68.6	103.0	133.0	125.8
Rice (White) .....	110.2	133.2	113.5	93.5	72.2	71.4	106.3	123.5	120.9
Vegetables (Dried, etc.) .....	96.3	64.3	56.8	45.2	45.4	46.6	55.5	56.1	59.5

141. The variations in wholesale prices are reflected in the retail prices shown in the following rough table of costs per catty (pound and a third) of staple food-stuffs of the wage earning classes for the last nine years:

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
Rice (3rd Grade) per catty	9.2	8.6	8.4	7.6	5.6	4.9	6.3	7.9	7.3
Fresh Fish ..	26.2	25.0	31.5	31.8	25.3	23.8	20.9	26.9	24.4
Salt Fish ..	33.7	32.0	34.6	27.8	23.1	22.5	21.2	24.1	25.2
Beef ..	49.0	49.0	48.0	44.4	40.6	35.2	32.8	36.8	37.6
Pork ..	54.0	53.0	55.0	51.4	41.6	38.9	41.7	51.9	49.7
Oil ..	23.2	23.0	24.2	21.4	15.3	15.8	23.7	28.3	22.2
Firewood ..	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.4

142. One cause of the variations in the market price of imports has been the fluctuation in the value of the local dollar in terms of sterling as shown in the following table.

Year.	Average rate.
1924	2/ 4½
1929	2/
1930	1/ 3½
1931	1/ 0¾ (January 11¼d; December 1/5½)
1932	1/ 3¾
1933	1/ 4¼
1934	1/ 6¾ (May 1/4¾; December 1/8¼)
1935	1/11½ (2/4¾ to 1/3½)
1936	1/ 3¾
1937	1/ 2¼
1938	1/ 2½

143. The figures which appear annually regarding cost of living in the report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs are based on information obtained from the District Watch Force. At my request figures were furnished from the same source showing the cost of living of an ordinary labourer. The figures have been tabulated as follows:—

\* The collection of trade statistics was commenced in 1917, discontinued in 1925, and resumed in 1930.

SINGLE MAN (per month).

		Hong Kong.			Kowloon.	
		Central.	Eastern.	Western.	Yaumati.	Average.
		\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
Food .....	Summer	5.40	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.40
	Winter	6.00	6.00	5.80	5.80	5.90
Housing & Light ...	Summer	4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50	4.50
	Winter	4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50	4.50
Clothes .....	Summer	1.00	1.00	0.90	0.90	0.95
	Winter	2.00	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.85
Total .....	Summer	10.90	10.50	11.30	10.70	10.85
	Winter	12.50	11.80	12.60	12.10	12.25

MAN AND WIFE.

		Central.	Eastern.	Western.	Yaumati.	Average.
		\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
Food .....	Summer	9.20	9.80	9.50	9.50	9.50
	Winter	10.00	10.50	10.20	10.20	10.20
Housing & Light ...	Summer	7.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.75
	Winter	7.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.75
Clothes .....	Summer	2.00	1.80	1.70	1.80	1.80
	Winter	3.50	3.20	3.00	3.20	3.20
Total .....	Summer	18.20	17.60	18.20	18.30	18.10
	Winter	20.50	19.70	20.20	20.40	20.20

EACH CHILD.

		Central.	Eastern.	Western.	Yaumati.	Average.
		\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.	\$ c.
Food .....	Summer	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	Winter	2.50	2.50	2.40	2.60	2.50
Housing & Light ...	Summer	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
	Winter	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Clothes .....	Summer	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.37
	Winter	0.40	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.47
Total .....	Summer	2.90	2.90	3.00	3.10	2.97
	Winter	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.80	3.57

144. Admittedly, these figures are not the result of a properly conducted survey and there is no item in respect of miscellaneous expenditure, but the figures do show the large proportion of income expended on housing.

145. It is a generally accepted principle that "rent should not exceed one fifth of the family income."\* I have consulted the Assessor in the matter who has been so good as to inform me that, in his opinion, the average rent paid to-day by the labouring class in Hong Kong for a bedspace is from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per month and for a cubicle from \$5.00 to \$6.00 per month in Chinese tenement houses. Water is generally included and, sometimes, electric light. It will be seen therefore that in the case of a family frequently more than a third of the income is expended on housing and that accommodation for a single man, who contents himself with a bedspace, costs not less than \$2.50 per month, and for a man and a wife about \$6.00. This is a large proportion of a small income as it must be remembered that the lower the income the greater the proportion that must be expended on food. Certain surveys conducted in China show as much as 75 per cent (in the case of ricksha coolies).†

146. Food consists mainly of rice. The following Chinese diets are quoted from the 1936 Blue Book :—

Diet for Chinese Prisoners, men and women, with hard labour.§

	Sunday.	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.
Breakfast:—							
Rice (Red) .....	12 oz.	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	12 oz.
Rice (White) ...	—	—	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	—	—
Fresh Vegetables ...	14 ,,	—	—	8 ,,	14 ,,	—	—
Salt Vegetables.	—	—	3 ,,	—	—	—	3 ,,
Chutney .....	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,
Oil .....	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,
Salt .....	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,
Tea .....	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,
Salt Fish .....	—	3 ,,	—	3 ,,	—	3 ,,	—

Midday Meal ..... Congee ..... 1 Pint.

	Sunday.	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.
Supper:—							
Rice (Red) .....	12 oz.	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	12 oz.
Rice (White) ...	—	—	12 oz.	—	12 oz.	—	—
Fresh Vegetables ...	—	14 ,,	10 ,,	—	10 ,,	14 ,,	8 ,,
Chutney .....	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{3}{4}$ ,,
Oil .....	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,	1 ,,
Salt .....	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,
Tea .....	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,
Fresh Fish .....	3 ,,	—	—	3 ,,	—	—	3 ,,
Fresh Beef .....	—	—	5 ,,	—	5 ,,	—	—

\* Report of the Housing Commission, 1935, Appendix II.

† Ricksha coolies in Hong Kong have four meals a day. Those taken during working hours are small.

§ The average cost of rations for a Chinese prisoner is at present approximately \$4.35 a month.

Diet for 3rd Class Chinese Patients in Government Hospitals.

FULL DIET.

---

Breakfast:—7.30 a.m.	
Fish, Fresh with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Ground Nut Oil (or 1 Salt Egg, alternately) .....	2 oz.
Pork, Fresh (with 1 Salt Egg, or 3 Water Chestnuts, alternately) .....	2 ,,
Rice .....	12 ,,
Tea (Chinese) .....	$\frac{1}{4}$ ,,
Vegetables, Fresh .....	4 ,,
Tiffin:—12.30 p.m.	
Beef Congee (2 oz. Beef, 1 oz. Rice) .....	$\frac{1}{2}$ pt.
Supper:—4 p.m.	
Egg, Salt .....	1
Fish, Fresh, with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Ground Nut Oil (or 2 oz. Pork with 4 oz. Acidulated Vegetables, alternately) .....	2 oz.
Rice .....	12 ,,
Vegetables, Fresh .....	4 ,,

---

**147.** The ordinary working man has two meals a day, morning and evening, with a cup of tea and a few cakes at midday, costing about five cents. These meals consist chiefly of the following:—

(a) If made at home: 4-6 bowls of rice, a little pork or beef, 2 or 3 cents vegetables, salt fish, tea.

Cost 18-20 cents.

(b) If bought at stall: rice, noodles, or macaroni, or congee at about two cents a bowl, with a little roast meat or duck, salt fish or beancurd.

Cost: 15 cents.

**148.** Another analysis of monthly living costs is:—

Food: \$5.40 to \$6.00.

Rent: \$3.00 for a bedspace (sleeps in street when income is small).

Clothing: \$1.00 (6 cotton suits at \$1.40 each, 4 cotton singlets at 40 cents each, and a few shorts every year, with a woollen jacket which lasts several years).

Other items: \$2.00.

Minimum cost per month: \$9 without bedspace.  
\$12 with bedspace.

**149.** It would appear that, largely owing to the recent high increase in the cost of firewood, due to hostilities in China, it is cheaper to purchase cooked food at a stall than to cook it at home. The monthly cost of food for an adult male is between five and six dollars, in both tables.

**150.** The Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children which keeps a record of family incomes calculated per head of persons in family, does not, unless there are exceptional circumstances, give assistance if the family income exceeds \$4.00 per head per month.

---

\* The average cost of rations for a Chinese prisoner is at present approximately \$4.35 a month.

**151.** The average monthly income of families under relief was \$1.57 per head in 1938.\* The lowest in any one month was \$0.86 at the Eastern Centre. The following table shows comparison with previous years:—

1932 .....	\$2.93
1933 .....	2.49
1934 .....	2.05
1935 .....	2.01
1936 .....	1.73
1937 .....	1.80
1938 .....	1.57

The table shows an alarming and almost continuous decline in income since 1932.

**152.** Children are suckled for long periods until they can digest rice, as the poorer classes are unable to afford cow's milk.

**153.** The investigations of the recently gazetted Nutrition Research Committee, which was appointed "to inquire into the question of nutrition in the Colony including the application of dietetics to the social problems of the Colony," should throw light on the subject of the adequacy of the normal Chinese labourer's diet, as with his preference for polished rice and the incidence of beri-beri there is much scope for inquiry and education.

**154.** The wages and cost of living of the labouring classes in Hong Kong are subject not only to the effects of the trade cycle but also to conditions peculiar to China and to the fluctuations in the value of the dollar which until 1935 was based on the price of silver. Its sterling value is now practically stabilized. In 1935, as the result of the trade depression many labourers returned to China and rents fell accordingly. In 1938, trade boomed, rents soared, and accommodation was at times unattainable by many.

**155.** No adequate statistics have been kept but it would not appear that rates of wages have fluctuated to anything like the same extent as cost of living, with the result that there must have been considerable disparity between real and money wages.

**156.** The Salaries Commission† reporting in 1929 on the adequacy of the existing scales of salaries, wrote—

"We think, after a careful consideration of the evidence of a large number of witnesses of this class, that the lowest wage paid to a labourer in Government employ should be \$12 a month although in most cases we have recommended a commencing wage of \$13 a month. This compares favourably with wages paid by private employers. In many cases men stated quite frankly that they had entered Government service because they improved their position by doing so, and they were fully alive to the advantage which greater security of continued employment gave them."

**157.** In addition, these workers are entitled to free quarters or an allowance in lieu, and, as a result of the recommendations of the Commission, receive a Chinese New Year Bonus.

§" (a) A bonus on the following scale is payable at Chinese New Year to Chinese monthly paid officers with three years' service or more other than the discipline staff of the Police, Fire Brigade and Prisons Department:—

Annual salary up to \$240 .....	One month's pay.
„ „ from 241 to \$252 .....	\$16.
„ „ „ 253 to 264 .....	12.
„ „ „ 265 to 276 .....	8.
„ „ „ 277 to 288 .....	4.
„ „ „ 289 and over .....	Nil.

\* 9th Annual Report of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children covering the period from 1.11.37 to 31.10.38.

† Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1929.

§ General Orders of the Hong Kong Government para. 105.

(b) A bonus on the following scale is payable at Chinese New Year to Chinese daily paid staff who have during the 12 months immediately preceding that date worked on 300 days or more:—

Wages up to 66 cents a day .....	30 days' pay.
„ from 67 to 70 cents a day .....	\$16.
„ „ 71 to 75 „ „ „ .....	12.
„ „ 76 to 80 „ „ „ .....	8.
„ above 85 „ „ „ .....	Nil.

Annual salary includes personal allowance but no other allowances.”

**158.** The commencing salary for coolies in Government employment is still \$13.00 a month as recommended in 1929. Third class postmen commence at \$17.00 a month, railway porters and gatemen at \$13.00 a month and scavenging coolies at \$12.00. “Male officers other than members of the floating staff on salary scales of which the minimum is less than \$420 per annum will be granted allowances of \$4 per month when no quarters are available, and \$2 per month where single quarters are available.”\*

**159.** The following are typical rates of pay of Chinese workers in local factories. They are not furnished in detail but are included merely as indicative of the general rates of wages obtaining:

*Bakers and Confectioners, (European control).*

Permanent male workers: These work in shifts during the day and night. The rates of pay vary according to their skill.

Shifts.

11 men, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.; 6 p.m.-10 p.m.;	
11 p.m.-1 a.m. ....	\$15-\$30 a month.
3 men, 2 a.m.-6 a.m.; 7 a.m.-10 a.m.....	\$18-\$35 „
16 men, 4 a.m.-8 a.m.; 9 a.m.-12 noon ...	\$10-\$55 „
4 females—chocolate makers, 7 a.m.-1 p.m.	\$10-\$15 „

*Bakers and Confectioners (Chinese control).*

Males, permanent .....	\$7-\$70 a month—board and lodging.
Forewomen .....	\$20-\$80 a month.
Female workers, piece work .....	\$.25-.50 a day.

*Batteries (Torch) etc.*

Male workers, permanent .....	\$6-\$15—board and lodging and bonus.
Female piece work .....	\$.15-.35 a day, extra pay from 6-8 p.m.

*Box Makers, Camphorwood.*

Males, monthly .....	\$8-\$13—board and lodging.
Males, piece work .....	\$.40-\$1.20 a day (different classes of work).
Food is supplied but cost is refunded to master monthly.	

*Box Makers, Carboard.*

Males, monthly .....	\$15-\$21—board and lodging.
Males, daily .....	\$1.00 (irregular times).
Females, piece work .....	\$.25-.40 a day.

\* General Order No. 119 (2).

*Building Trade.*

Locomotive Drivers .....	\$1.30 to \$1.80 per day.
Carpenters .....	0.80 to 1.30 ,,
Bricklayers .....	0.80 to 1.30 ,,
Painters .....	0.80 to 1.30 ,,
Plasterers (including Shanghai plasterers) ..	1.00 to 1.50 ,,
Scaffolders .....	1.00 to 1.50 ,,
Labourers (male) .....	.60 to .80 ,,
,, (female) .....	.40 to .50 ,,

Working hours—9 per day. Time and a half paid for overtime.

Free temporary sleeping quarters provided on the building site and communal messing at cheap rates for men only.

*Cement Works (European control).*

Foremen .....	\$30-\$132.50 a month.
Skilled men .....	\$1-\$1.60 a day.
Unskilled men—labourers .....	50-80 cents a day.
,, ,, —packers on piece work.....	\$ .90-\$1.00 a day. Three shifts each of 8 working hours and two days off on change of shift, every third week.

Hospital expenses and Insurance benefit for permanent employees.

*Contractors' Coolies.*

A day's work reckoned from 7 a.m.-12 noon; 1-5.30 p.m.

Males—Daily pay .....	40-60 cents.
,, —With board and lodging .....	25-30 ,,
Females—Daily pay .....	35-50 ,,
Casual labourers .....	\$.40 a day average.

Sand carrying coolies. From junk to building site by lorry or basket—\$.25 for 100 cubic feet. A good man can earn up to \$1.00 a day.

*Electro-plating.*

Male workers—monthly rates .....	\$8-\$40—board and lodging.
Females, piece work .....	\$.15-.35; time and third from 6-8 p.m.

*Engineering.*

Males, daily rates .....	80 cents flat rate—board and lodging.
Apprentices .....	\$1.50 a month—board and lodging.
Specialists .....	Over \$1.00 a day—board and lodging.

*Feather Works. (sorting, picking, &c.)*

Permanent workers, male only .....	\$15—board and lodging and bonus.
Carrying coolies, odd jobs .....	4 cents a bale.
Packing coolies .....	about 7 cents a bale, approx. \$1 a day.
Females, piece work, sorting .....	average 40 cents a day; overtime 6-8 p.m., \$.30 more.
Females, piece work, "fine picking" .....	\$.60 a day.

*Felt Hats.*

Males, permanent .....	\$7-\$40 a month—board & lodging.
Males, daily .....	\$.60-.80 } 6-8 p.m.—time and
Females ,, .....	\$.25-.70 { half.
Females, permanent .....	\$15-\$20—board and lodging.

*Fruit (Preserved) workers.*

Male workers, permanent .....	\$3-\$20 a month—board & lodging.
Women, piece-workers .....	\$.15-.60 a day.

*Glass Blowers.*

Males, permanent .....	\$11-\$30 a month—board and lodging.
Apprentices .....	\$3-\$6 a month—clothing, board and lodging.

*Gunny Bag Manufacturers (European control).*

Skilled labourers .....	\$29-\$45 a month (Graded).
Unskilled ,, .....	\$18-\$19 ,, ,,
Unskilled women .....	\$10-\$16 ,, ,,
Pieceworkers, men .....	\$35-\$45 ,, ,, (Baling coolies), 40-50 cents per bale, according to contents.
Pieceworkers—men .....	\$.50 a day, general labourers.
,, —women, sewing and darning.	\$.40-.50 a day. 3 cash (= .3 cent) a bag.

*Handkerchief Makers.*

Males, permanent .....	\$25-\$40—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.20-.40 a day (6-8 p.m. time and half).

*Hats, Cork.*

Males, monthly workers .....	\$2 (apprentices) to \$20—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.30-.55 a day (6-8 p.m., 10 cents more).

*Ivory Workers.*

Males, permanent, paid by piecework .....	ranging from \$30-\$80 a month and lodging.
---	---

*Joss Stick Makers.*

Permanent workers, male .....	\$3-\$15.—board and lodging.
Females, all piecework .....	\$.20 to .30 a day.

*Knitting Factory.*

Males, permanent .....	\$15-\$80—board and lodging.
,, apprentices .....	\$ 2-\$ 8— ,, ,,
Females, piecework .....	\$.20-\$1.00 a day (different grades of work).
\$ .20	beginners.
\$1.00	women in singlet making, this includes overtime 6-8 p.m.



*Medicine (Chinese) Workers.*

Male workers, all permanent .....	\$10-\$30 a month—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.15-.40 a day.

*Mines.*

Skilled men .....	\$1-\$3 a day—free quarters.
Coolies .....	\$.70-.90 a day.

*Mosquito Sticks.*

Males, permanent .....	\$20 average—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.20-.30 a day. (6-8 p.m., extra.)

*Ore Refineries.*

Males, permanent .....	\$5-\$23 a month—board & lodging.
Males, daily .....	\$.30-.40.

*Paint and Lacquer Workers.*

Males, monthly .....	\$10-\$50—board and lodging (different grades).
Females, daily workers .....	\$.25 average (No Sunday work).

*Paper Dyeing.*

Males, piecework .....	\$.40-\$1.00 a day and rice money.
Females ,, .....	\$.20-\$.40 a day.

*Pea (Green) Sorting.*

Males, piecework .....	\$.25-.30 a day.
Females ,, .....	.15-.20 a day.
Young persons ,, .....	.15-.20 a day.

*Perfumery.*

Males, monthly, permanent .....	\$7-\$50—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.24-.42 a day: 6-8 p.m. time and half.

*Printing Works.*

Skilled males (artists) .....	\$30-\$150 a month.
Male workers, permanent .....	\$20-\$80—board.
Female workers, piecework .....	\$.50-\$1.00 a day.

*Rattan Workers.*

Males, monthly .....	\$5-\$30—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.30-\$1.00 a day. 6-8 p.m. 20 cents extra.

*Rope (Grass) Workers.*

Males, permanent .....	\$5-\$18 a month—board & lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.30-.35 a day.

*Rope Workers (European control).*

Skilled artisans, permanent .....	\$1.10 to \$2.20 a day.
Foremen, permanent .....	\$ .90 to \$1.45 ,,
Workmen, daily .....	\$ .52-.66 ,,
Females, (spinning), daily .....	\$ .42 ,,
After 5 p.m.—time and half.	
No work on Sundays. Hospital expenses due to accidents paid: no pay, have to provide substitute.	

*Rubber Workers.*

Females. Cutting canvas uppers ...	\$ .12-.15 per 100 prs.	\$.36- .60 a day.
,, Punching eyelets .....	\$ .05-.06 ,, ,, ,,	\$.50- .70 ,,
,, Gumming canvas uppers .	\$ .06 ,, ,, ,,	\$.48- .60 ,,
,, Fixing soles to uppers ...	\$ .03 a pair	\$.60- .90 ,,
,, Fixing eyelets .....	\$ .06 per 100 prs.	\$.48- .90 ,,
,, Cutting soles .....	\$ .12-.15 ,, ,, ,,	\$.72-1.05 ,,
,, Cutting inner soles .....	\$ .10 ,, ,, ,,	\$.50- .60 ,,
,, Cleaning and packing .....	\$ .10 ,, ,, ,,	\$.60- .70 ,,
Learners and unskilled workers ....		\$.20- .45 ,,
Females—outside labour, machine stitching uppers :		
Shoes .....	\$ .25 for 10 pairs.	
Boots .....	\$ .06 for 1 pair.	

*Rubber Knee Boots—all female workers.*

Cutting and shaping rubber .....	\$1.50 a day.
Assembling department .....	\$.80-\$1.20 ,,
Trimming and wrapping .....	\$ .75 ,,

*Males.*

Engineers, permanent staff .....	\$30-100 a month.
Daily workers, milling rubber .....	\$.40-.80 a day.
Overtime—Time and half for males and females alike.	

*Shipping and Engineering.*

Electricians .....	\$1.00-1.40 a day.
Coppersmiths .....	1.00-1.60 ,,
Fitters .....	.80-1.55 ,,
Sawmillers .....	.70-1.25 ,,
Boilermakers .....	.95-1.20 ,,
Sailmakers .....	1.00-1.40 ,,
Blacksmiths .....	.75-1.20 ,,
Turners .....	1.00-1.40 ,,
Pattern-makers .....	1.00-1.40 ,,
Labourers .....	.70-1.00 ,,
Overtime—time and half. Night work—double time.	

*Shirt Makers*

All male workers .....	\$6-\$60 a month—board & lodging. (apprentices and different grades).
------------------------	--

*Shoes, Leather (Foreign style).*

<i>Apprentices.</i> 16-18 years old .....	\$ .30-\$1.00 a month with free board and lodging estimated at \$6-8 a month. Clothes supplied once a year. Apprenticeship three years.
<i>Men.</i> Men's shoes .....	\$ .60-\$1.00 a pair.
Women's ,, .....	\$ .40- .70 ,,
	Average output three pairs in two days.

*Stocking Knitting.*

Males, monthly .....	\$4-\$30—board and lodging.
Females—piece work .....	\$ .25-.50 a day. 6-8 p.m., time and half.

*Sugar Refinery. (European control).*

Senior Chinese Staff .....	\$75-\$100 a month.
Permanent male workers, fitters &c. ....	\$1.20 daily average.
,, ,, ,, fitters coolies ...	.69 ,, ,,
Skilled males \$18.00 average per month	} 6 hours shifts. No work on Sundays.
Unskilled ,, \$16.50 ,, ,, ,,	

All females, flat rate of \$10.40 a month—No work on Sundays; Hospital expenses due to accidents on duty paid.

*Sweet Makers.*

Male workers .....	\$4-\$20 a month—board and lodging.
Female ,, piece work .....	\$ .20-.50 a day.

*Tin Can Makers.*

Skilled male labour .....	\$80-\$100 (including late work).
Ordinary male labour—average .....	\$24.70 a month.
,, ,, ,, ,, .....	\$28.60 for night work.
Females .....	\$ .25-.40 a day. (6-8 p.m., time and half).
,, Piece work—monthly average.....	\$11.50 to \$14.50.

Accommodation and board for apprentices.

*Tobacco Workers (Cigarette makers) (Chinese control).*

Permanent male workers .....	\$34-100 a month.
Daily ,, ,, .....	\$ .80
	Hospital expenses paid and medicine provided.
Permanent female workers .....	\$28.50-\$45 a month.
Daily workers .....	\$ .80 a day.
Daily ordinary worker .....	\$ .30-.50 a day.
,, pieceworkers .....	\$ .30-.65 ,,

*Tobacco Workers (Cigarette makers) (European control).*

Male skilled time-workers (average) .....	\$1.00 per nine-hour day.
Unskilled coolies ,, ,, .....	.56 ,, ,, ,,
Unskilled boys ,, ,, .....	.47 ,, ,, ,,
Female pieceworkers ,, .....	.63 ,, ,, ,,
Unskilled female time-workers ,, .....	.48 ,, ,, ,,

All workers are classified as permanent after 6 months' service.

*Torches, Electric.*

Only a few permanent workers.

(1) Daily—males .....	\$ .60 to \$1.10, fitters and platers &c.
,, —females .....	\$.25 to \$.32, assembling.
(2) Piecework, females .....	\$.40-.45 a day: 6-8 p.m., time and third.

*Transport Workers.*

Tram Drivers .....	\$36-45 per month.
,, Conductors .....	30-39 ,,
Chinese New Year Bonus.	
Bus Drivers (Chinese Bus Co.) .....	27-54 ,,
,, Conductors ( ,, ,, ,, ) .....	18-21 ,,
Working hours—9 per day. Free uniform. Bonus at end of year—3 days' pay.	
Bus Drivers (European Bus Co.) .....	\$55 per month.
,, Conductors ( ,, ,, ,, ) .....	\$22.50-35.00 per month.
Working hours—9 per day. Free uniform. One month's salary bonus.	

<i>Transport Coolies</i> .....	\$0.60-\$0.70 per day.
Coal coolies .....	0.55 ,,
Ricksha coolies .....	0.60- 0.70 ,,

*Weaving and Spinning.*

Males, monthly .....	\$12-\$50—board and lodging.
Females, piecework .....	\$.25-.60 a day: 6-8 p.m. time and third.

**Housing.**

**160.** The question of housing has already been referred to in connexion with the concentration of the population in the urban areas round the harbour, the high cost of accommodation for the working classes and the encroachment by factories upon property designed for housing purposes.

**161.** For many years the law relating to buildings was combined with the law relating to public health in the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance No. 1 of 1903. In 1935 these were separated into several Public Health Ordinances and the Buildings Ordinance No. 18 of 1935, which is described as an ordinance to amend and consolidate the law relating to the construction of buildings. In a colony subject to violent typhoons buildings have to be substantial, and the law has concentrated on the question of construction rather than that of town planning.

**162.** A Town Planning Committee was appointed in 1922 but its labours do not appear to have borne much fruit.

**163.** A Commission was appointed in 1923 to inquire “as to what measures are possible to increase the quantity and decrease the cost of housing accommodation in the Colony.”\* While certain recommendations of the Commission, such as the improvement and extension of communications, are largely out-of-date with the development of roads and motor transport, it is of interest to note that reference was made to the transfer of military lands and it was recommended that the removal of the military from the central and already levelled and drained sites in the heart of the City of Victoria and of the Kowloon Peninsula should be expedited. The Commission declared that these sites, which occupy some hundreds of acres, are vital to the residential and commercial expansion of the Colony. The areas in question are still occupied by the military, that in the heart of Kowloon Peninsula as mule lines.

**164.** The Commission while of the opinion that it was impracticable to do away with middle-men in the building of houses recommended that the re-letting of a *whole* contract should be forbidden by law, as the practice tended to increase the cost of buildings. The failure to enforce a clause in Public Works contracts forbidding sub-letting has already been commented on. The Commission also observed that the existing labour guilds sought to debar new-comers from the country by large entrance fees. The practice of demanding large entrance fees appears to have been common among guilds and unions about this time as the author of “Some Aspects of the Labour Situation in Canton”, who investigated in 1926, reports that the Coffin Makers Union required of each member the payment of seventy dollars as an initiation fee.

**165.** The Commission recommended in the interest of all branches of trade in the Colony that a law should be passed “for the reference to a strong and independent tribunal, with one representative of the employers and one representative of the workmen as assessors, of all disputes in this Colony relating to wages to be paid to workmen, hours of employment and holidays. Such a law is clearly desirable in the interests of workmen, no less than in those of employers, for it is of the utmost importance to the former to know that they have a definite tribunal to which they can appeal with the full certainty of their grievances being gone into without delay and without any cessation of wages such as is involved in a strike.”

**166.** Among other recommendations the Commission proposed the building of houses for the accommodation at a reasonable rent of Government servants of all races and grades.

**167.** No effect appears to have been given to these recommendations.

**168.** A further step in the direction of town planning was taken in the appointment of the Playing Fields Committee,† which made certain recommendations, not only for playing fields but for “lungs” and open spaces.

**169.** In 1935 a Housing Commission was appointed “to inquire into the housing difficulties in Victoria and Kowloon with special reference to overcrowding and its effect on tuberculosis and suggest steps which should be taken to remedy existing conditions.”

**170.** In Appendix 2 to the Report,¶ which was issued in 1938, it is pointed out from figures contained in the census of 1931, when the population was only about 850,000, that in Hong Kong there were some 270 acres populated at an average density of over one thousand per acre, with a minimum of eight hundred per acre and a maximum of over one thousand seven hundred per acre in parts. This density has no doubt increased with the recent influx of refugees.

**171.** The old-fashioned, but still the most common type, of Chinese tenement house is of three or four storeys, often with a shop on the ground floor. The length is about 43' 6" and the breadth, which is determined by the length of the China fir pole, about 13' 6". The height of the flats might be 13' but this is frequently utilised

---

\* Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1923.

† Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1930.

¶ Sessional Paper No. 12 of 1938.

to erect a cockloft over part of the floor. Such a flat might be likened to a pigeon hole with an open verandah, windows between the verandah and the flat proper and the other end blocked by a kitchen but with a window in the corner over a covered yard. It is frequently let to a principal tenant who occupies a portion of the flat and sublets the remainder in cubicles and bedspaces to as many individuals or families as he or she can crowd in. A flat in normal times may have as many as twenty five adults stowed away in cubicles, bedspaces and cocklofts: and the population is at present swollen with an addition of twenty five to fifty per cent, accommodated in existing houses.

**172.** As has already been pointed out, a cubicle will cost about five or six dollars a month, so that with the cost of food at five to six dollars per month per adult, the author of the appendix to the Report was constrained to remark "A family of four therefore, earning a total of sixteen dollars per month cannot really afford anything for rent or clothing."

**173.** The Commission recommended that Government should consider the erection of experimental quarters for their Asiatic employees. Up to the present little has been done in this connexion beyond the provision of lodging houses for a certain number of sanitary coolies, a few Public Works Department labourers, and certain subordinate staff at Government hospitals.

**174.** The Commission also recommended that Government should encourage and where necessary assist the establishment by charitable organizations of "settlements" in the slum areas.

A recent experiment in social settlement in Kowloon where a number of flats were rented and let to tenants without overcrowding, with the provision of a warden and a kindergarten, and the elimination of the principal tenant's profits, showed that in many cases a sub-economic rent had to be charged.

**175.** The main recommendation of the Commission was, however, that a permanent Town Planning and Housing Committee be formed to advise Government on town planning and housing matters.

It is understood that legislation on the lines of certain sections of the Federated Malay States Sanitary Boards enactment, 1929, is being prepared providing for the appointment of an urban planning board with a view to proper zoning and planning.

Tenement factories will no doubt in time be abolished, and all new factories confined to suitable areas.

**176.** The question of slum clearance and the provision of sub-economic housing would appear to depend on the restriction of the population to numbers which the Colony can properly support.

**177.** The Commission generally referred to the necessity of decentralizing the population and preparing a survey of local industry and housing, each in relation to the other. In connexion with decentralization the abandonment of the system of workmen's tickets on the Hong Kong trams has already been remarked.

**178.** In 1921 it was found necessary to control rents by a Rents Ordinance, the provisions of which were extended by the Rents Ordinance No. 14 of 1922, which expired on 30th June, 1926. Owing to the increase in population last year, the Prevention of Eviction Ordinance No. 6 of 1938 was enacted to prevent unreasonable eviction of tenants and to make provisions as to the rent and recovery of possession of premises in certain cases. By the Prevention of Eviction Amendment Ordinance, 1939, powers were given to the court to determine questions relating to rent, and certain restrictions were placed on the issue of distress warrants.

**179.** The present position is that housing for the working classes is generally unsuitable, inadequate, and expensive. Families and individuals are thrown together to the almost complete destruction of privacy. Where free housing is not provided as part of a worker's emoluments—and it must be remembered that such housing rarely takes into account the possible existence of a family—the amount required for rent in the case of a family man represents a disproportionately large part of his income.

**Accidents, Medical Treatment and Compensation.**

**180.** Section 5 (1) (i) of the Factories and Workshops Ordinance No. 18 of 1937 empowers the Urban Council to make by-laws in respect of industrial undertakings for the purpose of “prescribing means of preventing accidents in factories and workshops and of relieving persons suffering from the effects of such accidents.”

**181.** “Industrial undertaking” by definition includes not only factories and workshops but also mines, quarries, handling of goods at docks, etc., and the transport of passengers or goods by road or rail, etc., but does not include any agricultural operation. It is therefore surprising to find the power to make by-laws concerning the prevention and notification of accidents restricted to factories and workshops to the exclusion of such industrial undertakings as mines.

**182.** By-laws to which none has been since added were published as a Schedule to the Ordinance. These deal with the fencing of machinery, the cleaning of dangerous machinery, and the notification of accidents.

**183.** By-law 14 reads:—

“ (1) Every accident which occurs in a factory or workshop and results in loss of life or disablement of any worker so as to cause him to be absent for more than three days from his ordinary work in such factory or workshop shall within seven days from the date thereof be reported in the form in Appendix III to these by-laws, either at the office of the Protector or at a police station.

“ (2) If any accident causing disablement is notified under this by-law and the person disabled subsequently dies as a result of the accident, notice in writing of the death shall forthwith be given either at the office of the Protector or at a police station.”

**184.** Neither in the by-law nor in the form is there any indication of who is required to make the report. At the end of the form is the line

*Signature of person making the report.*

Presumably the occupier or manager of the factory is intended, but no duty or liability is put upon him. The cause of the accident is on notification investigated by the Factories Inspector with a view to ascertaining whether the regulations have been complied with and whether further precautions to obviate such accidents are indicated.

**185.** What is meant by by-laws for the purpose “of relieving persons suffering from the effects of such accidents” is not known: no such by-laws exist. It is understood that it does not mean the passing of by-laws for workmen’s compensation.

**186.** A list of the accidents which occurred in factories, mines, etc., in 1938 follows:

Industries.	Accidents due to					Total number of accidents.	Fatalities.
	Machinery.	Falls.	Falling Objects.	Burns and Scalds.	Miscellaneous.		
Brewery .....	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
Canning Factories .....	1	—	—	—	1	2	—
Chemical Factories .....	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
<i>Carried forward</i> .....	1	1	—	1	1	4	—

Industries.	Accidents due to					Total number of accidents.	Fatalities.
	Machinery.	Falls.	Falling Objects.	Burns and Scalds.	Miscellaneous.		
<i>Brought forward</i> .....	1	1	—	1	1	4	—
Cigarette Factories .....	2	—	—	—	—	2	—
Cold Storage Plant .....	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Cotton Quilt Factories .....	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Dry Cleaners and Laundries ..	2	—	—	—	—	2	—
Engineering and Metal Wares	7	—	—	1	—	8	—
Hat Factories .....	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Knitting and Weaving Factories	6	—	—	2	—	8	—
Leather Goods Factories .....	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Mines .....	—	—	2 (2)	—	—	2	2
Oil Installations .....	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Perfumery Factories .....	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Printing Factories .....	4	—	—	—	—	4	—
Printing Ink Factories .....	2	—	—	—	—	2	—
Quarries .....	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Rope Works .....	2	—	—	—	—	2	—
Rubber Factories .....	2	—	—	—	1	3	—
Shipyards .....	8	42 (9)	12 (1)	1	18	81	10
Sugar Refineries .....	3	—	1	1	3	8	—
Utility Companies .....	—	1	3 (1)	2	2 (1)	8	2
	44	44 (9)	18 (4)	9	26 (1)	141	14

The figures in parenthesis denote Fatalities and are included in the total.

**187.** There is at present no Workmen's Compensation legislation but such is being prepared.

**188.** By section 18 of the Pensions Ordinance No. 21 of 1932 which is an ordinance to consolidate and amend the law regulating the granting of Pensions, Gratuities and other Allowances in respect of public service,

(1) It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to award to the widow and orphans of an officer who has been killed in the discharge of his duty, or who dies as a direct result of injuries received while on duty, or who dies of illness the contraction of which was specifically attributable to the nature of his duties a pension not exceeding ten-sixtieths of the deceased officer's emoluments or \$100 a year, whichever sum is greater: Provided that this maximum may be exceeded in exceptional cases.



(2) If the widow of any such officer marries again her pension under the provisions of this section shall cease on the remarriage: Provided that the pension may in the discretion of the Governor in Council, be revived upon re-widowhood.

(3) The pension of an orphan under the provisions of this section shall cease in the case of a male at the age of eighteen years, and in the case of a female on marriage or at the age of twenty-one years.

A similar section is included in the regulations made under the Police Force Ordinance No. 37 of 1932.

**189.** The regulations made under the Pensions Ordinance, 1932, provide for the grant of an allowance for injured officers:

(1) Where a person employed in the public service of this Colony has been permanently injured—

(a) in the actual discharge of his duty; and

(b) without his own fault; and

(c) by some injury specifically attributable to the nature of his duty;

and his retirement is thereby necessitated or materially accelerated, he may be granted in respect of such injury, in addition to any pension or allowance granted under these regulations, an annual allowance at the rate of the proportion of his actual pensionable emoluments at the date of his injury appropriate to his case as shown in the following table:

Where his capacity to contribute to his support is:—

slightly impaired .....	sixty seven-hundred-and-twentieths (60/720ths).
impaired .....	one hundred and twenty seven-hundred- and-twentieths (120/720ths).
materially impaired .....	one hundred and eighty seven-hundred- and-twentieths (180/720ths).
totally destroyed .....	two hundred and forty seven-hundred-and- twentieths (240/720ths).

Provided that no such allowance, together with any pension granted under these regulations, shall exceed the limit prescribed in section 11 of the Ordinance.

(2) The amount of the annual allowance shall be reduced to such an extent as the Governor in Council shall think reasonable in the following cases—

(a) where the injured man has continued to serve for not less than one year after the injury in respect of which he retires;

(b) where the injured man is not less than fifty years of age at the date of the injury; or

(c) where the injury is not the sole cause of retirement, but the retirement is caused partly by age or infirmity not due to the injury.

(3) Where the officer so injured holds a pensionable office and his length of service is not such as to qualify him for a pension, but he is qualified for a gratuity under regulation 20, he may be granted in lieu of such gratuity an annual allowance of one seven-hundred-and-twentieth (1/720th) of his pensionable emoluments for each complete month of pensionable service in addition to the allowance which may be awarded to him under this regulation.

(4) Any officer so injured, but not qualified for either a pension or a gratuity, may nevertheless be granted a pension of the same amount as the additional pension which he might have been granted if he had been so qualified.

Similar provision is made in the Police Pensions Regulations.

✓ **190.** The more important British industrial undertakings in the Colony already have schemes of compensation of their own in respect of sickness or injury incurred in the performance of duty. Certain European companies cover themselves by insurance. The compensation granted, however, is usually comparatively small, the maximum even in the case of death being generally between one hundred and two hundred dollars.

**191.** The maximum payable in respect of death or permanent injury in the case of Chinese workers at the Needle Hill Mine (Marsman Hong Kong China Ltd.) is one hundred and eighty dollars and for temporary total incapacity three dollars a week. This is covered by insurance. The British Cigarette Company under its own factory regulations may pay at its discretion a gratuity (not to exceed one thousand dollars, depending on the length of service of the worker) in the case of workers permanently disabled, partially or entirely, during the performance of their duties. This maximum is exceptionally high.

**192.** This Company has also established a savings fund for the benefit of employees who have completed six months' service. The Company voluntarily sets aside out of its own funds an amount equal to five per cent. of the employee's wages and adds a sum equal to that amount at the end of five years. The terms of the savings fund and the conditions under which withdrawals can be made are set out in the savings fund passbook held by each employee.

**193.** Some firms pay hospital expenses in respect of accidents and some continue the payment of salary or half salary during periods of temporary incapacity due to accidents and, more rarely, during periods of sickness. There is, however, no uniformity of practice, and in the case of an accident in the less well regulated factories the injured person is thrown on his own resources to seek free treatment if he so desires at a Chinese Public Dispensary if the injury is of a minor nature, or taken to a government or charitable hospital if he is more seriously hurt. Accident cases likely to have a medico-legal aspect are generally transferred to a government hospital. It is customary for the employer to sign a guarantee covering the expenses at the government hospital which, in the case of third class Chinese patients, amount to fifty cents a day. Third class patients do not pay operation fees. The responsibility of the employer would appear to be limited to giving due notice of the accident on the appropriate form, and as pointed out above there is no statutory basis even for this limited responsibility, though there have been successful prosecutions in the police courts for failure to notify. If he fails to sign the guarantor's form the patient is eventually "written off as free" by the medical officer.

**194.** It will be seen from the table that by far the largest number of accidents occurs in shipyards, and in the matter of compensation the dock companies discriminate between their direct employees and labour recruited through contractors.

**195.** There is a charitable fund known as the Brewin Fund,\* the trustee of which is the Tung Wah Hospital and which is administered through the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, for the assistance of widows and orphans and of disabled workmen. Chinese workmen employed in the Colony who may become incapacitated for work by reason of old age or sickness or who may have been permanently disabled by any accident are eligible. The capital is at present nearly \$200,000 and the total monthly payments for February, 1939, amounted to \$736. Only six, however, of the beneficiaries are disabled workmen, each of whom receives five dollars a month.

**196.** The incidence of occupational diseases has not been investigated. The question of the inclusion of occupational diseases in the proposed Workmen's Compensation Ordinance has been raised by the writer. It has been found difficult to enlist the co-operation of the workers in measures for their own protection, and attempts to insist on the wearing of masks in the polluted atmosphere of the feather packing factories have failed.

**197.** Certain factories have their own hospitals or dispensaries with resident or visiting doctors but reliance is generally placed on the Government hospital system

---

\* Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs for the year 1937, paragraph 37.

with the Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong and the Kowloon Hospital across the harbour, and various other Government hospitals, dispensaries and clinics. There is also a number of charitable hospitals, European and Chinese, the most well known of the latter being the Tung Wah and the Kwong Wah Hospitals, which cater particularly for the sick poor, and of Chinese Public Dispensaries which act as first aid posts in industrial areas. Free treatment in Government hospitals is provided for those who are unable to pay. Maternity and child welfare clinics are included in the health activities of Government, and in addition to the government dispensaries in the New Territories there are several dispensaries conducted by the St. John Ambulance Association.

**198.** In addition to a Workmen's Compensation Bill, legislation to give effect to the draft Convention (No. 32) concerning the protection against accident of workers employed in loading and unloading ships is under consideration.

**199.** By the regulations under the New Territories Regulation Ordinance already quoted action is being taken to render coolie lines mosquito-proof as well as to provide adequate sanitation, but the scope of the regulations is confined to the New Territories and the writer has seen little attempt to comply with their requirements except at the Lin Ma Hang and Needle Hill Mines.

**200.** The incidence of tuberculosis has already been referred to in connexion with housing. Tuberculosis was recently declared to be a notifiable disease.

**201.** The health of a portion of the population is undermined by indulgence in or addiction to opium or heroin, but the use of dangerous drugs is not particularly common among workers partly on grounds of expense. For various reasons heroin has of recent years tended to supersede the more innocuous opium.

**202.** One prominent British public utility company in addition to providing its workmen with free medical service and accident compensation grants an invaliding gratuity to any employee invalidated after more than five years continuous service and funeral expenses and a compassionate gratuity to the next-of-kin of an employee of over five years service who dies whilst in the service of the company.

The Commercial Press—a Chinese owned and managed company—has both a savings fund and a profit sharing scheme. The latter is suspended as a result of the present hostilities and employees over a certain monthly wage have been subjected to a percentage reduction in wages on account of the war which has caused the company severe losses in Shanghai.

### **Education.**

**203.** Reference has already been made in paragraph 73 to the recommendation by a member of the Commission appointed in 1921 to inquire into the conditions of the industrial employment of children in Hong Kong that elementary Chinese education should be made compulsory. It was presumably intended that such education should be free as the then Director of Education remarked that he did not see how fees could be charged. The Census Report of 1931 shows that in the whole Colony there were 119,008 children of Chinese race of school age which was taken as from five to thirteen years of age—88,481 in Hong Kong and Kowloon, 17,940 in the New Territories, and 12,587 afloat in small craft in the waters of the Colony. Of these children 60,328 were males and 58,680 females. 47.94 per cent. of all persons of Chinese race, aged five and over, claimed to be able to read and write their mother tongue. The percentage of males was 69.73 per cent. and of females 18.03 per cent. There was, however, no standard or test and the census officer felt constrained to enter a caveat against the exaggeration of attainments. The percentage was much higher in Hong Kong and Kowloon than in the New Territories or afloat, illiteracy being almost universal among females of the latter two categories.

**204.** What percentage of literacy the next census will disclose cannot be foreseen, but it may be said generally that Government has made practically no direct provision for primary vernacular education among the Chinese.\*

\* Mr. E. Burney in his Report (1935) on Education in Hong Kong recommended "That the Government should without avoidable delay build model primary schools where most needed in the urban areas and recruit and train the teachers required."

**205.** By the Education Ordinance No. 26 of 1913 "school" is defined as a place where ten or more persons are being or are habitually taught whether in one or more classes. It is unlawful for any person to open, start, manage, teach in, or maintain any school in the Colony unless and until such person shall have applied for and obtained a certificate of registration. Schools are divided into English schools where the medium of instruction is solely or chiefly English, and vernacular schools in which Chinese is the medium. Schools may also be divided into three classes—provided (Government), aided or subsidized (by Government), and non-subsidized.

**206.** Provided schools (with the exception of the Belilios Public School for Girls and the Indian School) take pupils after a four to five years vernacular school course. Fees are charged in all Government schools, but a certain number of free scholarships are allotted.

✓ **207.** Children of the working classes, if their parents cannot afford fees, must generally obtain their education, if at all, at the free subsidized schools in respect of which Government pays fifty per cent. of the rent and the salary of the teachers. There are 161 subsidized schools in Hong Kong and Kowloon with an attendance of 16,000 and 118 in the New Territories with an attendance of 4,400. Of the 161 schools in Hong Kong and Kowloon approximately 130 are free or charge very low fees and are conducted by missionary bodies, charitable institutions like the Confucian Society, and various guilds. The fees of the remaining thirty vary from one to three dollars a month. The age of the pupils is five to fifteen with the majority between five to ten. None of the New Territories subsidized schools is conducted by a charitable institution. The subsidy in their case varies according to their efficiency.

**208.** In Hong Kong and Kowloon there are 693 non-subsidized schools with an attendance of 53,000, and 85 in the New Territories with an attendance of 3,200. All of these, with the exception of an orphanage and a school in the New Territories in which agricultural subjects are taught, are on a fee paying basis.

**209.** Of these non-subsidized schools 50 are night schools, all of which charge fees, except five conducted by Y.W.C.A. The attendance is about two thousand. The pupils are chiefly females such as amahs and factory girls. The work of these schools is not of a high standard and they are conducted by teachers and others as a means of additional income.

**210.** There is an industrial school in Aberdeen conducted by the Salesian fathers, which receives a charitable grant-in-aid from Government, and serves as an industrial school for the purposes of the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Ordinance No. 6 of 1932. It has about three hundred resident pupils of whom some are Government nominees. Juvenile offenders may be sent there by the magistrates if there are vacancies. The St. Louis Industrial School which also receives a charitable grant-in-aid teaches printing and book-binding. A small fee is generally charged. There is no reformatory.

**211.** Technical education is provided at the Junior Technical School conducted by Government, which is a fee paying institution providing a three to four years course for pupils of average age of eleven to fifteen. Students, on the completion of their course, generally become apprentices in local engineering firms such as dockyards. The maximum enrolment in 1937 was 118.

**212.** Government also conducts a Trade School which was opened in 1936 and which provides full time day courses in wireless telegraphy, building and motor car engineering. It is a fee paying school and the age of the pupils is sixteen onwards. The wireless course is of nine months and the building course and the motor car engineering course are of three years. There are less than a hundred pupils.

**213.** Evening schools for apprentices are held at the Taikoo and Kowloon\* Docks and more advanced classes at the Junior Technical School and the Trade School. In the former the fees are paid by the dock companies and teachers are provided by Government.

---

\* Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Co.

**Cases.**

**214.** I have taken statements from twenty individuals chosen at random as representative of various classes of workers

(1) YIU SUN, male, age 30, (found buying cigarettes from stall in Hing Lung Street, Hong Kong, after carrying vegetables).

In Hong Kong one and a half years, came from Kong Moon, Kwangtung Province, to look for work; in Kong Moon was small farmer and gardener; now tea-carrying coolie for Douglas boats; employed by coolie foreman NG PUI who is employed by Tea Guild. Wife in country, no children, married four years, supports mother in country. Lives 10 Chinese Street in cockloft on first floor which he shares with two fellow workers at one dollar each per month. Five families, eighteen adults and six children, on floor.

Employment regular, paid once a week according to number of boxes carried; earns five to six dollars a week. When no tea ships, no tea-carrying, carries vegetables at thirty cents to a dollar a day.

Has two meals a day from street stall at twenty cents a meal. Wears clothes he brought from the country. Can sometimes make two dollars a day. If sick, female cousin, 9 Chinese Street, whose husband also is a coolie, looks after him; if very sick would go to hospital. Wife in Kong Moon weaves at home, can earn very little, mother also weaves. Sends them about ten dollars a month. They spend six to seven dollars and save the balance in case children are born.

Since arrival in Hong Kong never been back to country, wife never been to Hong Kong. Clansman writes for him two or three times a month. Travelling trader on board Kong Moon boat arranges his remittances and pays them in Chinese currency. Expects to go home on visit in a few months at Ching Ming Festival. Better off here than in Kong Moon; does not smoke opium but spends three cents on cigarettes a day (six cigarettes).

Hours of work: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., sometimes works late till 9 p.m.

Average earnings when working \$1.60-\$1.70 a day; Sunday a holiday—walks about the streets.

In the country worships idols, Gods of the Sky; in Hong Kong does not care. Cannot read or write. When no work fellow workers come together and discuss affairs.

Winter clothing—two singlets, two jackets and two trousers (one short); does not wear shoes.

Rises 6 a.m., goes to bed 8 p.m.; 5 p.m.-8 p.m. takes a walk; has a bath at home every two days.

Clansman introduced him to Ng Pui (his immediate employer) half month after arrival in Colony; clansman fed him for that half month. Does not gamble; occasionally drinks five cents wine after hard work.

(2) LAM YEE, female, age 60, (found hawking peanuts in Connaught Road, Hong Kong). In Hong Kong fifteen years, unlicensed hawker, formerly street seamstress but sight failed. Husband died over twenty years ago; after his death came to Hong Kong from Fa Yuen, near Canton, with son, age 23, and daughter. Son emigrated after a year; never hears from him, thinks he has been kidnapped. Daughter married into family in country. No relatives in Hong Kong. Lives in Des Voeux Road West, number unknown. Occupies bedspace, principal tenant has pity on her, no fixed rent, pays an average of about a dollar a month. Cooks her own meals, two meals a day—rice, salt fish, vegetables—cost ten cents a day; eats very little. Clothes she wears ten years old. Has been arrested twice for hawking without licence, fined fifty cents each time, lost her capital. Borrowed fresh capital. No news from daughter in country for over a year; daughter is a widow; daughter's family would not allow her in. Was paid between twenty and thirty

dollars and some pork and cakes when daughter married. When weather bad stays at home—five families in flat, ten adults, five children. When a seamstress made about the same as hawking peanuts—fifteen cents a day. Came to Hong Kong as could not make a living in country; when worked in fields did not get enough to eat. Better off in Hong Kong, seldom sick; life in Hong Kong is wonderful in comparison with the country. No expenses beyond food and rent.

(3) CHENG KWAI YING, female, spinster, age 22, outworker, Fung Keong Rubber Factory, Shauiwan, Hong Kong; lives with brother and sister-in-law at 5 Tai Cheung Street, Sai Wan Ho, rent over four dollars a month. There are four cubicles on the floor, and over twenty persons on the floor. Family occupies one cubicle. Brother has daughter, age three, brother skilled worker in Taikoo Dockyard.

Occupation: stitching uppers together; owns sewing machine for which she paid eighty dollars second-hand. Has made ten dollars deposit with Fung Keong Company; receives sixty to seventy pairs of uppers a day; sister-in-law assists her to certain extent in work; paid according to size and kind. Earns 70 cents to \$1.00 a day; ten pairs require from two and a half to three hours. She herself stitches about fifty pairs a day, works every day.

Four years in Hong Kong, came from Canton where she worked in silk factory but market was poor and it was difficult to get work. Earns more here than in Canton. Brother earns over a dollar a day. Family income in all over fifty dollars a month. Family sends \$10 Cantonese (\$5 Hong Kong) per month to parents in country and elder brother. They are farmers in Shun Tak. Can read a little but cannot write, never been to school. Goes to pictures sometimes, cannot read newspaper. Not member of any union or guild.

(4) PANG SO FONG, female, spinster, age 24, employed at Fung Keong Rubber Factory, Shauiwan, Hong Kong.

Work: Gumming soles and uppers together.

Lives 35 Kam Wah Street, 3rd floor, Shauiwan, with brother and sister-in-law; brother employed in office at Fung Keong at \$150 a month. In Hong Kong since childhood, parents in country. Brought up by brother; was back in country for two years. Can read a little and write very little. Was two years at charity school.

Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-6 p.m., 7 p.m.-8 p.m. Been employed for five years, day's work—forty to fifty pairs at three cents a pair, average earnings over \$1.20 a day; takes a day off after seven or ten days.

Brother's family occupy a whole floor, rent unknown; sometimes gives brother six dollars towards it, sometimes nothing. Younger brother and sister and cousin and brother's daughter, age four, and two servants, cook and amah, also reside there. Brother sends money home to parents in country. Spends ten dollars per month on herself—amusements and cosmetics; goes to pictures once or twice a week. Not engaged to be married but saves a little against marriage. Has been trained as first-aid nurse in factory by St. John Ambulance; when she acts as such, receives one dollar a day.

(5) WONG TAI, female, married woman, aged 36, (found carrying sand in Cheung Sha Wan Road, Shamshuipo, Kowloon), husband mason; they occupy half a cockloft, ground floor of Tai Nan Street, Shamshuipo, number unknown, rent \$2.20 per month, no children; two children dead.

Carries sand daily for building contractor at forty cents a day, paid twice a month.

Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5.30 p.m.; husband employed on odd jobs 70-80 cents a day when working. She eats on the street while at work, sometimes sends \$2-\$3 home to brother in country. In Hong Kong eight to nine years; came from Wai Chau, Kwangtung Province, as could not find work in country. Not member of any guild or union.

(6) SO FUK CHOI, female, spinster; age 17, employed Lo Kwok Po weaving factory, 43 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Shamshuipo, Kowloon, (unregistered), lives 170 Nan Chang Street, 2nd floor, Shamshuipo, with elder sworn sister (*i.e.* friend) age 22 years, who does similar work in another factory; parents in Shatin, New Territories, working as farmers; came to Sha Tin seven or eight years ago; born and educated at Shiu Hing, near Canton, and can read and write; employed here for two years, working hand weaving machine; piecework, twenty to thirty cents a day.

Hours: 7 a.m.-10 a.m., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., 6 p.m.-8 p.m., can occasionally have a holiday on private affairs, no pay, generally works seven days a week.

Shares a bedspace with sworn sister, formerly \$2.30, now \$2.40 a month; they buy and cook their own food. Food costs \$4-\$5 each per month. Sometimes buys clothes, sometimes receives them from mother who assists with one to two dollars a month. Never goes to pictures; sometimes saves a little—to buy clothes. Paid twice a month. Has to pay for kerosene lamp in house. Not member of any union or guild.

(7) CHENG YAU LIN, female, married woman, age 31, employed at Wah Nam Battery Company, Pine Street, Taikoktsui, Kowloon.

Husband, unemployed seaman, three years unemployed, works occasionally, ten to fifteen days a month, as ship's painter and earns about ten dollars per month.

Three children, husband looks after children while wife works; while husband is also working eldest child, boy, age eleven, looks after the others and cooks the food.

Lives in cubicle at 128 Yee Kuk Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon, for which they pay \$3.60 per month.

Came to Hong Kong four years ago from Toi Shan, Kwangtung Province, as ship on which husband was employed frequently called at Hong Kong.

Work: Wrapping paper round manganese batteries (electric torch) and carbon sticks.

Wages: 21 cents a day. Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m., 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; works every day.

Cannot read or write. Is not a member of any union or guild.

(8) CHEUNG SIU, female, spinster, age 19, employed at Leung Wing Shing Joss Stick Company, 896 Kremer Street, Taikoktsui, Kowloon.

Came from San Wui, Kwangtung Province, four years ago to look for work; lives with elder sister in Ash Street, Taikoktsui, number unknown—shares cubicle and pays one dollar per month rent.

Employed four years in joss stick factory, piecework.

Wages:  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents per thousand joss sticks rolled; earns about 30 cents a day.

Hours: 7 a.m.-8 p.m. with intervals of about forty minutes off at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Is not a member of any guild.

(9) YAM SIU YING, female, spinster, aged 25, Moonlight Torch Factory, 11-27 Yen Chau Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon.

Works machines (various) that stamp out parts of electric torch cases; in present employment two years.

Wages: 25 cents a day, paid fortnightly.

Hours: 6.45 a.m.-11.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m.-5.45 p.m., occasionally works late till 8 p.m. with extra day's pay in three. Works every day of the week.

Lives in Pei Ho Street, Shamshuipo, number unknown, with mother, who works in knitting factory; shares bedspace with mother. Rent for the two women, two dollars a month.

Three years in Hong Kong; came from Canton, where she worked in a similar factory at 35 cents Cantonese a day, until factory closed.

Mother and she have just sufficient income to live on. Does not remit any money to country. Cannot read or write. Is not a member of any guild or union.

(10) LEI PIU, male, aged 48, fisherman (found on water front at Aberdeen, Hong Kong).

At present unemployed, living with friend in Aberdeen; born in Macao, four years in Hong Kong since master's boat was dismantled at Aberdeen, now generally on junk fishing in Chinese waters, away from Aberdeen three days to a month at a time.

Wages: \$18.00 per month and food together with certain perquisites in respect of small fish worth three to five dollars a month. When in regular employment used to be paid six months' wages in advance.

Wife dead, two sons now at work, one daughter married in Macao. Normally spends on an average about twenty days a month afloat; when employed sleeps on board. Wife when alive stayed in Macao. Junk carries over twenty persons including women and children—these consist of wife and children of owner and some fishermen's wives who do cooking.

(11) LAU SAU, male, aged 57, ricksha coolie (found plying for hire in Connaught Road, Hong Kong).

In Hong Kong four years, from Swatow, Chiu Yeung District, Kwangtung Province, where he was farmer; was never a ricksha coolie till he came to Hong Kong; no work in country. Wife died last year in country. One son aged 27, farming in country (Chiu Yeung District).

Lives 100 Second Street 3rd floor—coolie lodging house, thirteen coolies divide rent of floor, \$17.00, between them.

Hires ricksha from owner (licensee) at twenty cents a day, other coolie hires it at twenty eight cents a night.

Total earnings 70 cents to \$1.00 a day out of which he pays for hire of ricksha and repairs.

Hours of plying for hire: 5 a.m.-3.30 p.m., night coolie then takes over ricksha.

Four meals a day: At home before starting out, cost fifteen cents; in street at 8 a.m., ten cents; in street at 12 noon, ten cent; 5 p.m., at home, 15 cents. Meals at home cooked by himself on charcoal fire.

As it is wet, wearing oilskin coat; material and tailoring cost \$1.70. No expenses beyond food, clothing and rent. Sends five to six dollars home each month to son in country. Son does not earn enough. He is too poor to marry.

Is better off in Hong Kong than in Swatow. Cannot read or write. Not a member of any union. When he came to Hong Kong looking for work clansman introduced him to ricksha owner.

(12) CHING YUK, male 31, salesman, Men's Department, Wing On Department Stores, Des Vœux Road Central, Hong Kong.



Wages \$30.00 per month, free food and quarters on premises. Free laundry, shaving and hair-cutting. Employed by Wing On Company for fifteen years. Came from Chung Shan, Kwangtung Province, educated at Chung Shan, can read and write Chinese and a little English. Not married. Sends no remittance home. Spends nearly all income on clothes and entertaining friends; dresses in European fashion.

Hours of work: 9 a.m.-8 p.m. with half an hour off for lunch 11.45 a.m.-12.15 p.m.; 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Sundays. Holidays when store is closed—on Chinese festivals and public holidays.

Three meals a day but morning meal is only congee. If ill, leave without pay. Company provides doctor, and maintenance expenses in hospital; pays himself for medicine dispensed.

Not member of any union.

(13) FUNG SHU PING, male, 24, of Chekiang Province, employed in hand press sub-department, Banknote Department, Chung Hwa Book Company, Pak Tai Street, Mataukok, Kowloon.

Employed by Chung Hwa Book Company in Shanghai, about nine years in photographic department. After hostilities Shanghai works closed, came to Hong Kong October, 1938, on written contract, time indefinite, entitling him to two months' wages and twenty dollars fare to Shanghai in event of determination of contract.

Wages: \$15.00 per month, free food (\$7.50 rice money), free lodging and light in quarters provided by company, Sung Wong Toi Road, free medical treatment at factory by Chinese doctor qualified in Hong Kong University. If seriously ill sent to Government hospital, employers paying fifty cents per day. Full wages continue during illness for two months, thereafter half wages. If permanently unfit will be sent back to Shanghai. Earns also bonus on production.

Hours: 7.30 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5.30 p.m. Works occasionally on Sundays. Nine men to one press, standard day's work nine hundred sheets; bonus one cent per sheet additional divided between the nine men; for sheet spoiled fined five cents divided likewise. Can print seventeen hundred sheets per day with certain number spoiled. Share of bonus last month \$11.26.

Not married. Expenses chiefly on clothing; remits \$10 Hong Kong to Shanghai monthly. Can read and write Chinese and speak and write a little English. Educated at Provincial Government School at Chekiang as day boy, fees about \$40 per half year. In Shanghai earned about \$70 (Shanghai) before the war. Member of the Chung Hwa Branch of the Hong Kong Printers Union. Was not a member of any union in Shanghai.

(14) LAM SANG, male, aged 34, joiner, Taikoo Dockyard:

Employed there for last nine years. Married, one son four years, residing 61 Main Street, Saiwanho, 1st floor. Principal tenant of floor, rent \$14.50 (formerly \$11.00), retains for self one cubicle and sitting room, has two subtenants at four dollars each. Born San Wui, Kwangtung Province. Came to Hong Kong, aged 16, with a clansman as was poor in country. Apprentice for three years in furniture shop, Wanchai, Hong Kong, no pay, free board and lodging; then nine dollars per month with free lodging but not free food. After two months left shop to look for odd jobs as pay was too low. After several years obtained work at Taikoo, at first under contractor; three years ago joined permanent staff. Time work, \$1.26 a day—both under contractor and directly employed.

Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sunday work—time and half; overtime—time and half.

If ill, leave but no pay.

Wages amount to about forty five dollars a month, paid monthly. Wife does no work except house work—no servants. Not member of any union or guild. Food for family about eighteen dollars per month. Remits seven to ten dollars per month to mother in country. Can read and write Chinese: learned in country when boy. No savings.

(15) CHAN PUI, male, 48 years, plater, Taikoo Dockyard :

Married: two sons, four daughters eldest aged 22, 48 Saiwanho Street ground floor. Principal tenant paying \$11.50 per month, four sub-tenants from whom he collects from \$8 to \$9, retains one cubicle and bedspace, no servants. Two daughters work at Fung Keong Rubber Factory, earning thirty to sixty cents a day each which they hand over to him; he provides them with house, food and clothing.

Came to Hong Kong, aged 29, from Toi Shan, Kwangtung Province, as no work in country, learned trade for three years at Bailey's Shipyard at forty cents a day—then in Kowloon Docks from two to three years—fifteen years at Taikoo Dock, employed through a contractor, time work.

Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Wages \$1.50 a day. Overtime—time and half, Sundays—time and half.

Sent remittance to country monthly when mother was alive. Can read and write Chinese. Not member of any union. Eldest son, aged fourteen, goes to private school—fees thirteen dollars a year. Only eldest girl went to school. Food for family forty dollars per month.

(16) CHAN YIN, male, 60, coolie in coppersmiths shop, Taikoo Dockyard :

About thirty years in Hong Kong, came from Ching Yuen, Kwangtung Province, to look for work. Formerly employed as ship's painter, Taikoo Dock, but work too hard and dangerous, so became coolie. Employed as such for last seventeen years, wife dead. Resides with son, aged 17 years, apprentice in machine shop at fifteen cents a day, in Dockyard Quarters paying \$1.50 per month for one bunk. Son resided with wife in country until three years ago.

Wages: 9 cents an hour—81 cents a day.

Hours: 7 a.m.-12 noon, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Overtime and Sunday work—time and half.

Can read and write a little. Son can read and write as he went to school in country. Son now studying English at night school. When a painter was member of painters' guild. Was not skilled worker. Food for self and son \$17 per month. Used to remit money to parents when alive. Saves four to five dollars per month which he spends on relatives who borrow but never repay.

(17) WONG SIK PO, male, 26, foki of Sheung Chit Fat rice and oil shop, 158 Tam Kung Road, Kowloon City.

Came from Chiu Chow, Kwangtung Province this month as no work in country owing to war. Left wife and daughter, aged two, in Chiu Chow. Master of shop, also from Chiu Chow, pays him six dollars a month, free food; sleeps on premises.

Hours: 7 a.m.-9 p.m. with half hour off for meals at 8 a.m., 12 noon, and 7 p.m.

Can read and write a little. Not member of any guild or union. Remits four dollars per month home.

(18) LEUNG SAM, female, 40, (found shovelling sand at house being erected along Customs Pass Road, eight miles beyond Kowloon City).

Widow, came from Hoi Ping nine months ago to make living in Hong Kong leaving son aged 13 and daughter aged 15 with mother-in-law in country. When in

Hong Kong lives with sister-in-law, whose husband is a seaman, at 18 ..... Street, name unknown, near temple, Kowloon City; pays no rent. Was small farmer in country. Has been on present job four to five months, lives in wooden shed beside work.

Wages: Thirty cents a day.

Hours: 7 a.m.-1 p.m., 2 p.m.-5.30 p.m. Feeds herself at cost about three dollars a month, goes to Kowloon twice a month for rice. Remits four to five dollars per month to mother-in-law in country.

(19) TANG HO, female, aged 32, (found turning over earth under water before rice planting between Castle Peak and Un Long).

Married as "tin fong" or second wife (first wife being dead) to farmer, Lam Tei Village, married four years, one daughter; was born near Castle Peak, New Territories. Has three step sons, all married, and two step daughters; a third step daughter is dead. Family lives together in four village houses which it owns. They own three fields, two bullocks, chickens, vegetables. Supporting themselves on rice of their own growing and sale of surplus crop. Have no pigs this year. Only purchases salt fish, fresh fish, some vegetables and pork. Wearing clothes she possessed at time of marriage. The wives of the three sons also work in the fields—they have three children. No servants. Cooking done by step daughter, aged 12. Last year two harvests. Cannot read or write. Never been ill. Two meals a day—rice, and congee at midday.

(20) NG WAI, female, aged 34, domestic servant employed by Wong family at 6 Queen Victoria Street third floor, Hong Kong.

Master and mistress, no children, occupy one cubicle; is only servant and sleeps in camp bed outside cubicle.

Does cooking and washing, etc. Wages—\$2 per month.

Born in Canton; came to Hong Kong last year as refugee. Widow, no children.

Rises at 6 a.m., goes to bed 9-10 p.m. Feeds at employer's table; three meals a day supplied. Cannot read or write.

### ✓ Summary and Recommendations.

**215.** It is not proposed to collate these cases but to allow them to speak for themselves. It is interesting, however, to note that of the twenty workers chosen at random only one, the New Territories farmer, is a native of Hong Kong. The Colony was described in an earlier paragraph as geographically but not politically a part of China. Many of the inhabitants ignore this distinction and that is the root trouble in respect of Hong Kong trade unions. As many cases show, the interests and loyalties which bind the workers to China are strong. However low the wages and long the hours, they are, even with a higher cost of living, better off in Hong Kong than they were in China, and many are able to remit money home to China monthly. Most of them look to China as their home. When I called at Chung Hwa Factory shortly after the strike and lockout referred to in a previous paragraph I found all parties united for the time in the despatch of a joint telegram to Chiang Kai Shek advocating the expulsion of Wang Ching Wei from the Kuomintang.

**216.** Admittedly, those concerned had recently come from Shanghai but the attitude of the Cantonese is much the same. War, or civil war, or disturbance of any kind in China, drives a certain number to Hong Kong. Some may return when the trouble is over, others remain at least for a time to seek a livelihood. The population at the present time is unnaturally swollen with refugees and embusqués. It is impossible to say how many of these will endeavour to make a permanent home in the Colony and how many businesses transferred from Shanghai and elsewhere will take root. That depends on the future of China, but it is impossible to build the future of the Colony on such a fluid and unstable foundation. Some of that quarter or half million are rentiers but the majority is without substance and there is not

employment for many. They cannot all hawk in the streets. Some who can scarcely be described as criminals swell the population of the overcrowded gaols where they find a comparative degree of security and comfort. The official refugee camps contain a few thousands. These will no doubt return home as occasion offers. It is the unofficial refugees who are the problem. When things return to normal the question of restricting the population of the Colony to those who are economically capable of maintaining themselves on a fair standard of living or whose birth or years of work have given them a claim on the Colony will require consideration. But so long as conditions in the Colony are better than in the neighbouring provinces of China there are bound to be many who will endeavour to come to Hong Kong. If one may say so, the Colony in respect of population has already reached saturation point. The solution of the problem depends fundamentally on the development and prosperity of China.

**217.** The Colony could be made considerably more self supporting than it is. The development of the fishing industry and agriculture should help in this connexion. Market gardening has developed in recent years but there is still considerable scope for improvement and expansion. A Committee was appointed in 1934 to consider and advise as to what practical steps could be taken to improve and extend the breeding of pigs and poultry in the New Territories,\* and a report on the possibilities of a co-operative system in Hong Kong was prepared in 1935 by Mr. C. F. Strickland, C.I.E.\*\* Little if anything has been done to develop in the Colony thrift and loan societies, housing societies, and consumers' stores. I was recently approached for information regarding co-operative thrift and loan societies, as developed in Malaya, by the manager of an important public utility company in Hong Kong, which treats its employees excellently, but which finds money-lenders congregated round its gates on pay days. There appears to be considerable room for development in this connexion.

**218.** The present housing congestion in the Colony has already been referred to. Housing that is adequate for a million, and Hong Kong housing is not, is inadequate for a million and a quarter or a million and a half. The problem of housing is difficult as the population is not static and the flow of immigration may as at present be hundreds of thousands. So long as ownership of property is regarded as primarily a profit making concern, if not a speculation, it is inevitable that landlords in times of housing shortage should attempt to recoup themselves for their losses or diminished profits during periods of depression when a certain proportion of the population returns to China.

✓ **219.** It must always be remembered that in dealing with labour in Hong Kong one is dealing not with workers segregated in cantonments but with the urban population itself, and legislation must regard them as citizens in the first instance. Those who live in coolie lines are a very small proportion of the total labouring classes. The existing legislation controlling such lines is confined to the New Territories. Admittedly, the existing mines are all situated in the New Territories, but road and catchment work and building generally are not confined thereto, and it is recommended that similar provisions should be extended to the remainder of the Colony and an endeavour made to secure uniformity in the application of the regulations.

✓ **220.** As has been pointed out, in matters of medical treatment workers are treated not as a separate class but as individual citizens whose health as such is the concern of government. The Nutrition Research Committee already referred to is investigating the question of nutrition in the Colony including the application of dietetics to the social problems of the Colony. Benefits derived from the investigations of the Committee will be for the community in general.

**221.** The recommendation for the development of primary vernacular education has already been referred to.

✓ **222.** The absence of any but crude statistics regarding cost of living and wages has already been commented on. Such information is essential before any adequate standard of living can be assessed, established, and maintained. It is understood that

---

\* Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1934.

\*\* Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1935.

an officer, during his leave of absence in England, is at present studying the application of statistics to various problems, but it is not only necessary to know how to deal with data, the data must first be collected and the existing statistical office confines its activities to wholesale prices which have only a general relevance to the fluctuations in the actual cost of living. The question calls for further examination. The Professor of Economics and Political Science at the Hong Kong University whose assistant is at present preparing a cost of living index has kindly offered me the assistance of his department in the conduct of any surveys that may be considered necessary.

**223.** The total number of workers in the registered factories and workshops represents only a fraction of the total working population. For the purposes of the Factories and Workshops Ordinance, 1937, "factory" means any premises or place wherein or within the close or curtilage or precincts of which any machinery other than machinery worked entirely by hand is used in aid of any industrial undertaking carried on in such premises or place, and "workshop" means any premises or place other than a factory wherein or within the close or curtilage or precincts of which any manual labour is exercised by way of trade or for purposes of gain in or incidental to making any article or part of any article, or altering, repairing, ornamenting or finishing or adapting for sale any article, provided that at least 20 persons are employed in manual labour in the said premises or in the close, curtilage and precincts thereof. Legislation as to hours and conditions of labour, however, is largely restricted to this fraction together with the unknown portion which is engaged in other industrial undertakings which are not registered.

**224.** The Factories and Workshops Ordinance, 1937, is a kind of omnibus ordinance lumping together various disparate matters from the age under which children shall not be employed in industrial undertakings to the provision of fire escapes in tenement factories and the notification of accidents. As it stands, the Ordinance creates a diarchy consisting of the Urban Council and the Protector of Labour who is the Chairman of the Urban Council, but may be any person appointed by the Governor to be Protector of Labour for the purposes of the Ordinance. The Urban Council is empowered to make by-laws defining the duties and powers of the Protector while the Protector is empowered generally to overrule the by-laws and recommendations of the Urban Council. As certain of these by-laws, as has been pointed out, represent the terms of International Labour Conventions to which the Colony has subscribed the possibility of their modification or suspension is unsatisfactory.

**225.** The Ordinance is defective in certain other respects. The power to make by-laws preventing accidents is confined to factories and workshops, and industrial undertakings such as mines are excluded. The by-laws regarding the employment of women, young persons, and children, are confined to industrial undertakings and dangerous trades and have no reference to agricultural operations or domestic service. Thus we find the anomalous position of the Urban Council of Hong Kong purporting to prohibit the employment of females on underground work in mines in the New Territories which its inspectorate is inadequate to supervise and ignoring the employment of children at night as pages and bell boys and girls in hotels within a hundred yards of its council chamber.

**226.** Under the Ordinance the existing powers of the Council (and no additional powers have been taken or by-laws passed since the Ordinance was enacted) appear restricted in some directions and excessive in others. It is submitted that the Ordinance should be repealed and the provisions dealing with sanitary, hygienic, and structural conditions in factories incorporated in the Public Health (Sanitation) Ordinance No. 15 of 1935 already referred to. That Ordinance is already administered by the Urban Council. The Chairman of the Urban Council as Chairman of the proposed Town Planning Committee would control the design and siting of factories. It is submitted that the control of conditions of labour in factories is more properly part of the functions of the Labour Office, and that the relevant legislation, with any necessary amendments and additions, should be collected in a Labour Ordinance.

**227.** Matters connected with the proper fencing of machinery in factories with a view to protection against accidents and the notification of accidents, etc., should also belong to the Labour Office which presumably will be in control of workmen's

compensation. Legislation for workmen's compensation is at present under consideration. In this connexion it is strongly urged that the precedent of the Straits Settlements and Ceylon should be followed rather than that of the East and West Africa Model Ordinance in that conditions in the Colony require that the Ordinance should be administered by an executive officer instead of the injured workman or his dependants left to pursue their rights by the slow and costly process of litigation. A scheme of workmen's compensation however easy to administer in respect of the better conducted industrial undertakings presents many difficulties in respect of small under-capitalized factories.

✓ **228.** As was pointed out in the chapter on social legislation in Hong Kong, the present so-called Inspectorate of Labour, Factories and Workshops originated as an Inspectorate of Juvenile Labour and consisted originally of one male and one female inspector. The activities of the Inspectorate of two officers are now practically confined to the registered factories and workshops which number nearly nine hundred. It is submitted that this Inspectorate should form the nucleus of a Labour Inspectorate whose sphere would be the conditions of labour generally in the ✓ Colony. It is suggested that the Chinese Mines Inspector whose appointment is recommended by Mr. Kershaw should be incorporated in this Inspectorate. It would appear desirable to employ Chinese female inspectors of labour as in the supervision of "mui-tsai" where Chinese lady inspectors have proved eminently ✓ successful in investigating the status of what is after all merely a section of female workers. No one knows the conditions of outworkers in this Colony as no one has investigated. The Labour Inspectorate should take the conditions of all labour in the Colony as its province.

**229.** In the matter of legislation generally it is understood that the Peace Preservation Ordinance, the regulations made under the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, and certain other restrictive legislation are to be scrutinized with a view to incorporating in the general legislation of the Colony any provisions deemed necessary and employing thereafter the Emergency Regulations Ordinance only to make regulations necessary in an emergency which should be repealed when the state of emergency is over. There is at present in service a battery of heavy legal artillery, mostly obsolete. Even the Employers and Servants Ordinance requires scrutiny as to its adequacy in existing circumstances.

✓ **230.** Great advances in respect of the betterment of working conditions in the Colony have been made in the last fifteen years. The regulation of the age of admission of children to industrial employment has eliminated most of the evils of the apprentice system, and it is submitted that the proper organization of trade unions will eliminate the evils of the contract system and give workers a sense of security, the absence of which is one of their main grievances. I have, under the direction of the Honourable Attorney General, drafted a Trade Union Bill, based on the law of England, to define the status and powers of trade unions and to provide for their registration. The Bill is intended to bring the position of trade unions in ✓ Hong Kong into alignment with that of English trade unions. Registration is not made compulsory, but a union applying for registration must satisfy the Registrar (the Labour Officer) that its objects and constitution are similar to those of registered trade unions in England.

**231.** Clause 28 of the Bill repeals section 37 of the Offences against the Person Ordinance No. 2 of 1865 quoted in paragraph 102 above, makes a consequential amendment in the second schedule to the Peace Preservation Ordinance No. 10 of 1886 by the deletion of the figures 37 in the third line thereof, and repeals the Boycott Prevention Ordinance No. 41 of 1912.

✓ **232.** One result of the abolition of the registration of societies which followed the passing of the Societies Ordinance in 1920 was that genuine trade unions of workmen lost the status afforded by official recognition or exemption and became ✓ merely not unlawful societies. It is hoped that voluntary registration will give genuine trade unions a certain amount of "face" and inculcate a certain degree of responsibility. One of the greatest needs is the development and encouragement of honest and competent leaders whose aim is the improvement of the working and living conditions of the workers rather than participation in Chinese politics and their own aggrandizement. They should be responsible representatives of the workers capable of negotiating on their behalf.

✓ **233.** The failure ever to make use of Minimum Wage Ordinance No. 28 of 1932 has been noted. It is submitted that the root cause of this lies in the terms and scope of the Ordinance itself. Any inquiry under the Ordinance is to be conducted by a board of commissioners consisting of five persons of whom one shall be a judge or magistrate who shall be chairman of the board. No provision is made for an inspectorate, with the right to require employers to supply information regarding the wages paid to employees, to see that any minimum wage is adhered to. The Ordinance is merely a legislative gesture.

**234.** The report of the Royal Commission on Labour in 1894 analyzed the difficulties in the weakly organized trades and pointed out that peaceable relations are the result of strong and firmly established trade unionism, and that trade unionism in a weak and struggling condition rather tends to increase the number and bitterness of industrial conflicts. "The most quarrelsome period of a trade's existence is when it is just emerging from the patriarchal condition in which each employer governs his establishment and deals with his own men with no outside interference, but has not yet fully entered into that other condition in which transactions take place between strong associations fully recognizing each other."\*

**235.** Such is largely the condition in Hong Kong and it is submitted that what is most urgently required is power to appoint trade boards, rather than commissions ✓ to deal merely with a minimum wage. { The trade boards should have the power and duty of fixing minimum wages, determining normal working hours, which in some cases are grossly excessive in this Colony, and fixing overtime rates in trades where the wage standards are low and where organization of employers and workers is ineffectual. The persistence of the truck system and the grant in many cases of free quarters and sometimes food as part of a worker's emoluments make the fixing of a minimum wage frequently difficult. The trade boards might consist of representatives of workers and employers of a particular trade in equal numbers, say two or three each, to whom might be added a labour leader from a better organized trade, and a representative of employers, and the board might function under the chairmanship of the Labour Officer }

**236.** The Printers' Union have recently conducted a survey of most of the printing and newspaper establishments in the Colony and submitted data in considerable detail regarding hours and wages. In the existing state of the law it is difficult to see what can be done to assist them as there is no power to control hours in respect of adult males and the length of hours of work is their chief grievance. Even a better organized union than the printers would in existing conditions in Hong Kong find it difficult to enforce its demands in respect of any establishments where conditions are notoriously bad as a number of printers is unemployed and there is always surplus labour ready to accept low terms on the principle that a little is better than nothing. The establishment of trade boards would go far to assist the conciliation machinery of the Labour Office.

**237.** During the last five months I have visited and investigated the conditions of work in the four mines and the larger industrial undertakings and in many of the smaller ones. Conditions vary greatly both as to wages and hours. It is in the small factories competing with cheap labour in China and Japan that conditions are worst. Such competition is fierce and the local manufacturers of bulbs for electric torches and of thermos flasks have recently been eliminated.

**238.** It is such competition in countries which have no social legislation, or if they have it do not apply it, which has been used as an argument against improvement of conditions in Hong Kong. There is much, however, that can be done without necessarily destroying trade as the experience of the last fifteen years shows.

✓ **239.** It has been considered necessary to refer in this report to housing, education and health: progress is being made in all these matters but their administration is outside the scope of the Labour Office as is also the question of the revision where necessary of existing restrictive legislation. The necessity of developing a proper statistical department has also been stressed.

---

\* Quoted from "A Report prepared by the Members of the Commission on Industrial Relations in Great Britain" appointed by President Roosevelt.

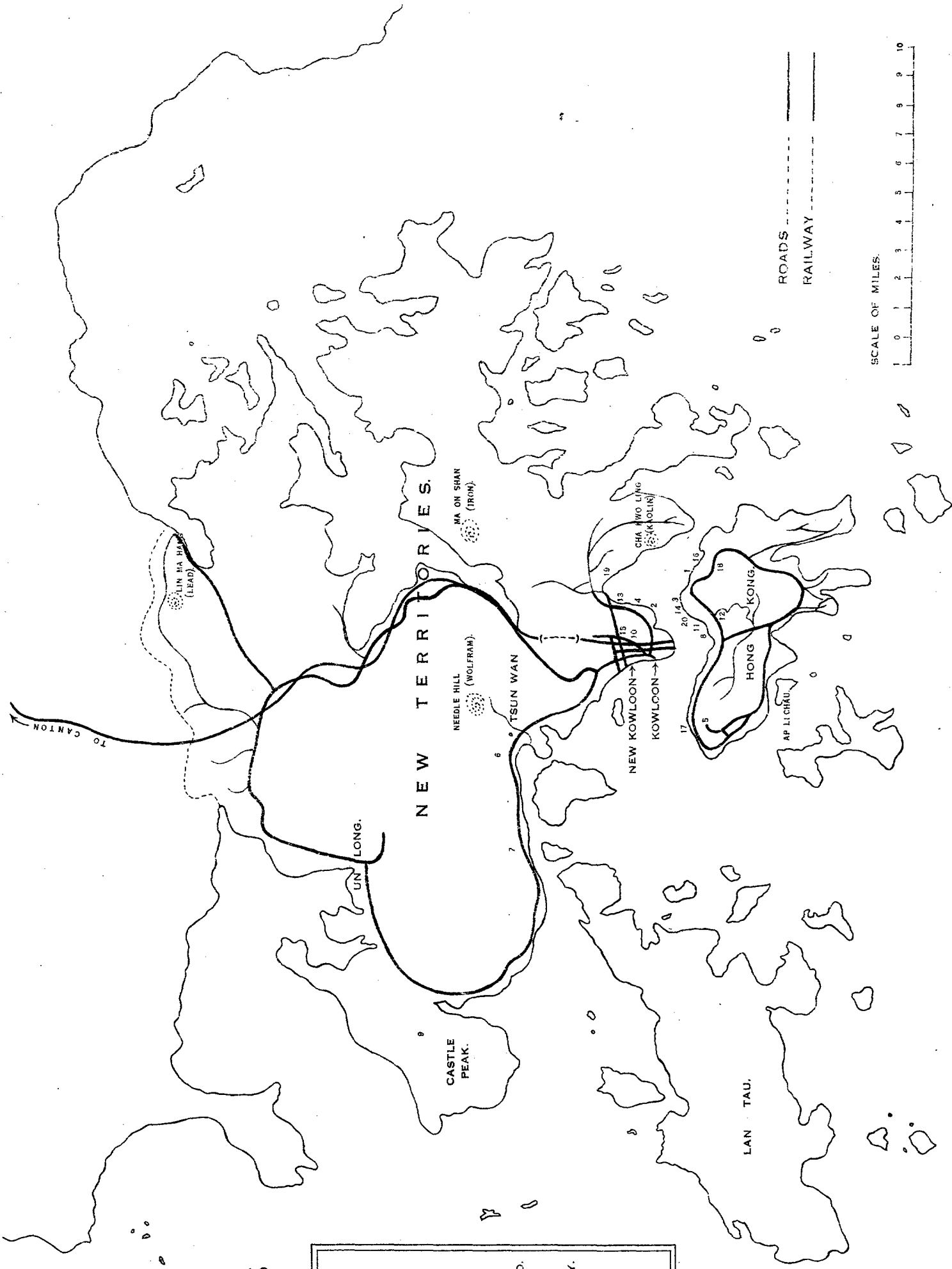
240. The recommendations in connexion with the Labour Office are shortly—

- (a) a Trade Union Ordinance,
- (b) a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance,
- (c) a Trade Boards Ordinance, in place of the existing Minimum Wage Ordinance,
- (d) an Ordinance (in place of the Factories and Workshops Ordinance) dealing with Labour Conditions generally and providing for a Labour Inspectorate which will consist of both European and Chinese Inspectors and Lady Inspectors.

241. A copy of the "Report prepared by the Members of the Commission on Industrial Relations in Great Britain" appointed by President Roosevelt was made available through the courtesy of the American Consul General in Hong Kong. I am indebted to the Director of the China Branch of the International Labour Office for information regarding the ratification of International Labour Conventions by China, and for a copy of "Chinese Labour Conditions in 1937" (in Chinese), and to Dr. Y. L. Lee for a copy of his report "Some Aspects of the Labour Situation in Canton". The managers of the industrial undertakings visited have been most kind in supplying information regarding wages, hours, and conditions of work generally, and several Government officers have generously assisted me with information on their particular subjects. The Inspector of Factories has acted as my guide and most of the details of wage rates have been supplied by him.

H. R. BUTTERS,  
11th April, 1939.





- |     |                            |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 1.  | TAIKOO DOCKYARD.           |
| 2.  | KOWLOON DOCK.              |
| 3.  | TAIKOO SUGAR REFINERY.     |
| 4.  | GREEN ISLAND CEMENT CO.    |
| 5.  | HONG KONG ROPE WORKS.      |
| 6.  | HUME PIPE.                 |
| 7.  | HONG KONG BREWERY.         |
| 8.  | NAVAL YARD.                |
| 9.  | KEEN SANG BRICK WORKS.     |
| 10. | STEAM LAUNDRY.             |
| 11. | BRITISH TOBACCO CO.        |
| 12. | NANYANG BROS. TOBACCO CO.  |
| 13. | CHUNG HWA BOOK CO.         |
| 14. | COMMERCIAL PRESS.          |
| 15. | MIN NGAI KNITTING FACTORY. |
| 16. | FUNG KEUNG RUBBER CO.      |
| 17. | HONG KONG RUBBER CO.       |
| 18. | CHINA CAN.                 |
| 19. | AMOY CANNING CORP.         |
| 20. | HONG KONG ELECTRIC CO.     |

SCALE OF MILES.

