



## CONTENTS

	Page.
PREFACE .. .. .	(i)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .. .. .	(iv)
INTRODUCTION .. .. .	1
PART I (SIMLA) .. .. .	2
PART II (MADRAS) .. .. .	17
PART III (CALCUTTA) .. .. .	33
PART IV (NAGPUR, VIZAGAPATAM, MURREE, MADURA AND DELHI) .. .. .	54
PART V (SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS) .. .. .	59
APPENDIX .. .. .	62



सत्यमेव जयते

## PREFACE.

The ~~Labour~~ Labour Conference at its meeting in September 1943 recommended the setting up of a machinery to investigate questions of wages and earnings, employment and housing, and social conditions generally, with a view to provide adequate materials on which to plan a policy of social security for labour. In pursuance of that resolution, the Labour Investigation Committee was appointed by the Government of India by Resolution No. L-4012, dated the 12th February 1944 to carry out the investigations. The Committee was instructed to extend its investigations generally to all industrial and semi-industrial labour covered by the Royal Commission on Labour in their Report, with the addition of certain other categories. The Committee was asked by the Government of India to decide in each case the most suitable manner of conducting the enquiry. The Government, however, considered that the method of enquiry should not merely consist of sending out questionnaires to Government agencies and Employers' and Workers' Associations, but should also comprise specific enquiries in individual concerns based on representative sampling.

2. In India, in spite of the quite comprehensive enquiries made by the Royal Commission on Labour and a few Committees appointed by the Provincial Governments, there have remained large lacunae in regard to information on labour conditions in several industries. In particular, broadly speaking, the method of direct enquiry on the spot has not been adopted on a sufficiently wide scale so as to cover the entire industrial structure. Moreover, certain industries, like cotton textiles and coal mining, have received greater attention than others, and even as regards these industries, comprehensive information on an all-India basis has not been available. With a view to making up this deficiency as well as to bringing the available information up to date, the Committee decided that *ad hoc* surveys should be carried out in various industries so as to secure a complete picture of labour conditions prevailing in each. The following industries were selected for the purpose :—

A. *Mining.* (1) Coal. (2) Manganese. (3) Gold. (4) Mica. (5) Iron Ore. (6) Salt.

B. *Plantations.* (7) Tea. (8) Coffee. (9) Rubber.

C. *Factory industry.* (10) Cotton. (11) Jute. (12) Silk. (13) Woollen. (14) Mineral Oil. (15) Dockyard. (16) Engineering. (17) Cement. (18) Matches. (19) Paper. (20) Carpet weaving. (21) Coir matting. (22) Tanneries and Leather Goods Manufacture. (23) Potteries. (24) Printing Presses. (25) Glass. (26) Chemical and Pharmaceutical works. (27) Shellac. (28) Bidi-making, cigar and cigarettes. (29) Mica Splitting. (30) Sugar. (31) Cotton Ginning and Baling. (32) Rice Mills.

D. *Transport.* (33) Transport Services (Travancore and Busses). (34) Non-gazetted Railway Staff.

E. *Other types of labour.* (35) Port Labour. (36) Municipal Labour (37) Central P.W.D. (38) Rickshaw Pullers.

3. The main conception on which the *ad hoc* surveys have been based is that information should be collected on the spot by direct enquiry conducted with the help of the Committee's own staff and that this information should, as far as possible, conform to the sampling methods widely adopted in such work. Owing to great variations in the character of the different industries, however, there could not be a complete uniformity in regard to the methods which had to be adopted to suit the peculiarities of particular industries and centres. For instance, while there are only a few centres and units in certain industries such as potteries, mineral oil, gold, etc., in other industries, such as

textiles, engineering, transport services, plantations, tanneries, bidi-making, etc., a very large number of centres and units in different provinces (and even States) had to be covered. Moreover, some of the industries are modern industries of the large-scale type, wherein factory legislation applies more or less entirely, while others are indigenous handicrafts or small-scale industries, where factory legislation is either inapplicable or partially applicable. Thus, information has not been uniformly available in advance as regards the size, location and ownership of industrial units, such as is necessary before decisions for sampling are taken. Consequently, the technique of representative sampling had to be modified and supplemented so as to obtain whatever information of a reliable character was available. As far as possible, however, in all industries important centres were covered. In each of these centres units were chosen on a sample basis, but it was possible in a few centres to cover all units. The final lists of centres of survey and individual establishments were made out in the light of the impressions gathered during the course of the preliminary tour and in consultation with local authorities. The guiding principle in the selection of centres of survey was to make the survey regionally representative so as to discover differences in the conditions of labour in the same industry in different parts of the country. The selection of individual concerns was generally based on considerations in order of importance of, (a) size, (b) ownership (private or limited) and (c) whether subject to statutory regulation or not. In this connection, it may be stated that the Committee were greatly handicapped in sampling the units owing to the lack of complete information regarding location and number of units in the selected industries. Unfortunately there are no all-India employers' organisations in some of the organised industries, nor are the statistics maintained by the Central and Provincial Governments at all complete. Moreover, in certain unorganised industries, such as shellac, carpet-weaving, bidi-making, etc., owing to their very nature, no such information could have been readily available in advance. In certain cases, therefore, owing to these difficulties as well as transport difficulties and other exigencies, the sampling could not be fully adhered to. Nevertheless, the Committee have been anxious to gather in the maximum possible information in the limited time at their disposal and with a view to this they have cast their net as wide as possible. The main instruments of the *ad hoc* survey were the Questionnaires. These were of two kinds :—(a) the main *ad hoc* survey questionnaire on points likely to be common to all industries surveyed, and (b) supplementary and special questionnaires in respect of certain industries, such as plantations, mines, railways, rickshaw pullers, port labour, municipal labour, glass, shellac, mica, etc. The main questionnaire was accompanied by a tabular form for entering wage data and this was used wherever possible. In the case of certain surveys, however, such as salt, paper, cottons, woollen and jute textiles, dockyards, silk, cement and gold mining, it was possible to conduct a wage survey on a sample basis. The chief method of collection of data was by personal investigation of industrial establishments, examination of their records and contact with labour in factories and homes. The information thus collected was supplemented and checked with replies to the Questionnaires received.

4. For the purpose of conducting enquiries, a sufficiently large field staff, consisting of 16 Supervisors and 45 Investigators, was appointed. Before the commencement of field work, all the Supervisors (with the exception of those working in Bengal) were called to the Committee's headquarters at Simla and given detailed instructions on the technique and scope of the enquiries to be conducted by them, the manner in which they were to submit their data, and the centres and units which they were to investigate. In addition, both Supervisors and Investigators were provided with written instructions regarding the

use of questionnaires, sampling of concerns (where this could not be done in advance), filling of the wage forms, etc. In particular, they were asked not only to collect information on the spot but also to draw upon every other possible source of information. In doing so, they were required to distribute copies of the questionnaires in the centres assigned to them not only amongst the sampled units but also amongst Employers' and Workers' associations in the industry and such other associations and individuals as were likely to be interested in the subject. They were also asked to get into touch with officials of Central and Provincial Governments connected with labour and obtain such facilities as might be necessary in doing their work.

5. As far as the field work in Bengal was concerned it was done by the staff of the Committee under the guidance and supervision of the Labour Commissioner, Bengal, and his subordinate officers. Members, however, paid visits to selected centres and units in Bengal to obtain first-hand knowledge of local labour conditions.

6. The Committee's survey covered all Provinces with the exception of the North West Frontier Province where none of the Industries selected for survey was sufficiently important. It extended to many of the Indian States also, such as Kashmir, Patiala, Gwalior, Baroda, Mysore, Sandur, Travancore, Cochin, Bundi, Indore and some of the states of the Eastern States Agency. No survey was undertaken in the Hyderabad State as that State preferred to appoint its own Labour Investigation Committee, with terms of reference identical to those of this Committee, for enquiry into local labour conditions.

7. In dealing with the *ad hoc* survey work, several courses were open to the Committee :—(i) the Committee, as a whole, to study each industry, (ii) the surveys to be distributed region wise and each Member put into charge of a region, and (iii) each Member to be entrusted with a few surveys throughout India. With a view to speedy and efficient work the third course was actually adopted. This departure from the usual procedure of the Committee as a whole dealing with the work was necessary in view of the immensity of the task and the necessity of maintaining an all-India perspective. Moreover, it was felt that this procedure would enable Members to make a specialised study of labour conditions in individual industries in different parts of the country. It was also felt that the peculiar problems of industrial labour had more an industry-wise than a region-wise dispersion and that the procedure would be helpful to future legislation which has to take into consideration the diversified conditions of each industry. It will be seen, however, that in the Reports the factual material has been presented both on an all-India and on a regional basis.

8. Thanks and acknowledgments are due to Provincial Governments, State Authorities, Labour Commissioners (and particularly the Labour Commissioner, Bengal), Directors of Industries, Chief Inspectors of Factories, Port Authorities, local bodies, employers' and workers' associations, managements of the units surveyed and all others who rendered help in the collection of the data presented in these Reports.

D. V. REGE, *Chairman.*

S. D. DESHPANDE	} <i>Members.</i>
AHMAD MUKHTAR	
B. P. ADARKAR	

TEJA SINGH SAHANI,

*Secretary.*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**

Acknowledgments are due to my supervisors—Messrs. J. S. Pooniah, M. Prasad and H. Rahman—and to my Investigators—Messrs. M. A. M. Rao, A. A. Vasudevan, G. K. Kapur, S. N. Ghose and P. Bhattacharjee—for their assistance in the collection of data. To Mr. P. Satgopan, an Assistant in the Labour Department, my thanks are due for having checked the statistical data in this report.



सत्यमेव जयते

## INTRODUCTION

There is no evidence from any published records as to when and where the rickshaw\* was first introduced in India. It is believed that it was imported into Madras by some of the officers of the French East India Company from the East Indies. There is definite evidence of the use of rickshaws in Simla earlier than 1898. The earliest reference to the rickshaw in Calcutta is found in the Corporation report for 1900. During the past few decades, the vehicle has become popular in several other parts of the country.

Among the factors which have contributed to its growing popularity may be mentioned its suitability for certain classes of traffic, especially women and children, its cheapness for short distances, particularly in narrow lanes and streets of thickly-populated cities, the soaring prices of horses and carts and, lastly, the reduction in motor transport on account of petrol rationing. On some hill stations, it has come to enjoy a virtual monopoly of conveyance, because of the turns and twists as well as the ups and downs of roads, and, in certain cases, of municipal restrictions on the alternative means of transport.

Simla, Calcutta and Madras were chosen by the Labour Investigation Committee as representative centres respectively of hill-stations, Northern India and Southern India for an *ad hoc* survey of the social and economic conditions of rickshaw pullers. The information was collected through different agencies. A detailed and comprehensive questionnaire was drawn up and issued to Municipalities, Medical Officers of Health, Rickshaw Pullers' and Rickshaw-owners' organisations and other associations and individuals interested in their welfare in these three centres. Statistical and factual data in regard to earnings, civil condition, indebtedness, housing and other matters were collected by personal enquiries made by Investigators and checked and re-checked by Supervisors and myself. Information about certain other centres—Nagpur, Vizagapatam, Murree, Madura and Delhi—was obtained from the Municipalities concerned. The Director of Industries, Punjab, answered the questionnaire both in respect of Simla and Murree. The Calicut Municipality did not reply.

The report is divided into five parts. Parts I to III deal with the socio-economic conditions of rickshaw pullers at Simla, Madras and Calcutta respectively. Part IV gives in a summary form the condition of rickshaw pullers at Nagpur, Vizagapatam, Murree, Madura and Delhi. Factual conclusions are given in Part V.

---

\*The word 'rickshaw' is an abbreviated colloquial adoption of the Japanese word 'jin-riki-sha' meaning literally a 'man-power-vehicle' (jin=man, riki=power, and sha=vehicle).

## PART I. SIMLA.

### Brief Retrospect.

The rickshaw is virtually the only means of public transport in Simla. 'Jampanis' and 'dandies', which are still found on some hill stations (e.g. Mussoorie), were available in Simla as well, but they have disappeared since the advent of rickshaws. Sir Edward Buck in his 'Simla, Past and Present', writes :—

"..... the *Jampan* with its curtains for protection against sun or rain, not altogether unlike a fourpost bedstead, was carried by four men and was a jolting, back-aching abomination. The *dandi*, a piece of loose footrest, was, if anything, even worse".

The rickshaws were, in the first instance, iron tyred. As early as 1898 the rubber-tyred rickshaws first made their appearance. The Municipality made rubber tyres obligatory in 1904 for the taking out of a license. Several improvements followed in wheels, tyres, upholstery, cushions, etc., and it will be no exaggeration to say that the rickshaw of to-day is, on the whole, a fairly cosy conveyance in Simla.

#### Employment.

Rickshaws are pulled by a team of not less than 4 persons each and are available for hire to the public at sheds, of which 18 were owned by the local municipality in August 1944. There are at present 600 rickshaws in Simla, 450 of these being public vehicles and 150 private ones.

The Municipality does not license the *jampanies*, i.e., rickshaw pullers in private employ. Many of the owners of private rickshaws keep less than 4 *jampanies* so that, in time of need, they draw on outside labour provided by *chawdhris* and others.

The number of rickshaw pullers on the register of the Simla Municipal Board\* in August 1944 was 2,196. The variations in the number of the pullers and the rickshaws from 1926 to 1944 are shown in the table below :—

TABLE I.

Year.							Licensed pullers.	Rickshaws licensed.
1926	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,579	450
1930	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,692	504
1935—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	Figures not available	..
1940	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,131	452
1941	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,357	480
1942	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,289	480
1943	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,152	440
1944	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,196	450
Average during the period 1940—1944 .. .. .							2,203	456

Some *chawdhris* in their evidence complained of shortage of labour as a result of the more remunerative callings that have become available since the outbreak of the present war and explained how steps had been taken to secure more pullers. Old and experienced hands were asked to bring more of their relatives and friends. Some of the *chawdhris* and their agents went to the neighbouring places and attracted labour by advancing loans.

\*Each rickshaw and rickshaw puller in Simla has to be registered under the bye-laws of the Simla Municipal Board.



**Sources of Labour Supply.**—Pullers are drawn from the villages of Simla Hill States, the Kangra district and certain other adjacent areas of the Punjab. The following table gives the places of origin of 2,127 rickshaw pullers licensed during the season of 1944 as compared with the corresponding statistics for 1933\* :—

TABLE II.

Places of origin.				No. licensed in 1933.	Percentage of the grand total	No. licensed in 1944.	Percentage of the grand total.
<i>Simla States :—</i>							
Bilaspur	..	..	..	1,007	37.20	898	42.22
Arki	..	..	..	114	4.21	93	4.37
Nalagarh	..	..	..	35	1.29	33	1.55
Mangal	..	..	..	15	.56	13	.61
Bhagat	..	..	..	..	..	4	.19
Total				1,171	43.26	1,041	48.94
<i>Kangra District and States :—</i>							
District proper	..	..	..	894	33.03	521	24.50
Mandi State	..	..	..	159	5.87	166	7.80
Subet	..	..	..	81	2.69	78	3.67
Total				1,134	41.89	765	35.97
Hoshiarpur District	..	..	..	306	11.30	311	14.62
Ambala District	..	..	..	20	.74	8	.38
Jullundur District	..	..	..	7	.26	..	..
Gashwal (U.P.)	..	..	..	69	2.55	..	..
Patials	..	..	..	..	..	2	.09
Total				402	14.85	321	15.09
GRAND TOTAL				2,707	100.00	2,127	100.0

There is no permanent labour force here. Pullers generally migrate to and from Simla as and when demand for them increases or decreases till, at last, in the months of November and December, a large majority of them return to their villages.

Since the war, however, Simla has had a large permanent population of Government employees, necessitating the stay of a certain percentage of the pullers even during the winter season. Information obtained in this connection showed that this percentage differs from shed to shed but, on the whole, it may be said to range between 10 and 25.

The pullers are mostly agriculturists at home and are drawn to Simla under the stress of economic circumstances. They have to supplement their scanty and precarious income from land by earnings as pullers. My inquiry revealed that, out of 381 sampled persons, only 79 or 20.7† per cent. were free from debt. The urge to pay off debts was, therefore, largely responsible for the movement of pullers to Simla.

**Religion and Caste composition.**—Of the 2,127 licensed pullers in 1944, only 334 (15.7 per cent.) were Muslims and the rest were Hindus. The following table shows their caste composition in 1944 as compared with the corresponding figures for 1933 :—

\*Refer to Publication No. 37 of the Punjab Board of Economic Inquiry (1934) for statistics relating to rickshaw pullers in Simla in 1933 and before.

†For details vide table VII, page 6.

TABLE III.

Caste.	1933		1944	
	Number of rickshaw pullers.	Percentage	Number of rickshaw pullers.	Percentage
<i>Hindus :—</i>				
Rajputs .. .. .	561	23.8	549	30.6
Julahas .. .. .	538	22.8	456	25.4
Brahmins .. .. .	400	16.9	383	21.4
Chamars .. .. .	281	11.9	271	15.1
Kanais .. .. .	277	11.7	40	2.2
Ghoraths .. .. .	141	6.0	55	3.1
Kolis .. .. .	68	2.9	..	..
Lohars .. .. .	27	1.1	8	.05
Chhimbas .. .. .	18	0.8	..	..
Gujars .. .. .	15	0.6	..	..
Kumhars .. .. .	14	0.6	..	..
Jats .. .. .	8	0.3	5	0.3
Dooms .. .. .	7	0.3	4	0.2
Nais .. .. .	6	0.3	4	0.2
Fakirs .. .. .	..	..	11	0.6
Tooris .. .. .	..	..	7	0.4
Total .. .. .	2,361	100.0	1,793	100.0
<i>Muslims :—</i>				
Gujars .. .. .	333	96.2	320	95.9
Pathans .. .. .	8	2.3	..	..
Rajputs .. .. .	3	0.9	6	1.8
Tolis .. .. .	2	0.6	8	2.3
Total .. .. .	346	100.0	334	100.0

These figures indicate that the Hindu Pullers are mostly Rajputs, Julahas, Brahmins and Chamars and that the Muslims are generally Gujars.

*Literacy.*—Excluding age, caste and place of origin for which an almost cent. per cent. sample was taken, the enquiry into indebtedness and different aspects of civil condition was conducted on a random sample of 381 rickshaw pullers, i.e., 17.91 per cent. of the total number licensed. 14 per cent. of the rickshaw pullers turned out to be literate, knowing either Urdu or Hindi, one of them was found to have studied up to the Vernacular Middle standard.

*Conditions of Employment.*—The work of pullers may, at the outset, appear to be easy. In reality, it is not so. The manipulation of movements on hill roads with their ups and downs, and turns and twists, is a rather difficult task, requiring special ability and skill. A team of raw and untrained pullers cannot pull the rickshaw successfully, and more often than not, at least 2 out of 4 pullers are experienced hands. The art of pulling is learnt by practice in a period of two to three weeks.

*Age-Distribution.*—Rickshaw pulling is undoubtedly a strenuous occupation. The fact that about 86 per cent. of the pullers are between 15 to 30 years of age corroborates our statement. The following table gives the frequency distribution, according to age, of 2,127 rickshaw pullers in 1944 :—

TABLE IV.

Age-groups.	Frequencies.	Percentage.
15—20 .. .. .	782	36.76
21—25 .. .. .	678	31.87
26—30 .. .. .	370	17.40
31—35 .. .. .	154	7.24
36—40 .. .. .	88	4.14
41—45 .. .. .	34	1.00
46—50 .. .. .	20	0.94
51 and over .. .. .	1	0.05
Total ..	2,127	100.00

A preceptable decline in the frequencies is noticeable as we go up the scale of age-groups.

*Period of Regular Employment.*—The fact that the work of pullers tells upon their nerves is further illustrated by the following results of an enquiry into the period of regular employment of the 381 sampled pullers :—

TABLE V.

Number of years worked.	Frequencies.	Percentage.
0—5 .. .. .	236	61.94
6—10 .. .. .	65	17.07
11—15 .. .. .	43	11.28
16—20 .. .. .	19	4.99
Over 20 .. .. .	18	4.72
Total ..	381	100.00

According to this enquiry, over 60 per cent. of the pullers are new entrants who have worked only up to 5 years, those who have worked for a period of 15 years and more being only 9.71 per cent.

The relief against this strain on nerves is provided by the seasonal nature of the work and the migratory character of the workers. The rickshaw puller recoups his health and energy to some extent by visiting his home village during winter. Some people stay on even in the season on grounds of health.

#### Marital Condition.

Out of 381 pullers, 227 (59.58 per cent.) were found to be married. The following table gives the number of married pullers in specified age-groups, the remaining being either unmarried or widowers :—

TABLE VI.

Age-group.					Married.
15 to 20 years	..	..	..	..	22
21 to 25 years	..	..	..	..	61
26 to 30 years	..	..	..	..	56
31 to 40 years	..	..	..	..	61
41 and above	..	..	..	..	27
Total					227
Percentage					59.58

## Indebtedness.

Out of 381 pullers interviewed, 302 (or 79.3 per cent.) were in debt to the extent of Rs. 1,45,486. An analysis of this amount of debt according to the causes for which it was incurred is shown in the following table :—

TABLE VII.

Cause.	Mar- riage.	Sick- ness.	Death.	Pur- chase of land and cattle.	Pur- chase of houses.	Litiga- tion.	Misc.	Ances- tral.	Total.
Amount	Rs. 53,298	Rs. 4,140	Rs. 4,770	Rs. 11,550	Rs. 3,290	Rs. 1,830	Rs. 17,703	Rs. 49,135	Rs. 1,45,486
Percentage of amount to total debt	36.6	2.8	3.3	7.9	2.3	1.1	12.2	33.8	100.0
No. of cases of debt incurred on account of	144	12	20	40	12	5	71	95	399
Percentage of cases to total cases	36.1	3.0	5.0	10.0	3.0	1.3	17.8	23.8	100.0
Average amount of debt for each cause	370	345	239	289	274	320	249	517	..

It will be seen that, in the total debt, the element of unproductive debt predominates. Debt incurred on account of marriage and that inherited account for just over 70 per cent. of the total. The average amount of debt incurred for financing marriages works out at Rs. 370. Actually, there were many individual instances of debt between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 1,500 incurred on the occasion of marriages. The average amount of ancestral debt works out at Rs. 517. In some individual cases, ancestral debt amounted to as much as Rs. 2,000. Though debt incurred on account of sickness is a small percentage of the total and relatively few cases of individual indebtedness occur on that account, yet the average amount of debt on this head is fairly high, standing at Rs. 345|- compared with the average of Rs. 370|- for marriages. Altogether, productive debt counts for less than 10 per cent. of the total, assuming that debt incurred for purchase of land, cattle and houses was an act of deliberate investment and not a result of a calamity such as death of cattle or collapse of a house. The above-mentioned 399 cases of debt incurred for various causes relate to 302 individuals, the same individuals in some cases being indebted on account of more than one cause. The average indebtedness per individual works out at Rs. 482.

During the off season, agriculture is the principal occupation and the mainstay of pullers. As a matter of fact, considered as family groups, rickshaw pullers are agriculturists first and pullers afterwards. The state of their indebtedness is, therefore, comparable with that of the agriculturists in general. The following table shows the frequency distribution of indebtedness of 302 pullers who were found to be in debt :-

TABLE VIII.

Amount of debt (in Rs.)	Upto 50	51—100	101—200	201—300	301—500	501— 1,000	1,001— 2,000	Above 2,000
No. of persons	9	34	64	60	64	56	21	4
Total amount (in Rs.)	400	3,160	10,073	17,285	28,588	42,800	32,700	10,700

**Rate of Interest.**—For all debtors, the creditors were invariably the usual moneylenders. There was not a single case of loan taken from a co-operative society. Hence the rate of interest payable was fairly high. The following table shows the number and amount of loans taken at various rates of interest :—

TABLE IX.

No. of loans.	Amount. Rs.	Rate of interest.	Annual in- terest char- ges. Rs.	Per capital interest char- ges. Rs.
130	66,145	12½ %	8,268	63.6
110	52,915	18½ %	9,922	90.2
46	19,076	25 %	4,769	106.9
Total	286	1,38,136	22,959	80.6

Cases not covered by this table pay rates of interest varying between 12½ per cent. and 37 per cent. In some cases, different rates of interest were paid on loans taken by the same individual on different occasions.

#### Hire Rates.

Rates of hire at Simla are laid down by the Municipal Board. The earliest rates for which there is any record are those that prevailed between 1900 and 1918.

TABLE X.  
Hire Rates in 1900—1918.

Time.	Per puller.	Per Rickshaw.
Up to 2 hours	2 annas.	8 annas.
2 to 12 hours	4 annas.	8 annas.
12 to 24 hours	8 annas.	16 annas.

These rates were revised at the instance of *chaudhris* in 1919 and a more elaborate schedule was introduced. The revised schedule was as follows :—

TABLE XI.  
Hire Rates in 1919.

Time.	Per Puller.	Per Rickshaw.
Up to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour .. .. .	2 annas	4 annas.
$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours .. .. .	3 "	8 "
2 to 4 hours .. .. .	4 "	9 "
4 to 6 hours .. .. .	5 "	10 "
6 to 8 hours .. .. .	6 "	11 "
8 to 10 hours .. .. .	7 "	12 "
10 to 12 hours .. .. .	8 "	13 "
12 to 14 hours .. .. .	12 "	16 "

In 1926, the half-hour rate was abolished and a one-hour rate, 2½ annas per puller and 6 annas per rickshaw, was introduced in its place. Since a strike was threatened in August 1929, the Municipality introduced a new scale to ensure fair wages to the pullers and a fair return to the *chawdhris*. The rates fixed in 1929, except for a few occasional changes, have been in force ever since. The following table gives the present rates as compared with the rates in force in 1929 :—

TABLE XII.

Rates in 1929.							Present rates*.									
Time (Hours).	Per puller.		Per Rickshaw.		Rickshaw with four pullers.		Time (Hours).	Per puller.		Per Rickshaw.		Rickshaw with four pullers.				
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.		Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.			
1	0	3	0	0	6	0	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	1
2	0	4	0	0	8	0	1	8	0	0	4	0	0	8	0	2
3	0	4	0	0	8	0	1	8	0	0	5	0	0	8	0	3
4	0	5	0	0	8	0	1	12	0	0	6	0	0	8	0	4
5	0	5	0	0	8	0	1	12	0	0	7	0	0	8	0	5
6	0	6	0	0	10	0	2	2	0	0	7	0	0	10	0	6
7	0	6	0	0	10	0	2	2	0	0	8	0	0	12	0	7
8	0	7	0	0	12	0	2	8	0	0	8	6	0	14	0	8
9	0	7	0	0	12	0	3	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	9
10	0	8	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	10	0	1	0	0	10
11	0	10	0	1	0	0	3	8	0	0	11	0	1	0	0	11
12	0	12	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	12	0	1	0	0	12

#### Earnings of pullers.

The determination of the earnings of rickshaw pullers is an exceedingly difficult task. I made personal enquiries in this respect and met a large number of pullers at every 'stand'. I was followed later by my supervisor and investigators. The pullers were very reluctant to disclose their earnings in the first instance ; for,

\*In addition to the rates given above, an extra charge of Re. 1/- will be levied for employment between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. provided that if the rickshaw is discharged by midnight, the extra charge will be annas eight only.

(a) they feared lest the *chawdhris* should come to know of the same and demand a larger share for themselves,

(b) their earnings are irregular in character, and

(c) they do not keep any account of their earnings or expenses.

Several methods of investigation, both direct and indirect, were therefore attempted to arrive at a reasonably accurate estimate of their earnings. A fair number of them and their employers, the *chawdhris* and the hotel managers, were approached directly in this connection. It appeared from these enquiries that there was some variation in the monthly earnings of pullers from one shed to another and from one hotel to another. Obviously, pullers were more anxious to work at sheds that were more paying.

The following table gives the earnings per month of pullers in two hotels at Simla :—

TABLE XIII.

Month (1944)	First Hotel.			Second Hotel.		
	No. of rickshaws.	Amount earned. Rs.	Per puller. Rs.	No. of rickshaws.	Amount earned. Rs.	Per Puller. Rs.
February	..	..	..	4	359	*
March	..	..	..	5	568	*
April	..	8	710	12	1,348	28
May	..	8	1,207	15	2,261	38
June	..	6	1,239	17	2,424	36
July	..	6	1,233	18	2,997	42

Since a rickshaw is drawn by 4 pullers, the earnings are divided equally among them. The average earning per head, on this basis, are Rs. 36/- per month in the second hotel and Rs. 26/- in the first hotel in the summer months (i.e., excluding February and March). These figures do not include any supplementary earnings from tips and other sources. According to a third hotel, the income of pullers per head was Rs. 30/- in April and Rs. 40/- per month till August.

The account books of a number of *chawdhris* were inspected with a view to finding the earnings of rickshaw pullers in private and municipal sheds (other than the hotel sheds) and these entries also showed that earnings varied between Rs. 30/- and Rs. 40/- exclusive of tips.

Yet another method of ascertaining the income of rickshaw pullers was attempted by calculating their cost of living at Simla and adding to it the amount of remittances usually sent by pullers to their families and relatives and the savings that were deposited with the *chawdhris* or kept with themselves. According to a modest estimate, the cost of living per head of rickshaw pullers at Simla comes to about Rs. 20/- per month. It was further ascertained that the amount of remittances to friends and relatives, payments to moneylenders and savings set aside, on an average, come to about Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per month. This again leads to the conclusion that the monthly income of a rickshaw puller in summer oscillates about Rs. 40.

\*Figures not available.

*Supplementary Earnings.*—The earnings of pullers by way of tips, which are common in Simla, are estimated at Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per month. In their leisure hours, pullers also undertake odd jobs, say, those of porters and draw an extra income therefrom. From enquiries, it transpires that they earn Rs. 2/- on an average per month as porters.

*Seasonal Variations.*—The income of rickshaw pullers generally varies from season to season. The lowest earnings are generally in winter when there is very little work in normal years. Since the war, however, rickshaw pullers have been earning sufficient income even in winter, because several government offices have been permanently stationed at Simla. The peak months, according to my enquiries, are June to August.

#### Working Hours.

The *chawdhris* place no limit on the working hours of the pullers. There are no legal limits either. The Municipal bye-law on the subject runs as follows\* :—

“The proprietor or any other person in charge of the licensed rickshaw shall be bound at any time of the day or night to give such rickshaw on hire to any person demanding the same and shall also supply the necessary number of licensed rickshaw coolies in order to propel and draw it.”

There is no shift system in Simla. Working hours depend upon traffic. Normally, the morning and evening hours are the busy hours, coinciding with the opening and closing of offices. Rickshaw traffic is heaviest in the evenings, as pleasure seekers add to it. Arrival and departure timings of the trains, railway motor or road motor are also busy hours for the rickshaws, specially on days following or preceding Sundays and holidays. From the evidence at my disposal, it appears that the period of rest for pullers falls between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m.

In the pre-war period, when labour was plentiful and work scarce, a rough and ready organisation of rest period was in force, but now that the traffic has increased and labour is comparatively scarce, it is only exhaustion or illness or some pressing necessity that prevents a team from working during all hours of the day or the night. There is a universal complaint by pullers against the present 24-hour liability of work. A system of overlapping shifts can be evolved in co-operation with the *chawdhris*, but this is likely to lead to several abuses. I may, therefore, advocate a simple two-shift system under which pullers of the first shift would be entirely different from pullers of the second shift.

#### The chawdhri system.

Out of 600 rickshaws at Simla, 450 are public vehicles and are owned by private capitalists called *chawdhris* who hire them out to pullers at rates fixed by the Municipal Board. The *chawdhri* takes a private or municipal shed on rent and accommodates the rickshaws and the pullers therein. Sometimes, he also takes a room or two in the neighbourhood to house his rickshaw pullers. In certain cases, he invites the pullers from their villages and provides them with uniforms. He is answerable to the Municipal Board for their conduct and behaviour.

There is no service agreement, written or unwritten, between the *chawdhris* and the pullers. Nor is any security demanded from the latter because they generally hail from the same place as the *chawdhris*. During my investigations I found that the hold of the *chawdhris* was sufficiently great and rickshaw pullers would not normally be allowed to change over from one

---

\*Bye-law No. 11 of the Simla municipality.



*chawdhri* to another. The present war, however, has had its effects on this system and a greater freedom on the part of pullers is, no doubt, discernible.

Usually, pullers form their own teams voluntarily on a caste or a locality basis and the arrangement lasts in some cases for an entire season and in others for a shorter period. A team may be formed and re-formed on more than one occasion in a season, especially when it is a known fact that the puller, when he comes to Simla, need not necessarily stay here for the entire season. His health may give way or domestic circumstances beyond his control may necessitate his return to his village. In winter, however, there is a general exodus of pullers to their villages and teams are re-arranged in November. The *chawdhri* appears to have no say in the matter. He does not generally keep any supervisory staff and he depends to a large extent upon the honesty of the pullers for his share of their earnings.

In matters of repairs and replacements of rickshaws or breakage or damage done to them, the responsibility is entirely that of the *chawdhris*. In very extreme cases of wilful or gross neglect, however, the pullers are held jointly responsible for the loss or damage.

The *chawdhri* system, as it obtains to-day at Simla, may be said to appeal to the new entrants unfamiliar with local conditions. Ignorant and poverty-stricken men, fresh from their villages, find it simpler and easier to leave all matters regarding registration, etc., in the hands of experienced *chawdhris*, who sometimes give an advance or arrange for an advance either in kind or in cash and even provide for their lodging and boarding, though not without payment.

Certain complaints have, however, been received against the *chawdhri* system and it is alleged that it throws ignorant and inexperienced men at the mercy of greedy persons and leads to their exploitation with all its consequent evils. The *chawdhris* have, it is said, shown themselves antagonistic to any improvements in the condition of pullers and the system of rickshaw ownership by them is unwholesome for all concerned.

*An experiment.*—Between 1938 and 1942, a scheme was introduced by which the rickshaws came to be owned by the pullers themselves. The *chawdhri* system was abolished in three sheds in 1938 and the new scheme was later extended to all Municipal sheds. It was understood that it would be applied all over but some hitch occurred and the *chawdhris* continued to survive in the private sheds, i.e., non-municipal sheds. To give a practicable shape to the new scheme, the Municipal Committee bought rickshaws from the dispossessed *chawdhris* and resold them to pullers on an instalment basis. A large number of rickshaws thus bought and resold were old and required repairs which, in certain cases, involved considerable expense. Complaints arose in the wake of this experiment but these were ignored as it was apparent that the period of dislocation and necessary re-adjustment would not be long. Towards the end of 1941, the Municipal Committee took stock of the position and decided to give the scheme a further trial. Supervision was strengthened by the appointment of a third rickshaw inspector in addition to the two who were already working. Certain complaints were received against the behaviour of the rickshaw pullers in the proper discharge of their duties and ultimately the experiment was given up early in 1943 when the Municipal Committee reverted to the old *chawdhri* system. Pullers were thus forced to sell their rickshaws at a price fixed by the *chawdhris* and the Municipal tax officials. Certain witnesses complained that the prices so fixed were in some cases much too low, no compensation having been paid to pullers for some heavy repairs and renewals carried out by them.

On the basis of the evidence available with me, I cannot decide whether or not a fair trial was given to the scheme adopted in 1938. Some witnesses asserted that pullers gained immensely from the new experiment. Others held that difficulties in the way of the ownership of rickshaws by pullers were artificially caused by the action of the Municipal Committee. It is a fact that rickshaw pullers behaved very badly at Simla during the period of experiment. One would, however, like the experiment to be tried again keeping clear of all the defects that were brought to light during 1938—42. The case for the discontinuance of the *chawdhri* system is strong, both on moral and economic grounds and merits reconsideration. The possible alternative system can be either municipal ownership or state ownership of rickshaws—the pullers purchasing rickshaws on hire-purchase or even plying them on reasonable hire charges. “The Municipal ownership of rickshaws”, writes the Director of Industries, Punjab Government, in reply to my questionnaire, “may not be impracticable”

### Health.

Rickshaw pulling puts a very great strain on human nerves, the exertion being particularly great on the legs. It was asserted that, even on considerations of health, there should be a limit on the age of admission to rickshaw pulling. The sample enquiry of 381 pullers showed that 36 per cent. were under 20 years of age. The general consensus of opinion is in favour of an age limit of 20 years for entrance to this employment. The Municipal Secretary suggested 18 but I would share the views of Col. \*Phipson who, in the course of his discussions with me, supported the age limit of 20 years. There were various suggestions for the fixation of the upper age limit. The Municipal Secretary put it down at 50. I would, however, agree with Col. Phipson that it should be 40 at Simla because of the greater strain that rickshaw pulling involves here.

To guard against the entrance of physically weak persons in the trade, there is a pre-employment medical examination by the Municipal doctor and the license to ply rickshaws is given only to those who are medically fit. An idea about the general health, physical disabilities and ailments peculiar to the rickshaw pullers can be had from some of the results of a health survey which was undertaken in 1933, and which covered 734 pullers. Though this enquiry is very old, the results are of interest even today.

*Prevalent diseases*.—Pediculosis, according to the enquiry in 1933, was the most prevalent disease among the rickshaw pullers. 99 per cent. of them were found to be infested with body vermin. The number of persons suffering from teeth and gum troubles was very large. 221 pullers were found to be suffering from dental caries. A considerable portion of these suffered from spongy gums, indicating deficiency of vegetables in the diet. 12.5 per cent were found to be suffering from disordered action of the heart, while 56.8 per cent of these heart cases were markedly anæmic.

\* Medical Officer of Health, Simla.

† The number of persons suffering from the various diseases is given below :—

Organic heart ..	4	Flat feet ..	6
Anaemia ..	50	Varicosity of leg veins ..	21
Tachycardia ..	88	Skin diseases ..	23
Signs of Bronchitis ..	21	Chronic Othilis Media ..	1
Chronic Malaria ..	53	Dialutus ..	1
Goitre ..	35	Pyorrhea ..	48
Eye diseases ..	61	Dental caries ..	221

This health survey undertaken in 1933 was given up on account of certain difficulties and I have no recent records at my disposal to find out the nature and extent of the diseases that pullers suffer from. The Municipal Secretary thinks that rickshaw pullers do not suffer from any special disease except varicose veins, which has been detected in a few cases. Col. Phipson holds that, apart from varicosity of leg veins, they commonly suffer from bronchitis and pneumonia, due mostly to exposure to rain and snow. The Doctor-in-charge of the Infectious Diseases Hospital, who examines the rickshaw pullers every year, adds pediculosis to the list of diseases referred to above. The pullers complained of stomach troubles and headache as the most common diseases among them. It is also said that rickshaw pulling leads to sterility. That the number of the married couples without children among the rickshaw pullers is large is not a conclusive proof of sterility. Long absence from home may perhaps account for lower birth rate among them.

The use of *patties*, it was suggested, is the best safeguard against varicosity. Though the Municipality does not insist upon the use of *patties*, some jampanies use them.

*System of medical examination.*—Every puller is examined by the Doctor-in-charge, Infectious Diseases Hospital, and is given a certificate for work. I met this doctor personally on the 19th June 1944 and found that he could with much difficulty spare 1-1/2 to 2 minutes for the examination of each puller. His duties were so many that he could not discharge all of them to his entire satisfaction. Col. Phipson had previously stated that the existing system of medical examination was unsatisfactory, and indeed little more than a formality and that it ought to be made more thorough and perfect but this could only be done by an increase in medical staff. He added that adequate shelter against cold and rain is also not provided to pullers. They rarely possess rain coats and are therefore liable to suffer from exposure. At one time, the Municipality supplied rain coats to the pullers on an instalment basis of repayment but difficulties in the recovery of money led to a stoppage of the practice.

*Medical facilities.*—The local Municipal Board maintains a General Hospital (the Ripon Hospital) which provides facilities for free treatment for all, including the pullers. Pullers, like several illiterate folk, however, are averse to allopathic drugs and do not care to go to hospitals, even when seriously ill. For the benefit of such people the Municipality has opened Ayurvedic and Unani dispensaries. My enquiries reveal that pullers have not taken kindly even to these institutions, the reason according to them being that they are not given the care they deserve there. It is difficult to prove this allegation but it is a fact that a puller would like to go back home in the event of serious illness, rather than stay under the inhospitable environments (to use his words) of Simla. His attitude smacks of conservatism and superstition, which can only be got rid of through a much wider diffusion of education. Compulsory adult classes for the grown-ups appear to be steps in the right direction. But, simultaneously, an attempt should be made to start mobile dispensaries so that ailing pullers may be attended to promptly.

One thing more. The Municipality takes precautions to disinfect the clothings of the pullers and to give them fortnightly baths at its Disinfecting Station. But, is that sufficient? What use is there in giving baths and in disinfecting clothes when their environment and ways of living are so insanitary and dirty? The medical examination is far from satisfactory and even those who suffer from infectious diseases can always manage to secure the desired certificate. Under such a state of affairs, it is necessary to tighten up the medical test and to see that the standard of living of the pullers improves.

No expectation of the average life of rickshaw pullers can be given as most of them do not stay permanently at Simla. Their meals, however, are deficient in nutrition. Most of them are vegetarians and those, who are not, cannot afford to take meat as their earnings are poor. My enquiries further indicated that pullers are not generally addicted to any intoxicant or drug.

#### Housing.

Like the general population of Simla in normal times, rickshaw pullers are migratory in character. The nature of their work requires them to live in the close vicinity of their sheds so that they may be available at all hours of the day and night. The responsibility of providing accommodation ordinarily devolves upon the *chawdhris*.

Rickshaw pullers have 4 different types of housing accommodation available to them :—

(i) They are housed in the very sheds where rickshaws are parked or in the verandahs or open places adjacent to public buildings.

(ii) A few rickshaw sheds have rooms attached to them which are utilised for sleeping at night.

(iii) In certain other cases the *chawdhris* rent out small houses in the close neighbourhood of the sheds.

(iv) Lastly, there are municipal barracks built for this purpose. Municipal accommodation includes four new well-built sanitary barracks of 3 to 4 storeys each. The approximate dimensions of each are 54 ft.  $\times$  20 ft. i.e. 1080 sq. ft. for 24 men. The municipal authorities exercise strict supervision so that the number of lodgers may not exceed the maximum capacity of the barracks.

It may be said that these new barracks are the very best from the point of view of construction but they do not afford any privacy to the inmates. A wiser course would have been to have built cubicles or single rooms for each team of pullers with kitchens and bathrooms attached. The rest of the municipal accommodation is either inadequate or miserable. In one shed, for example, there is a floor space of 162 square feet for 40 persons giving an average of about 4 sq. ft. per man. 18 persons of this shed sleep on the floor between and under the rickshaws, 10 men occupy a nearby roadside shelter, 4 sleep in a verandah of an adjacent post office and 4 on cots which are kept hanging from the ceiling in the day-time. A second shed, having a floor space of 22 ft.  $\times$  16 ft. i.e. 352 sq. feet, accommodates 16 rickshaws and 70 persons while in a third shed a space of 380 sq. ft. is meant for 15 rickshaws and 60 men, 20 of whom sleep between and under the rickshaws, 8 on cots hung from the ceiling in the day-time, and some in the small kitchen adjacent to the shed.

The condition of housing in the old municipal hostels is also unsatisfactory. For example, in a double storeyed shed, the ground floor is used as a rickshaw stand and the first floor as a hostel. The area of the ground floor is 64 ft.  $\times$  11 ft. (704 sq. ft.) accommodating 20 rickshaws and 30 pullers. The first floor houses 40 persons and the rest of the pullers, about 20, sleep in the verandahs of the neighbouring shops.

Accommodation in some of the hotel sheds, too, is equally unsatisfactory. In one hotel, for instance, 96 sq. ft. of floor area houses 5 rickshaws and 4 pullers. Eight men occupy a room 12 ft.  $\times$  8 ft. and 8 go to another shed to sleep there. In another hotel, conditions are even worse; a small room having a floor area of 60 sq. ft. has to accommodate 32 men, 4 of whom sleep in this room and the rest outside.

**Kitchens.**—In some municipal sheds, separate kitchens are available. In the new hostels, for example, there is one kitchen for each storey, or for 24 persons. Kitchens are also available in some other Municipal sheds. There

were, according to my sample enquiry, 17 kitchens for 376 pullers or about 22 persons per kitchen and the area of the kitchen varied between 27 sq. ft. and 64 sq. ft. Three kitchens alone were fitted with chimneys and, what was worse, 5 were being used partly as sleeping rooms. It has already been said that there is, on an average, one kitchen for every 22 persons. This, to say the least, is inhuman. I am of opinion that there should be a kitchen and a bath room for each team of four pullers.

*Latrines and bath-rooms.*—The new hostels are provided with bath-rooms and flush latrines. In one of the old hostels, however, there is no provision for latrines. Pullers naturally have to use the public latrines even during illness. According to my sample enquiry, 176 persons out of 376 (46.8 per cent) had to use the public latrines. 200 persons alone had separate latrine arrangements; of these 74 had flush latrines and 126 non-flush ones. Out of 376 pullers interviewed, 72 had to take water from the public taps and the rest from taps provided in the sheds. No charge was payable for water by the pullers except in the case of two sheds where they had to pay 2 to 4 annas a year per head. In the case of the new hostels, however, water charge is extra and is said to be excessive.

*Rent.*—Pullers are required to pay a rent of 12 annas per month per head in the case of the new hostels and 8 annas in the case of the old. A charge of 8 annas per head is collected invariably by the *Chawdhris* in respect of private sheds. With regard to the payment of rent and other charges, pullers are individually responsible to the *chawdhris*.

*Light*—None of the sheds (new barracks included) visited by me is fitted with electric light. Kerosene or mustard oil lamps are supposed to be in use, the expense being borne by the *chawdhris*. My personal experience is that dim lights are provided in rickshaw sheds by the *chawdhris* but there is no light in sheds which are used for sleeping purposes.

*Sanitary conditions.*—The general sanitary conditions in the new barracks and a few other sheds are good, but in a very large number of sheds, including municipal ones, they are unsatisfactory. Most of the sheds have not been white-washed for years.

#### Welfare activities.

Nothing has so far been done by the Municipal Board, the *chawdhris* or the rickshaw pullers themselves to start any welfare work. There is, for example, no provision for indoor or out-door games and for special night adult schools for their education. There are no special libraries and reading rooms for literate pullers. No entertainment in the form of radio, etc., is provided for them. Pullers would appreciate light music, if some arrangements were made by the city fathers. As it is, they often spend their leisure in singing.

*Clothing.*—Like housing, clothing or the livery is also provided generally by the *chawdhris*. Each puller is given two shirts, two *pajamas* and a turban by the *chawdhris* who recover the cost of these articles in easy instalments of 8 to 12 annas per month. The puller is responsible for the washing, which he generally does himself. A more satisfactory arrangement exists in some of the hotels. In one hotel, for example, a puller is supplied two complete uniforms (coat, *pajama*, turban, *kula*, *patties* and belts) and a nominal amount of one rupee per month per puller is deducted for washing and repairs of the uniforms. In another hotel, on the other hand, uniforms, blankets and dusters are provided by the management without any charge. The pullers in a third hotel are supplied uniforms by the *chawdhris* at three rupees and eight annas for the season.

The personal belongings of the pullers are only a few. More often than not, they have one blanket and a carpet each. Some of them have old jerseys for winter use. Those who stay on in winter have some more clothing in the shape of warm *bandies* or second-hand winter wears. Judged from the nature of their work, the clothing of pullers in the private and municipal sheds is insufficient, and the possibilities of their exposure to cold are consequently many. They have generally no footwears when they go out with rickshaws in summer, but otherwise they do use mostly cheap shoes.

#### Earnings of Chawdhris.

My treatment of the economic condition of rickshaw pullers will not be complete unless I refer to the earnings of the *chawdhris*. There are at present 85 *chawdhris* owning 2 to 22 rickshaws each according to their financial position. The capital outlay in this trade naturally varies with the number of rickshaws. The purchase price of a new rickshaw would be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 400 in normal times. The rickshaws are generally purchased second-hand and the price today ranges between Rs. 150 and Rs. 400 according to the condition of the rickshaw.

From the evidence of most of the *chawdhris* and a perusal of their account books, wherever possible, it transpires that the gross earnings per rickshaw come to Rs. 1|8|- per day, i.e., Rs. 45|- per month.

*Depreciation.*—The normal life of a rickshaw is 10 years according to the evidence of both the *chawdhris* and the manufacturers and, naturally, the depreciation charge should be estimated at 10 per cent. or roughly Rs. 3 per month.

*Annual repairs.*—The yearly expenses on repairs and municipal taxes of a rickshaw are as follows :—

TABLE XIV.

Serial No.	Items.	Yearly expenditure.
		Rs.
1	Rubber tyres and tubes .. .. .	50
2	Painting .. .. .	7
3	Upholstery, leather work, and wages of <i>Mochi</i> .. .. .	35
4	Kerosene oil, axle grease, etc. .. .. .	15
5	Municipal tax (Levied on both private and public rickshaws) .. .. .	8
6	License fee. (Levied on public rickshaws only) .. .. .	3* (Rs. 4 for old type rickshaw).
7	Miscellaneous repairs and renovations .. .. .	15
	Total .. .. .	133

These figures have been arrived at as a result of my discussions with the rickshaw manufacturers and repairers, the *chawdhris* and others concerned. They show a monthly average of Rs. 11 per rickshaw on repairs. Besides, the monthly expenses on *illegal gratification, which is alleged to be very common in the Punjab*, may be estimated roughly at Re. 1|- per month. The monthly profit and loss account in respect of one rickshaw may thus be as under :—

Rupees three will be charged for license for a rickshaw of the new light pattern as described below :—

- (a) Hood and apron made of water-proof canvas.
- (b) Weather screen fitted with mica.
- (c) Wheels of the light 'cycle' type and fitted with solid or pneumatic tyres.

TABLE XV.

*Profit and loss account.*

	Rs.	
Depreciation .. .. .	8	} Income : Rs. 45
Repairs .. .. .	11	
Illegal gratification .. .. .	1	
Profit per rickshaw .. .. .	30	
Total .. .. .	45	Rs. 45

This account does not take into consideration the overhead charges and the incidence of rent. Taking into account all the factors, I find that the income of a *chawdhri* would be slightly less than Rs. 30/- per rickshaw per month. A rickshaw manufacturing shop hires out rickshaws to certain hotels at Rs. 22/- per rickshaw per month with responsibility for minor repairs on the part of the hirer. This confirms my conclusion that the ownership of rickshaws should rest with pullers. This would mean increased earnings for them.

I may here state the charges which the *chawdhris* had to pay for 18 municipal sheds in the different parts of the town. These sheds are put to auction every year ; the *chawdhris* offering the highest bid being allowed to take them over. The Municipality realised a total income of Rs. 16,150/- from this source in 1944-45.

## PART II.

## MADRAS.

The popularity and the success of rickshaw transport in Madras City may be attributed mainly to three factors. Firstly, the city is far-flung over a wide area of nearly 30 square miles, but is inadequately served by modern means of communications\*. Secondly, a considerable labour force is available for rickshaw pulling, drawn mainly from the depressed classes of the adjoining districts. Thirdly, there are large open spaces in different parts of the city, where rickshaw pullers, along with many others of their kinsmen, can put up cheap huts for themselves.

## Employment.

The following data, obtained from the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Madras, show how the number of public rickshaws and licensed pullers in Madras City (excluding certain outskirts such as Saidapet and Tambaram) has steadily increased in order to meet the increasing demands of a growing population :—

\* The number of passenger buses (with a maximum carrying capacity of 21 persons per bus) plying within city limits is 145. The Madras Electric Tramways have 33 miles of track and the number of cars is 88. The total mileage of the South Indian Railway and the M.S.M. Railway passing through city limits is about 16, and the service does not, however, materially benefit either the inner areas or the congested parts of the city. The bullock and the horse-drawn carts, which figure very prominently in the smaller towns of the province, are also strikingly few in Madras, mainly because of the high cost of draught animals and the scarcity of fodder.

TABLE XVI.

Year.					Total number of public rickshaws.*	Total number of licensed pullers.	Estimated population of the city in lakhs.
1935-36	..	..	..	..	2,746	Records not available. }	7.06
1936-37	..	..	..	..	2,140		7.21
1937-38	..	..	..	..	Records not available.		7.36
1938-39	..	..	..	..	2,418	5,250	7.51
1939-40	..	..	..	..	3,312	4,687	7.66
1940-41	..	..	..	..	3,112	4,591	7.69
1941-42	..	..	..	..	4,013	5,500	7.82
1942-43	..	..	..	..	3,674	6,530	7.95
1943-44†	..	..	..	..	4,031	5,931	8.08
1944-45‡	..	..	..	..	4,000	6,122	8.21

Apart from these public rickshaws, there are about 500 private rickshaws, owned mainly by middle class people. These vehicles, like the public rickshaws, pay taxes to the Corporation at the rate of Rs. 3 per half year but are not registered with the Police Department. Nor are the pullers of these vehicles required to take out licences. In almost all cases, the owners of these private rickshaws utilise the services of their pullers as domestic servants and pay them a regular monthly wage ranging from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30. Moreover, there is no restriction, whatsoever, regarding the number of persons that can be carried at a time in these private rickshaws as in the case of public rickshaws.

*Religion and caste composition.*—An analysis of the data in the Pullers' Register maintained by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Madras, for 1943-44 shows that 4,654 (78.5 per cent.) out of a total of 5,931 registered pullers, are Tamils, and that the rest are Telugus. Classified according to religion, it is found that 5,777 (or 97.4 per cent.) are Hindus, 95 (or 1.6 per cent.) are Muslims and that 59 (or 1 per cent.) are Christians.

*Sources of labour supply.*—In the latter half of 1944, when the present enquiry was undertaken, a random sample of 744 pullers were questioned on various points relating to their places of origin, literacy, civil condition and indebtedness. The data in the following table relate to the place of origin of these samples.

\* Statistics of public rickshaws and licensed pullers are for the financial year ending 31st March. The estimated population of the city as published in the annual administration reports of the Madras Corporation is based upon the vital statistics of the Health Department and should be regarded only as an estimate.

† A preliminary census carried out by the A.R.P. personnel in connection with the introduction of rationing revealed that the population of the city in 1943 was 9.88 lakhs as against the estimated figure of 8.08 lakhs. It is believed that the population in 1945 would be over 10 lakhs, if the military personnel are also included.

‡ Since the financial year 1943-44, the Commissioner of Police, Madras, has restricted the number of public rickshaws in the city to 4,000.



TABLE XVII.

Area.	Total number from each area.	Percentage of pullers from each area to the total number of pullers questioned.
<b>TAMIL.</b>		
(1) Chinglepet .. .. .	148	19.9
(2) South Arcot .. .. .	268	36.0
(3) Madras .. .. .	103	13.8
(4) Other Tamil districts, mainly Trichinopoly, Salem, Ramnad and Tinnevely.	63	8.5
(5) Pondicherry.. .. .	11	1.5
<b>Total</b> ..	<b>593</b>	<b>79.7</b>
<b>TELUGU.</b>		
(6) Hyderabad .. .. .	98	13.2
(7) Telugu districts of the Madras Province (Guntur, Nellore and Kistna).	53	7.1
<b>Total</b> ..	<b>151</b>	<b>20.3</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b> ..	<b>744</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of pullers stated that they did not find work in their villages all the year round and were therefore compelled to migrate to the city. The data in Table XVII given above corroborate the observations of the pullers as all the places of recruitment are such as have few irrigation facilities and are not capable of offering any avenues for the employment of agricultural labour throughout the year. In this respect, conditions in Madras are identical with those which prevail in several towns of China where, too, labour for rickshaw pulling migrates to cities during the off-season in agriculture, as can be seen from the following passage\* :—

“The most popular means of passenger conveyance in Chinese towns is the rickshaw. According to the census, Shanghai alone in the year 1924 issued over 10,000 licenses for rickshaws. In 1925, there were in Peking 35,000 rickshaws with 55,000 rickshaw coolies. These coolies come mostly from the surrounding rural districts and take to rickshaw pulling as spare time occupation. These coolies, mostly farm-hands, remain in the city for only a season of the year and return to their country when their labour is required on the farms.”

Several pullers hailing from the two neighbouring districts of Chinglepet and South Arcot alleged that they were compelled to take to rickshaw-pulling in Madras not only because of lack of employment as agricultural labourers but also because of oppression by castemen and rackrenting by landlords.

As per information given by the 744 pullers referred to above, 24.1 per cent. (179) were absent from the city for a period extending up to three months and 60.6 per cent. (451) from four to six months. Pullers who work all through the year constitute only 13.0 per cent. (97 out of 744) and almost all of them declared themselves to be permanent residents of Madras City.

\* Chinese Economic Bulletin, 10th October 1925, No. 242.

More instructive than the study of the causes for the inflow of agricultural labourers into the city as rickshaw pullers is the study of "years entirely missed" by them. Only 2.3 per cent. of the pullers (17 out of 744) missed their job for a period ranging from 1 to 3 years. Of these, 10 were from villages and 7 from Madras City proper. The 'village pullers' attributed this to their own illness or domestic calamities such as deaths in the family. In the case of the 'Madras pullers', the reasons given were that they changed over to other occupations such as *jutka*\* driving or working as coolies in army-clothing departments or in the building trade. When questioned further why they did not continue in these jobs, they confessed that they were discharged by their employers for some reason or other and that they were therefore obliged to revert to rickshaw pulling. The truth is that rickshaw pulling is more or less an unskilled job and very few pullers seem to be capable of engaging themselves in any skilled occupation. There is a humorous saying current in Madras—"Once a rickshaw puller, always a rickshaw puller".

This does not mean that a puller works as a puller all the time. The strain involved is so great that many pullers give up the job after some years of work. The following table shows the frequency distribution of the period of regular employment of the 744 pullers questioned by my staff:—

TABLE XVIII.

Period of regular employment.	Total number of pullers in each period.	Percentage to the total number of pullers.
1. Up to 1 year .. .. .	130	17.5
2. 2—5 years .. .. .	340	45.7
3. 6—10 years .. .. .	170	22.9
4. 11—15 years .. .. .	46	6.2
5. 16—20 years .. .. .	39	5.2
6. Over 20 years .. .. .	19	2.5
Total .. .. .	744	100.0

Though there may be a certain element of error in the data of period of regular employment as supplied by these illiterate pullers, the general trend revealed by them is unmistakable. For, it is seen that 17.5 per cent. of the pullers are those who have worked up to only one year. 45.7 per cent. have worked only from two to five years. Those who have worked regularly for a period of over 10 years are found to constitute only 13.9 per cent. It is clear beyond doubt that the majority of pullers drop out within a period of 10 years and revert to other occupations and that their places are taken by new recruits. This conclusion is corroborated further by my analysis of the age-distribution of all the licensed pullers in 1943-44, as recorded in the Pullers' Register maintained by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Madras.

#### Age distribution.

From the analysis of the age distribution of pullers given in the following table, it can be seen that the vast majority of pullers (69.3 per cent.) comprising the second, the third and the fourth age-groups are between 21 and 35 years of age and that those who are 41 and above form only 15 per cent. This has a bearing upon the practical question of fixing the age limit for pullers. Both the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of the Madras Corporation have suggested that the puller should be not less than 20 and not more than 45. If such an age limit is fixed, it is obvious that 9.8 per cent. or about 600

\* Jutka is a horse-drawn vehicle.

pullers would be thrown out of their jobs. It is this prospect of unemployment among pullers that has made the President of the Madras Rickshaw Pullers' Association to record his dissent to this proposal unless old age pensions are instituted for them.

TABLE XIX.

Serial No.	Age-group.					Total number of pullers in each group.	Percentage of each group to the total number of pullers.
1 ..	15—20 ..	..	..	..	..	145	2.4
2 ..	21—25 ..	..	..	..	..	1,233	20.8
3 ..	26—30 ..	..	..	..	..	1,711	28.8
4 ..	31—35 ..	..	..	..	..	1,165	19.7
5 ..	36—40 ..	..	..	..	..	789	13.3
6 ..	41—45 ..	..	..	..	..	452	7.6
7 ..	46—50 ..	..	..	..	..	280	4.8
8 ..	51 and over ..	..	..	..	..	156	2.6
Total ..						5,931	100.0

#### Literacy.

Out of the 744 pullers covered, only 33 (or 4.4 per cent.) were literate, i.e., those who knew how to read and write a letter in their own mother-tongue. The remaining 711, constituting just over 95 per cent. of the total, were illiterate.

#### Dependants.

Out of a total of 744 pullers, 565 or 75.9 per cent. declared themselves married and the remaining unmarried. The following table shows the distribution of families according to the number of dependants :—

TABLE XX.

#### Frequency distribution of dependants.

Number of dependants.	No. dependants	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	7 and above
Number of families .. ..	120	274	241	89	20

Though a large majority were married, only about 36 per cent. lived with their families in Madras. The recent floods which washed away several huts are said to have been responsible for many pullers sending away their families to villages. Whatever be the cause, there is no denying that this condition is not conducive to healthy moral life among the pullers. In an enquiry conducted in 1932 by the Triplicane Sociological Brotherhood, it was noticed that, in some of the *cheris* (dwellings of outcastes), the proportion of children to the adult population was strikingly small providing evidence for concluding that some were living with their 'mistresses', leaving their wives and children in villages. In the present enquiry, as many as 15, out of a total of 744 pullers, admitted openly that they were living with their 'mistresses' in the city.

#### Socio-Economic Organisation of Tamil Pullers.

This account of the conditions of rickshaw pullers may well close with a  
(C)DofL

brief description of certain peculiar features of the socio-economic organisation of the Tamil pullers :—

Firstly, each *cheri* has its own recognised headman who is the presiding authority at the social and religious functions of its residents. It is he who also settles petty disputes among them. These features of community organisation which are the survivals of ancient Dravidian village government are certainly capable of further development in any scheme of improvement of conditions of rickshaw pullers.

Secondly, the Tamil rickshaw pullers throughout the city have evolved and are observing certain well-defined rules and regulations of their own for carrying on their work, and the following among them are of special interest :—

(a) Each puller must attach himself to a particular 'stand', the place recognised by the Police for the parking of rickshaws and no puller is allowed to pick up passengers from the 'stand' to which he does not belong. Any new entrant has to be a 'probationer' (that is, not allowed to park his rickshaw in the 'stand') until he is 'admitted' as a member of the 'stand'.

(b) At certain 'stands', there are even elaborate conventions concerning the picking of passengers. For example, at some of the 'stands' of Mount Road, a puller, who cries out first for a passenger or the one who first draws out his rickshaw towards the passenger, is given the right of priority in negotiating the fare. Similarly, there are rules regarding the fixing up of fares and the settlement of disputes arising therefrom.

(c) Each 'stand' has a 'headman' appointed by the members of the 'stand' by common consent and his decisions are accepted as final in all disputes among its members.

(d) The punishment for any violation of the rules of the 'stand' is a fine which may extend to Rs. 5 per offence. But, as a rule, the fine is limited to a few annas and the amount collected is utilised for purchasing *pansupari* (betel leaf and arecanut) and distributing it among the members. If the amount is large, it is devoted to the performance of 'pujas' to the 'deity' of the 'stand' or the gods and goddesses of the temples in their native villages.

(e) All pullers join together and celebrate certain festivals, particularly the *Ayudha Puja*, by collecting subscriptions among themselves at the rate of one anna per week for a period of 8 weeks prior to the due date of the festival.

#### Indebtedness.

Indebtedness being a chronic and universal disease among the poor in India, there is nothing to be surprised at either the volume of debt or the purposes for which money is borrowed. According to my enquiries, only 287 out of a total of 744 (or 38.6 per cent.) were found to be free from debt and the vast majority, i.e., 457 (61.4 per cent.) were therefore indebted. Of the latter, 57 were without any dependants to support. The total amount of debt of all indebtedness persons was Rs. 51,465. Indebtedness *per capita* was thus Rs. 112. The following table shows the distribution of debt according to the size of the family :—

TABLE XXI.

*Indebtedness of families according to the number of dependants.*

Number of dependants.	No de- pendants.	1—2	3—4	5—6	7—8	Total
Number of families ..	57	169	154	61	16	457
Amount of debt (Rs.) ..	6,718	17,422	17,298	6,840	3,187	51,465
Average amount of debt per family (Rs.) ..	118	103	112	112	199	112

The following table shows the distribution of indebted persons according to the amount of debt :—

TABLE XXII.

I		II		III		IV		V		VI	
No. of persons in debt.		Number of persons free from debt.		Debt between Rs. 1 & 50.		Debt between Rs. 50 & 100.		Debt between Rs. 101 & 200.		Debt over Rs. 200.	
No.	%age of total.	No.	%age of total.	No.	%age of Col. 1.	No.	%age of Col. 1.	No.	%age of Col. 1.	No.	%age of Col. 1.
457	61.4	287	38.6	197	43.1	124	27.1	91	19.9	45	9.9

(a) *Causes of indebtedness.*—Analysing the distribution of debt according to causes it was found that the 457 persons in debt had taken altogether 478 loans for various purposes. The following table shows the total number of loans taken, the purposes for which they were taken and the average amount of loan in each account :—

TABLE XXIII.

Cause of debt.				No. of loans taken.	%age of all loans.	Amount of debt (Rs.)	%age of total debt.	Average amount of debt (Rs.)
All causes	..	..	..	478	100	51,465	100	119
Marriage	..	..	..	184	38.5	20,140	39.1	109
Sickness	..	..	..	5	1.1	310	0.6	62
Death ..	..	..	..	21	4.4	1,570	3.1	75
Litigation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Purchase of land	..	..	..	31	6.5	5,080	9.8	163
Domestic needs	..	..	..	174	36.4	14,470	23.1	83
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	23	4.8	1,100	2.1	4
Ancestral	..	..	..	40	8.3	8,825	17.2	221

This table shows that loans on account of marriages and domestic needs constitute nearly 76 per cent. of all loans and 67 per cent. of total debt. While the proportion of loans on account of these two factors is about equal, debt incurred on account of marriages is 13 per cent. higher than debt incurred for meeting domestic needs. The average amount of loans for marriages is also higher by Rs. 26½ than the average amount of loans for domestic needs. Ancestral debt follows next accounting for a little over 17 per cent. of the total debt. Though the number of cases of debt inherited is 8 per cent. of all loans, the average amount of debt on this account is the highest of all, being Rs. 221 as compared with Rs. 83 for domestic needs and Rs. 109 for marriages. Altogether, the predominance of debt for consumption purposes is obvious.

(b) *Sources of borrowing.*—It may be noted here that the migratory character of the pullers and the absence of any pledgable property with them scare away the professional moneylender. This is why the Marwari does not come into the picture. The pullers' moneylenders, according to enquiries, are their own village kinsmen who had come earlier and had built up small savings by frugal living while in the service of the local municipal corporation or similar institutions in the city. It is their small capital resources as well as their intimate knowledge of the conditions of their borrowers which explain this special type of moneylenders among the pullers.

Another interesting aspect of the problem of indebtedness among pullers is the method by which the creditors collect the interest as well as the principal due to them. In fact, these creditors lend only small sums, usually Rs. 10, but deduct interest for a month (calculated at one anna or two annas per rupee per month—i.e., at 75 or 150 per cent. per annum respectively) at the time of paying the principal. Thereafter, the creditor starts collecting the entire principal in small instalments of As. 5 per day, so that a borrower of Rs. 10 repays the debt in 32 days. It is a very common sight to see these moneylenders visiting rickshaw stands or *cheris* every day for collecting their dues.

During the course of my investigations, it was found that, in the case of 54 out of a total of 478 loans (11.3 per cent.), the borrowers did not know the terms on which they had borrowed money as their creditors went on collecting interest for an indefinite period. In the case of 26 loans (5.4 per cent.), the borrowers stated that they had borrowed by usufructuary mortgage of their land and that they were therefore not paying any interest. The following table gives the frequency distribution of the remaining 398 cases of loans borrowed at different rates of interest.

TABLE XXIV.

Rate % per annum.	Up to 6½	9	12	16	18 to 18½	24	30	37½	75	112½	150	300	Total.
No. of loans in each category.	26	10	50	9	24	13	4	16	112	5	123	6	398
% of each category to the total number of 478 loans.	5.4	2.0	10.4	2.0	5.0	2.8	0.9	3.3	23.4	1.0	25.8	1.3	83.3

The data given above show clearly that by far the largest number of loans (123) had been borrowed at the enormously usurious rates of 150 per cent. per annum and that the next largest group (112) paid interest at the rate of 75 per cent. per annum.

### Health.

In the absence of any medical examination, it is very difficult to describe the general health of the rickshaw pullers in Madras City. Three important points should however be borne in mind in this connection. Firstly, the vast majority of pullers (69.3 per cent.) are in the prime of their manhood. Secondly, all but 13 per cent. of pullers, who are permanent residents of Madras, are drawn from the class of agricultural labourers and continue to have their contact with their villages by periodically visiting them during the time of sowing and harvesting. Thirdly, they lead a hardy life and live in the open.

*Prevalent diseases.*—Nevertheless, as pointed out by the Health Officer of the Madras Corporation, the rickshaw pullers suffer from several common ailments to which under-nourished people are generally liable, and in particular from cold, cough, bronchitis and fever, on account of their frequent exposure to sun and rain. Several pullers admitted that they suffer very frequently from headache and fever but that they seldom go to any dispensary or hospital since they get themselves easily cured by a few simple indigenous drugs. In cases of serious illness, they go to their native villages and consult the local physicians.

### Clothing.

The clothing of pullers is neither clean nor adequate and this may in itself be responsible for several cases of cough and cold due to exposure. Males usually have two *dhoties* and two shirts (or vests) and their women-

folk generally have two *sarees*. Children below 5 have practically no clothing. Some pullers wear small pieces of cloth as their turban, while some others use old hats to serve the same purpose. Vary few pullers use any footwear at all as it is costly, though some wear old and cast-away tennis shoes.

#### Diet and drink.

The diet of the vast majority of pullers consists entirely of the rationed quantity of rice besides one vegetable or *dal*. Meat is used on festive occasions only, though cheap fish is taken usually once a week.

Almost all pullers chew betel leaves and arecanut and the majority smoke *bidis*. The Telugu pullers smoke a strong type of country made 'cheroot' or 'cigar' to which they are accustomed in their native villages. Alcoholic drink is the most common evil among all rickshaw pullers. In fact, they say that they cannot pull rickshaws unless they drink toddy (fermented juice of palmyra or cocoanut). It may be noted here that the womenfolk among them drink as well and that children are also brought up in this habit from their very childhood. Enquiries at the *cheris* of the Tamil pullers show that a puller spends about a quarter of his monthly earnings on drinks, both for himself and his family. Those who live alone in the city spend even half their earnings while confirmed drunkards go to the extent of borrowing money, if their earnings are not sufficient for this purpose. The Telugu pullers are, however, moderate in this respect, as they drink only once a week—that is every Sunday afternoon, which is their usual rest-period for the week.

#### Working Hours.

The hours of work for rickshaw pullers in Madras City are not regulated. The puller is his own master and this is indeed one of the reasons for many Adi Dravidas taking to rickshaw pulling in preference to other unskilled occupations, such as hand-cart pulling and splitting of fuel wood.

The working hours of a puller depend partly upon his needs for money and partly upon the conditions of passenger traffic in the particular parts of the city wherein he works. A puller works ordinarily eight to ten hours per day as that much time is necessary to enable him to earn his income for paying the hire charges for his rickshaw and meeting his daily expenses. But, on account of the strenuous character of the job, a puller who earns the requisite income during a shorter period usually hands over his rickshaw to some other puller in consideration of a commission of 2 to 4 annas. This practice of one puller hiring out his hired rickshaw to another puller is due to the fact that

- (i) the number of public rickshaws is limited to 4,000, whereas there are nearly 6,000 licensed pullers,
- (ii) the poorer pullers are not able to find the necessary deposit to hire out rickshaws for themselves, and that
- (iii) there is frequent absenteeism due to pullers returning to their villages. This practice leads to irresponsible handling of rickshaws and sometimes even to vehicles falling in the hands of unlicensed pullers.

Rickshaw traffic is heavy in all the congested parts of the city and on all the 'stands' which are located close to schools, hospitals, hotels, picture houses, etc. It is also fairly heavy in many of the narrow streets of George Town, where there are neither tram nor bus facilities. 'Stands' situated close to the beach enjoy a fairly large volume of traffic during the evening hours of fair weather. Arrival and departure timings of trains on the two railway stations—Egmore and Central—are also the busiest hours for the rickshaw pullers of the adjacent 'stands'.

A point of considerable importance in connection with the working conditions of a puller is the question of fixing a limit to the number of persons that he can carry in a rickshaw at a time. The President of the Madras Rickshaw Pullers' Association asserts that the enforcement of the rule that only one person should be carried at a time has resulted in considerable loss to the puller without materially reducing his strain. He says that, when more than one passenger was allowed to be carried, more people travelled by rickshaw, as it was cheaper for short-distance transport (the fare being divided among the passengers) than even the tram, and that pullers had therefore a larger income not only by way of fares but also by way of tips from them on the plea of heavier strain. While this is undoubtedly true, there is no denying that the enforcement of the rule by the police since the 12th December 1940 has been welcomed by the public, particularly because it seeks to reduce the heavy strain imposed on pullers. In this connection it is necessary to refer to two points brought to my notice by several pullers questioned by me. Firstly, the enforcement of this rule is not stringent enough so much so that pullers, who feel the pinch of money, are tempted to violate the rule by taking their chances of escaping detection by the Police. Secondly, if detected, they are sometimes likely to get away from the clutches of the law by illegal gratification. One puller cleverly asked why the puller alone should be punished when the passengers are also equally guilty and argued that the most effective way of enforcing the rule would be to punish the puller and the passenger.

#### The chawdhri system.

The provision of public rickshaw transport in Madras city is almost entirely in the hands of a multitude of petty capitalists since, out of a total of 4,000 registered public rickshaws, puller-owned vehicles (according to the statement of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Madras), number only 20.

The Police Department maintains a register of owners of public rickshaws under sections 4 and 9 of the Madras Hackney Carriages Act of 1911. The total number of entries of the names of owners in the registers for 1943-44 is 1912. Since the names of some of the owners are repeated more than once, when they register their vehicles at different dates, it is not easy to know the exact number of rickshaw owners. The Inspector-in-charge of the registration of these vehicles, however, estimates that the total number of owners would be only 1,500. Again, as the head of a family who owns several rickshaws gets the vehicles registered in the names of different members, particularly the women-folk, with a view to evading some taxes it is not possible to determine the exact number of 'families' which control these public rickshaws. The Inspector, referred to above, estimates these families to be about 600 in all.

Though the Madras Corporation collects the vehicle tax and the Police Department registers the public rickshaw, neither of these two bodies has laid down any regulations regarding the hire charges payable by the puller to the owner. For several years up to 1932, these charges stood at As. 4 per day per vehicle. Between 1932 and 1941, they were As. 6 per day. In 1942, on account of the evacuation in the city due to the threat of Japanese bombing, owners reduced the rates to As. 4 per day. Since 1943, the rates have been raised to As. 7 in the case of old vehicles and As. 8 in the case of new ones on the plea of higher costs and repair charges.

The conditions of the upkeep and maintenance of rickshaws are a matter of private oral agreement between the owner and the puller. According to the agreement the owner is responsible for paying the "Vehicle Tax" to the Corporation (Rs. 3 per half year) and the "registration fee" (As. 4 per vehicle per year) to the Police Department, besides meeting all repair charges, which amount to Rs. 18 at present as against half this amount in 1939. The



puller, on his part, undertakes the responsibility for the safe custody of the vehicle and its upkeep in sound running condition and paying the license fee of Rs. 6 per year to the Police Department. He is also required to pay a caution deposit varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10, according to his relationship with the rickshaw owner.

It may be noted here that the *Chawdhris* have no responsibility, whatsoever, with regard to the provision of uniform or housing facilities for pullers or of sheds for the parking of their rickshaws. There are, however, cases of some owners who have built tenements for pullers on their private land, or in portions of their own workshops, to provide shelter for the pullers and the vehicles. But in all such cases, I found them charging very high rents for the same.

*Defects of the system.*—The existing arrangement for public rickshaws suffers from three main defects :—

Firstly, their ownership by a multitude of petty capitalists leads to a great deal of waste and indicates in a general way the disorganised character of this transport service.

Secondly, the hire system leads to irresponsible handling of vehicles by pullers and to much unnecessary and avoidable expenditure by way of repairs.

Thirdly, owners experience considerable difficulties in collecting hire charges.

The unsatisfactory character of the existing system has led to two interesting developments. The first is the case of some owners entrusting the responsibility of collecting the hire charges to middlemen paying them a commission of Rs. 1 per vehicle per month. The second is the case of some owners maintaining their own workshops for the repair of their vehicles, as professional workshop owners charge exorbitant rates, particularly at the time of the registration of vehicles with the Police Department. The necessity of maintaining such a large number of petty workshops provides yet another proof of the inefficient character of the existing system.

#### Costs of manufacture and replacement.

Unlike Simla, where rickshaws are of luxurious design and are estimated to cost about Rs. 400, the pre-war cost of a public rickshaw in Madras was only Rs. 70 as against the estimated cost of Rs. 250 in 1944, as shown in the following table :—

TABLE XXV.

Serial No.	Items.	1939	1944
		Rs.	Rs.
1	Upholstery .. .. .	5	15
2	Cushions .. .. .	5	10
3	Varnish .. .. .	5	15
4	Wooden parts (wheels and body) .. .. .	20	60
5	Iron parts (Channel, springs, etc.) .. .. .	25	125
6	Rubber tyres .. .. .	10	25
	Total ..	70	250

During the pre-war period, besides getting the vehicles repainted every year, upholstery, cushions and rubber tyres, the wooden and the iron parts were required to be replaced after one, three and ten years respectively. But, now, in view of the fact that materials are not easily available, the police are not strict and hence the owners continue to use the old parts for double the period

they are meant for (except in the case of the iron parts). Basing the calculations on these facts, the costs of replacement may be worked out as follows :—

TABLE XXVI.

*Showing the costs of replacement as in 1939 and 1944.*

Serial No.	Items.	1939			1944		
		Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1	Upholstery						
2	Cushions	15	0	0	20	0	0
3	Varnish						
4	Wooden parts (Wheels, body, etc.)	6	10	8	10	0	0
5	Iron parts	2	8	0	12	8	0
6	Rubber tyres	10	0	0	12	8	0
Total		34	2	8	55	0	0

### Earnings of Chawdhris.

Making due allowances for depreciation, taxes and petty repairs, the annual net income of a *chawdhri* in respect of a rickshaw works out as follows :—

TABLE XXVII.

		1939			1944		
		Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.
<i>Gross Income.</i>							
At the rate of 6 annas per day for 300 days. (about 2 months being discounted as idle period).		112	8	0	150	0	0
<i>Deductions.</i>							
(a)	Municipal tax	6	0	0	6	0	0
(b)	Registration	0	4	0	0	4	0
(c)	Depreciation ( <i>vide</i> table XXVI)	34	2	8	55	0	0
(d)	Petty repairs	9	0	0	18	0	0
Total Deductions		49	6	8	79	4	0
<i>Net income—</i> (gross income minus deductions)		63	1	4	70	12	0

It is evident that the *chawdhri*'s net income per rickshaw today has increased by Rs. 7/10/8 as compared with 1939.

### Hire Rates.

The only important source of income for rickshaw pullers in Madras is their earning by way of fare charges from passengers. Tips are not many and pullers seldom do any regular coolie work during odd hours. The schedule of fare charges is laid down by the Commissioner of Police, Madras, with the previous sanction of the Local Government under section 31 of the Madras Hackney Carriages Act (Act V. of 1911 as amended by Act 1 of 1941).

In recent years, the rates have been revised twice—first in August 1940 and then in December 1943. It can be seen from the following table that the latest revised rate records an increase of 50 per cent. over the rate which obtained in 1940.

TABLE XXVIII.

		1943			1940		
		Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.
(a)	For first hour	0	9	0	0	6	0
(b)	Each additional hour or part thereof	0	4	6	0	3	0
(c)	Per trip first half mile	0	3	0	0	2	0
(d)	Every subsequent mile	0	1	6	0	1	0
(e)	Stoppage over $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or part thereof	0	3	0	0	2	0

### Earnings of pullers.

It is difficult to estimate accurately the earnings of rickshaw pullers in Madras city as there are about 6,000 pullers in all, with varying degrees of 'earning capacity' (some being alert and clever in picking passengers as well as in bargaining about fares and others not so). Moreover, there are 260 'stands' scattered all over the city where conditions of traffic as well as fare charges are of a varying character. The earnings are also irregular and uncertain and no accounts are maintained either by the pullers or by the *chawdhris*. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to arrive at a fairly reliable estimate, by keeping in view the following facts :—

(1) A large number of pullers on a few 'stands' like those at Egmore, Mount Road and Triplicane were approached directly and were questioned about their earnings. The answers were that, though irregular, their earnings would on an average range from Rs. 1/8 to Rs. 2/8 per working day. This means that a puller's net earnings (gross earnings minus the hire charges) for a complete month would range from Rs. 30 to 60. As against this, allowance must be made for

- (a) illness,
- (b) slackness of demand on particular days,
- (c) loss of income on days when pullers might stand charged, by the police for any contravention of traffic regulations, and
- (d) visits to villages on important occasions like marriages or funeral ceremonies of relatives. Thus, the net monthly earnings of an average puller may stand at Rs. 25 to Rs. 30.

(2) Pullers of private rickshaws receive a remuneration ranging from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 and, if the earnings of the pullers of public rickshaws were larger, some of them would make an attempt to switch on to the other side.

(3) In an enquiry conducted in 1932 by the Triplicane Sociological Brotherhood, the estimated income of the Madras rickshaw puller has been given as Rs. 12 per mensem. The Sanitary Welfare League of the Servants of India Society, in one of its memoranda presented to the Corporation Special Housing Committee of 1933-34, has pointed out that the minimum earnings of a puller would be Annas 6 per day and that the maximum earnings would be Rs. 1/8 per day. Since there has been a 50 per cent. increase in the scheduled rates of fares and a general increase in the rates paid by passengers at present, it is a reasonable estimate to put down the average net earnings of pullers between Rs. 25 and Rs. 30 per mensem.

**Supplementary earnings.**—There are no extra incomes by way of odd coolie labour or any appreciable earnings from tips. Tips are not common and the income from this source would be about two rupees per month per head.

The advent of the allied military personnel had been a source of increased earnings to pullers on certain 'stands' near the railway stations, hotels and picture houses for some time. Tips were high and the fare was invariably a rupee or more for each trip. But, for one reason or other, the European and American military officers and ranks have become wiser by experience and the fare paid by them to-day is also at par with others. Several pullers earned as much as Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per day when the Allied troops first came to Madras but this extraordinary phase in the rickshaw trade is fast disappearing.

### Housing conditions.

The housing of rickshaw pullers may be treated under two main headings, the first concerning the Telugus and the other the Tamils; and each of these may be considered further under two sub-headings; one relating to those who live with their families in the city and the other to those who live 'single', that is the unmarried as well as the married whose families are left behind in villages.

*Telugu Pullers.*—Among the Telugu pullers, the unmarried as well as the married who live 'single' in the city live in rented houses in small groups of about 10, 20 or 30. The tenement-rooms rented by them are situated in some of the most heavily congested parts of George Town and lack ventilation, sanitation and amenities such as water and lighting. These tenements generally comprise one small room of about 50 square feet and one verandah, but the number of occupants is disproportionately large. The inmates do not, however, sleep in the open or on the pavements in the city. The common latrines for sleep in the open or on the pavements in the city. The common latrines for these tenement rooms being insufficient and stinking, pullers are obliged to use the public latrines nearby or ease themselves even on the roadside. None of the tenements is electrically fitted and the only available lighting is that of a country-made kerosene oil lamp. Repairs to flooring and roofing are seldom carried out by landlords whose main interest lies in the collection of their monthly rents. Four out of the seven tenements visited by me have common water taps but the rest have to depend upon the public taps outside. There is a well in each house but well water is used only for bathing, washing, etc.

Two different arrangements for meals have been made by the pullers in these tenements. In Venketeswaralu Naidu Street, George Town, 10 ~~rickshaw~~ pullers have rented one room wherein they keep their boxes, and pay 9 annas per head per day for three meals cooked and served by a woman who has rented the whole house and has sublet it to a number of other people. In another establishment in the same street, 11 pullers have rented a portion of the house and engage the services of a woman for cooking their meals. The woman and her husband are given free board and lodging. In another house, in the same locality, I found that the woman cook was given Annas 4 per month by every puller in addition to her free board and residence. In the two last mentioned establishments, the expenses of the common mess were calculated every day and divided pro-rata among the members.

The Telugu pullers who live with their families in Madras are mostly *Bhōves*, hailing from the Nizam's Dominions. They live in *cheris* like the Tamil *Adi-Dravida* pullers and the following description of three *cheris*, situated in Kondithope (George Town), will bring out certain features of their housing conditions.

No. 1, situated at Saravana Mudali Street, Korathope, consists of 52 small huts, each partitioned off from the other only by palmvra matting. Roofing is of old tin sheets and it is complained that the rooms are very hot during the day, particularly in summer. Moreover, the door-way is so low that one can only enter by squatting. There is only one tap for all these 52 huts containing a total population of 214 persons. The number of latrines (fresh out) is only two. In the premises of the *cheri* is situated a well from which all women draw water and take their bath in the open. There is no bath room either for men or for women. No lighting arrangements exist for the *cheri* as a whole. A few huts possess country-made kerosene lamps but these are used only during dinner time. The rent is Rs. 2 per hut per mensem.

No. 2, situated at Ratna Mudali Street, Kondithope, consists of 4 tiled rooms, each fetching a rent of Rs. 3 per mensem. There is no latrine or tap for this *cheri*. The nearest public latrine is situated at a distance of one furlong and the nearest public tap is several yards away. The total number of inhabitants in the *cheri* is 22.

No. 3, situated at Ratna Mudali Street, Kondithope, consists of 14 thatched huts, each paying a rent of Rs. 2 per mensem. There is neither a tap

ner a latrine for this *cheri* too and, hence, the occupants have to use the municipal latrine and the public tap situated at a fair distance. As the huts are small, pullers sleep either in the narrow open spaces outside the huts or on the pavements. But, when it rains, they are obliged to take shelter inside the huts. It is to be noted further that some families living in these huts provide accommodation to their friends or relatives as well.

*Tamil pullers*.—The Tamil pullers who live 'single' in the city are practically "homeless". They neither rent any house themselves nor do they live in the houses of friends or relatives. They sleep on the pavements, basks under the public taps and eat their meals from vendors of food in the streets. During rainy nights, they take shelter under overbridges or in the open verandahs of some hospitably-minded people, in front of whose houses they might be parking their rickshaws. I have noticed several pullers actually snoring and taking shelter from the rain under the hoods of their own rickshaws.

The Tamil pullers who have their families with them live in *cheris* because of their low social status and the stigma of untouchability. The huts in the *cheris* are built of thatch. In some cases roofing consists of old (kerosene oil) tin sheets. The roofs rest on mud walls of 2 to 4 feet height. The entrance to the hut is not only narrow but also low (about 3 feet) so that one has to creep on his hands and knees to get into the hut. There are no windows or ventilators and hence it is dark and suffocating inside. Since the roofing also is low, one can hardly stand erect inside the hut. Cooking is done in a portion of the hut. Flooring is of hard trampled earth but it is generally uneven and damp, especially in *cheris* situated in the low-lying areas. The general sanitary conditions of the *cheris* are deplorable, as there are no facilities for drainage and conservancy, except in the case of those situated on Government or Corporation land. The following details concerning 4 *cheris* will serve to give a general picture of the housing conditions of the Adi Dravida Tamil pullers living with their families in the city.

No. 1 is situated in Assudin Khan Bahadur First Lane, Triplicane. The site and the 2 rows of 40 thatched huts built thereon belong to an owner of about 30 rickshaws in Triplicane. The number of families living in 20 of these huts as enumerated at the time of the enquiry in September 1944 was 20. The total number of occupants was 61 giving on an average 3.26 souls per family. Each hut measuring about 50 sq. ft. fetches a rent of Rs. 1/8 per mensem. There are no lighting arrangements. Even kerosene oil tin lamps were in use only in a few huts. A small narrow drain runs right in the centre of the *cheri*, but it was choked up and emitted a stinking smell. There is only one common latrine for all the 40 families. There is no well or tap and the inhabitants have to take water from the public tap about 20 yards away. The pullers park their vehicles in the open space between the two rows of huts.

No. 2 is also situated in Assudin Khan Bahadur First Lane, Triplicane. The site and the 7 thatched huts built thereon belong to an owner of a dozen *julkas* in the city. The number of occupants in the 7 families which have rented these huts at a monthly rent of Rs. 1/4 per family is 21, giving an average of three persons per family. There are no lighting, latrine, drainage or water facilities. The sides of the lane are used as latrine by the children and the adult members use the public latrine situated at a distance of furlong. Water is taken from the public tap. The owner of the *cheri* has built stables for his horses just in front of the huts and the *julkas* are also parked there, rendering thereby the premises of the *cheri* extremely insanitary.

No. 3 is situated on the bank of the Cooum on the road leading from the premises of Messrs. Simpson & Co. to the Ripon Buildings. The site has been

assigned by the Madras Corporation to the families inhabiting the locality, who have put up huts at their own expense. They pay a ground rent of Annas 2 per month per hutting ground of 100 sq. feet. The total number of huts, enumerated in November 1944, was 49. Several huts here have a larger floor area but the entrances are all narrow and as low as in the case of the majority of the other huts in the other *cheris* of the city. There is no separate latrine. There are no drainage arrangements in any part of the *cheri* and the middle portion which is on a lower level, is reported by the inhabitants to be flooded not only on rainy days but also when water level rises in the Cooum.

No. 4, known as the Pallakkumanibam *cheri*, is situated in Luz, Mylapore. It consists of 70 thatched huts put up by the families at their own expense. There are 12 rickshaw pullers in this *cheri*. The number of persons enumerated in 14 huts in the centre of the *cheri* was 64, giving on an average 4.6 persons per hut. Portions of three of these huts were sub-let to three families. The land, on which the huts have been built, belongs to a temple but has been leased by a private person, who collects a ground rent of As. 10 per hut per mensem. The *cheri* is somewhat clean as the ground is fairly even and rain water is easily drained off to a nearby pool. The Corporation has provided electric lights in the main street of the *cheri* and a public tap at the entrance to the *cheri* proper.

#### Welfare activities.

There is no agency, official or non-official, carrying on any specific programme of welfare activities exclusively among the rickshaw pullers of the Madras City, though some pullers, along with their kinsmen as described below, have been and are still being benefited by some of the ameliorative measures undertaken by the Provincial Labour Department and a few private agencies like the Y.M.C.A., the Harijan Seva Sangh, the Social Service League and the Ramakrishna Mission for the uplift of the depressed classes in general.

*The Labour Department.*—The work of the Labour Department for Harijan uplift in Madras City has been in the following three main directions :—

- (a) the assignment of land for house-sites,
- (b) the grant of loans upto Rs. 30 for each assignee to put up huts, and
- (c) the provision of certain elementary amenities such as water and lighting to the *cheris* situated on government land.

The following extract taken from the Administration Report of the Labour Department for 1941 summarises briefly the work done in the direction of providing amenities in the *cheris* situated on Government land :—

"The aggregate expenditure incurred on sanitary improvements and construction and repair of school sheds was Rs. 2,23,436. Incidentally it may be stated that out of a large number of *cheris* and slums existing in the city, the Labour Department has been in direct charge of only 17 *cheris* for about the last 10 years. Out of these, 9 have been handed over to the Corporation of Madras during the years 1929 to 1940 after being provided with amenities such as roads, water taps, latrines, etc., at a total cost of Rs. 78,261 leaving during the year under report a balance of only 8 *cheris*."

It was not found possible to ascertain the exact number of rickshaw pullers who have been benefited by the assignment of land for house-sites or the grant of loans for putting up huts in all these *cheris*, since there have been, in some cases, changes in ownership of sites and, in others, voluntary removal of persons from one *cheri* to another. But in one of the recent colonies in Egmore

formed by the Labour Department for the benefit of the depressed classes, half a dozen rickshaw pullers have been given land for house-sites and loans through a co-operative society for building their huts.

*Private agencies.*—Since 1935, the Labour Department has also been subsidising several private agencies like the Y.M.C.A., etc., which are engaged in welfare activities among the depressed classes. It may be noted that almost all these agencies have confined themselves mainly to education (running of adult night schools, 'bhajana', etc.), sanitary improvements and temperance propaganda, as they have only very limited resources of their own.

#### Concluding remarks.

The ownership of rickshaws by a multitude of petty capitalists indicates the defective organisation of rickshaw transport. The Commissioner of the Madras Corporation puts the case against the proposal for municipal ownership of rickshaws in a highly humorous way : " The odium for this kind of exploitation of human beings had better remain with the *Chawdhris* ". Here is indeed the most convincing argument against any scheme in which the puller cannot be made the owner. But this is not the only direction in which reform is necessary. It is apparent that, if the manufacture of rickshaws is undertaken by a single agency with bulk purchases of materials, standardisation of parts and economy of management, there is bound to be, as admitted by the owners of the existing workshops themselves, a considerable reduction in the cost of the vehicle and its maintenance.

### PART III.

#### CALCUTTA

##### Brief Retrospect.

The history of rickshaw pulling in Calcutta is rather obscure, though, from the available records, it can be safely gathered that rickshaws were not seen on the streets of Calcutta prior to 1900. It is said that the first few rickshaws imported by some well-to-do Chinese were of Japanese make, and that the first rickshaw-pullers of Calcutta were Chinese.

Rickshaws are first mentioned in the Corporation reports for 1900, their number then being 6. But these vehicles were for the private use of their Chinese owners only. The possibility of utilising them as a public conveyance in a growing city, where distances were great and means of conveyance by no means adequate, attracted the attention of the enterprising Chinese and the credit for popularising this exotic vehicle in Calcutta is thus entirely theirs.

Calcutta was, of course, accustomed to using palanquins all the time, but these were fast going out of fashion by the beginning of the 20th century. Tramways had done their best in relieving the pressing need for cheap public conveyance. The hackney carriages were also on the scene but they were expensive and could hardly negotiate the narrow lanes of the city. The stage was thus set for something to replace the palanquin and at the same time bring within the easy reach of the man-in-the-street a cheap means of conveyance. The Chinese experiment with the rickshaws caught the public eye and, visualising their possibilities from 1913-14 onwards, the Chinese began to place a number of rickshaws on the roads for hire. The pullers were still Chinese, and, though the rickshaws found a ready market, the business remained for some years more almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese.

It appears that Indian rickshaw pullers were negligible in number up to 1915 probably due to their reluctance to work under the Chinese owners, and, to a smaller extent, to the scorn and jeers that fell to the lot of the pullers in those early days, provoked by the novelty of their calling. During the first few years, it was not uncommon to find a rickshaw surrounded by an inquisitive crowd and street urchins shouting after the puller *baghair dum ka ghora* (horse without a tail).

In 1917, an enterprising Bengalee invested some money in the business, which was till then monopolised by the Chinese. Several other Indians followed suit so much so that by 1920 all the Chinese were ousted from the business.

Patrol rationing has at present greatly augmented the demand for rickshaws which have become a popular means of conveyance, particularly among the personnel of the fighting forces.

#### Employment.

From the data given in the following table, it can be seen that there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of rickshaws from 1920 to 1935, with a remarkable steadiness thereafter and that the fluctuations in the number of pullers have been in direct proportion to the number of rickshaws. For example, there were 1,196 pullers to 612 rickshaws or about two pullers per rickshaw in 1920. This proportion dropped almost to 1 : 1 in 1925. In the quinquennium ending 1935, the number of pullers was about three times the number of rickshaws. Thereafter the number of pullers has gone on steadily increasing till in 1944 it was five times the number of rickshaws.

TABLE XXIX.

Year.	No. of rickshaws	No. of licensed pullers
1920 .. .. .	612	1,196
1925 .. .. .	2,021	2,390
1930 .. .. .	2,284	5,878
1935 .. .. .	5,841	17,099
1936 .. .. .	5,801	17,085
1937 .. .. .	5,807	18,428
1938 .. .. .	5,776	19,560
1939 .. .. .	5,752	21,290
1940 .. .. .	5,757	24,675
1941 .. .. .	5,881	26,395
1942 .. .. .	5,801	26,022
1943 .. .. .	5,766	25,574
1944 .. .. .	6,000	30,000

The rickshaws, that were first imported from Japan by the Chinese, were two seaters and, except for two brief and unsuccessful experiments in 1933 and 1937, they have always remained so. In 1933, an attempt was made to import single seater rickshaw from Japan and 8 rickshaws of the type were registered as public vehicles. But the public did not take kindly to them and they consequently disappeared from the market. In 1937, a second attempt was made but this too failed rather dismally. The reason for the failure is that a two-seater is cheaper than a single-seater.

A rival to jin-rickshaw is the cycle rickshaw. It is widely in use in the suburbs of Calcutta and practically all over the province. An attempt was



made to introduce it in Calcutta in 1943, but the Commissioner of Police did not permit it as it was likely to increase road accidents. A strong bid for cycle rickshaws may probably be made at the end of the war after the withdrawal of the military vehicles from public roads. It may be noted that, wherever the cycle rickshaws have been introduced, they have driven the jin rickshaws out of the market.

*Price of a rickshaw.*—The selling price of a Japanese rickshaw in Calcutta in 1916-17 ranged between Rs. 275 and Rs. 350 though the cost price in Japan was reported to have been only Rs. 75. Before the outbreak of the present war, it was about Rs. 175.

On the basis of an examination of 20 owners, it was found that the average price of an Indian rickshaw in pre-war days was Rs. 85 and the present price is about Rs. 250. The figures supplied by the All Bengal Rickshaw Union for 1939 and 1944 are Rs. 70 to Rs. 90 and Rs. 200 respectively. The cost of repairs of a rickshaw according to owners and *sirdars* questioned by my investigators is Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month. A rickshaw is thoroughly repaired and repainted once a year before being presented for renewal of registration.

*Classification of rickshaw-owners.*—There are at present about 750 rickshaw-owners in the city, owning among themselves 6,000 rickshaws. Of these, 575 owners have formed the All Bengal Rickshaw Union which was registered in 1939. Among them are some who own as many as 90 to 125 rickshaws each. Though no accurate statistics are available, the table below shows the approximate distribution of rickshaws in the possession of these 750 owners:—

TABLE XXX.

Classification of owners	No. of rickshaws owned.	Estimated number of owners in each class.
Very small owners .. .. .	1 to 10	300
Small owners .. .. .	11 to 25	220
Medium owners .. .. .	26 to 75	200
Big owners .. .. .	76 and above	30
Total		750.

There is a very limited number of Bengalese in the rickshaw trade. A majority of the owners are from Bihar and U.P. Among them, they own almost 85 per cent. of the total number of rickshaws. Some of the owners were originally police constables in the city of Calcutta. Among the very small owners owning less than 10 rickshaws, there are a few who were originally pullers.

*Sources of labour supply.*—The Bengalis have not taken kindly to rickshaw pulling. That it is not wholly due to fear of hard work will be borne out by the fact that a very large number of planquin-bearers of Calcutta were Bengalis. There were not more than 20 Bengali rickshaw pullers in Calcutta up to 1939. The Japanese bombing of Calcutta in December 1942 resulted in the exodus of a large number of up-country pullers. It was then that some of the Bengali owners brought down pullers from their native villages. Their

number was not large, nor did they show any inclination to stay. The famine of 1943 drove the landless Bengal agriculturists from the villages to the cities in search of employment, and it seems that, since then, the number of Bengali pullers has been steadily on the increase. But, even to-day, Bengali pullers, most of whom hail from Midnapore, form a very small percentage of the total number of registered pullers.

The majority of the pullers are from some well-defined zones of Bihar and U. P. For example, 96 per cent. of the Bihar pullers come from the districts of Darbhanga, Chapra, Motihari, Arrah, Bhagalpore and Hazaribagh while the Orissa pullers belong to Cuttack. It is possible to further localise their places of origin and show that they are not even drawn from all over these districts but from particular villages of these districts. The reasons for this are :—

(a) *Communal messing.*—The new hands who are brought by the old and trusted pullers of the rickshaw owners find themselves at home when they arrive in Calcutta. They form a common mess with their old friends and share the expenses of food and house rent. This is one of the reasons for overcrowding in *khatahs*. The new pullers naturally like to stay with their co-villagers even when the room or rooms rented by the latter are small. They prefer to sleep out at night on pavements, rather than give up the association of their old comrades. Thus placed together, they do the cooking by turn and help one another in time of need.

(b) The second reason is the aversion of the owners to entrust their rickshaws to new comers unless old pullers stand as guarantors for their good conduct. How important this is will be evident when it is remembered that the cost of repairs of the rickshaw is borne by the employers and, also normally, the fines for petty cases such as for breach of traffic rules, etc. Another point is that though rickshaw pulling can be called 'unskilled' in character, the pullers must possess some road sense and know the rudiments of the various traffic rules. Hence the new comers as a rule attach themselves to the older pullers.

My staff examined 500 pullers in the course of the inquiry and the data relating to their religion and domicile are given below :—

### *Religion and Domicile.*

TABLE XXXI.

Communities	Frequencies				Percentage to total.			
	Bengal	Bihar	U.P.	Total	Bengal	Bihar	U.P.	Total.
Caste Hindus .. ..	1	75	5	81	0.2	15.0	1.0	16.2
Scheduled Castes .. ..	4	267	9	280	0.8	53.4	1.8	56.0
Muslims .. ..	9	128	2	129	1.8	25.6	0.4	27.2
<b>Total ..</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The following table gives further details of the places of origin and the

age-distribution of pullers who are the so-called members of the All Bengal Rickshaw Union :—

TABLE XXXII.

Showing the places of origin of pullers.  
(Figures within brackets indicate percentages to the total).

Places	Years.				
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
<b>BIHAR</b>					
Bhagalpur .. .. .	45 (4.4)	439 (4.7)	148 (4.0)	201 (2.7)	119 (3.1)
Darbhanga .. .. .	153 (15.0)	2,021 (21.5)	794 (21.6)	1,462 (19.7)	590 (15.3)
Gaya .. .. .	188 (18.5)	1,041 (11.1)	550 (15.0)	1,071 (14.4)	658 (17.1)
Hamaribagh .. .. .	86 (8.4)	1,025 (10.9)	352 (9.6)	919 (12.4)	625 (13.6)
Monghyr .. .. .	93 (9.1)	964 (10.3)	371 (10.1)	775 (10.4)	232 (6.0)
Motihari .. .. .	70 (6.9)	524 (5.6)	169 (4.6)	703 (9.5)	227 (5.9)
Muzaffarpur .. .. .	211 (20.7)	1,818 (19.3)	799 (21.7)	1,614 (21.7)	1,156 (20.0)
Other Districts .. .. .	26 (2.5)	160 (1.7)	76 (2.1)	84 (1.1)	101 (2.6)
Total for Bihar .. .. .	841 (82.5)	7,992 (85.0)	3,259 (88.6)	6,829 (92.0)	3,809 (93.6)
<b>OTHER PROVINCES</b>					
U.P. .. .. .	91 (8.9)	968 (10.5)	205 (5.6)	210 (4.2)	171 (4.5)
O.P. .. .. .	..	..	5 (0.01)	1 (0.01)	..
Omissa .. .. .	14 (1.4)	54 (0.6)	6 (0.01)	87 (0.8)	11 (0.3)
Bengal .. .. .	26 (2.6)	172 (1.8)	124 (3.4)	114 (1.5)	36 (0.9)
Other Provinces .. .. .	47 (4.6)	195 (2.1)	80 (2.2)	112 (1.5)	28 (0.7)
Total for all provinces .. .. .	1,019	9,401	3,878	7,423	3,854

TABLE XXXIII.

Showing age-distribution.  
(Figures within brackets indicate percentages to the total).

Age Groups	Years.				
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
15—20 .. .. .	209 (20.5)	1,219 (13.0)	616 (16.7)	950 (12.8)	611 (15.9)
21—25 .. .. .	418 (41.1)	2,186 (23.3)	754 (20.5)	1,203 (16.2)	844 (21.9)
26—30 .. .. .	253 (24.8)	3,299 (35.1)	1,444 (39.3)	3,039 (41.07)	1,407 (36.5)
31—35 .. .. .	88 (8.6)	1,280 (13.6)	440 (12.0)	1,173 (15.8)	517 (13.4)
36—40 .. .. .	49 (4.8)	447 (4.7)	187 (5.1)	322 (4.3)	148 (3.8)
41—45 .. .. .	..	808 (8.6)	154 (4.2)	1493 (6.6)	147 (3.8)
46 and above .. .. .	2 (0.2)	162 (1.7)	83 (2.2)	243 (3.3)	183 (4.7)
Total .. .. .	1,019	9,401	3,878	7,423	3,857
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Period of regular employment.*—The rickshaw pullers are drawn from land and are agriculturists at heart. On the basis of information supplied by the 500 sampled pullers, it was found that pullers do not generally work for more than 7 months in a year. This is evident from the data given in the following tables :—

TABLE XXXIV.  
*Showing period of regular employment.*

Period	No. of samples	Percentage to total
0—2 months	13	2.6
2 to 4 months	25	5.0
4 to 6 "	96	19.2
6 to 8 "	149	29.8
8 to 9 "	89	17.8
9 to 10 "	87	17.4
10 to 11 "	38	7.6
One year	3	0.6
	500	100.0

My enquiry reveals that, in certain families where there are two or more able-bodied persons, one member is sent out to Calcutta in search of work, while the others stay behind and look after the land. During sowing and harvesting, when extra help is needed for agricultural work, pullers go back home. But they may as well go for other reasons. This break from the long, tiresome and irregular hours of work and uncertain meal hours enable the pullers to recoup their health, even though they have to contribute their quota of labour on the fields.

Some of the factory workers also hold licenses for pulling rickshaws. The All Bengal Rickshaw Union admitted that some of their puller members were factory workers first and rickshaw pullers afterwards\*. It is indeed surprising that some sweepers and street-lighters of the Calcutta Corporation should also work as pullers; the former as night pullers and the latter as day pullers. Factory workers generally pull rickshaws for two days during the week (Saturdays and Sundays) when regular pullers take a day or two off. Some factory labourers were found working as night pullers too. This shows incidentally that the rickshaw puller today earns more than other classes of workers.

#### Registration of pullers.

Under the Calcutta Hackney Carriage Act, all pullers are registered, the fee for the licence† being 4 Annas per year and renewal fee 2 Annas. The

\* In this connection it has to be mentioned that the manager of one of the jute mills reported to my investigating staff that he had noticed some of the workers of his mill absenting themselves and working as pullers.

† The license issued to the pullers is called Rickshaw Bearer's License. This is because in the earlier days no distinction was made between the palanquin bearers and the rickshaw pullers, when they were both shown in the Corporation Registers under one class as "Bearers". Though the palanquins decreased in number steadily till they disappeared completely in 1927, this nomenclature has continued and the rickshaw puller's license is still known as Rickshaw Bearer's License.

icense issued is valid only for one year and should be renewed within 7 days from the date of expiry. If it is not renewed within that period, the defaulters are sent up for trial and are liable to a fine which varies between Re. 1 and Rs. 4. It is the liability of the owners to produce pullers in question before the court and this in itself is the guarantee for the payment of fine imposed.

The procedure for obtaining a Rickshaw Bearer's license was at one time long-drawn-out, cumbersome and expensive and entailed a delay of almost two months. In the meantime, the applicants had to remain unemployed incurring debts to meet their day-to-day expenses or to do whatever odd jobs came in their way. It is alleged both by pullers and owners that, though the actual license fee was only 4 annas, a puller had to spend Rs. 8|12 in respect of various items of expenditure as shown below :—

	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1. Petition writer .. .. .	0	8	0
2. Photo .. .. .	1	0	0
3. Police Enquiry (Local) .. .. .	2	0	0
4. Expenses at Hackney Carriage Office .. .. .	1	0	0
5. Village Enquiry .. .. .	3	0	0
6. Arrangement for expeditious issue of license from Hackney Carriage Office .. .. .	1	0	0
7. License Fee .. .. .	0	4	0
Total .. .. .	8	12	0

*Temporary Licenses.*—This was the state of affairs until September 1939 when the facility for issuing what is now termed as temporary license was granted to the All Bengal Rickshaw Union at the instance of the then Labour Minister, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy. The Union offers this facility to pullers of its owner-members only. It claims to have 575 owner-members out of about 750 and all the big and medium owners are its members. It follows that a good majority of the pullers actually enjoy the facility of which the Union has been made the sole custodian. It may be noted that there are 175 owners, who are not members of this Union and are therefore denied this privilege. The privilege is also withheld from the Calcutta Rickshaw Mazdoor Union, which is a *bona fide* workers' union, duly registered with the Government. One fails to understand why the Owners' Union and the Workers' Union referred to above should not have been placed at par in this respect.

Under the present system, an intending puller approaches the All-Bengal Rickshaw Union with a letter from the rickshaw owner. He deposits Rs. 2|8|— which, according to the Union, are accounted for as under :—

	Rs.	As.	Ps.
Cost of photos (3 copies) .. .. .	0	7	0
R. B. License fee .. .. .	0	4	0
Puller's yearly subscription .. .. .	0	2	0
Donation from puller .. .. .	1	11	0
Total .. .. .	2	8	0

It should be remembered that the All-Bengal Rickshaw Union is, to all intents and purposes, a union of owners and not of pullers. By a payment of 2 annas a puller is supposed to become a member of the union, though he does not exercise any power in its deliberations. In addition, he pays a donation of Rs. 1/11-. This fact was brought to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) and I now understand that the total sum payable for a license has been brought down to Rs. 2/3/-. My objection, however, stands and an enquiry in regard to the legitimacy of the charges appears necessary.

As soon as the application is made to the Union office for the temporary license and the required sum of money is paid, the Motor Vehicle Department is moved and the temporary license is issued through the good offices of the Union in the course of a day. This temporary license is valid for periods varying from 1 to 3 months according to the time that is needed for completing the police enquiries in the villages. The *Hulia* or 'description form' is then sent to the rickshaw union office for local enquiry. The Union has appointed five inspectors for this purpose. This is a distinct improvement on the old procedure of enquiry through the local *thanas*, which involved delay and could also be used as a profitable weapon for exacting bribes by any unscrupulous police officer. The form is then returned to the Hackney Carriage Branch within 8 days with suitable remarks on the basis of the report by the Secretary of the Union. The *Hulia* form is sent later for enquiry by the Superintendent of Police of the district from which the pullers come. It is said that the enquiry in the villages takes less time now than it used to do before. The same holds good in respect of the renewal of licenses which does not usually take more than a day.

After the Japanese bombing of Calcutta in 1942, the Union succeeded, on the plea of shortage of labour, in persuading the licensing authorities to relax the rules regarding renewal of license and permit the pullers to renew it within two months of its expiry. It seems that the relaxation granted in the matter as an emergency measure has come to stay. This has afforded considerable relief to the workers.

It is true that the Union has removed the difficulties of pullers in the matter of obtaining and renewing their licenses and reducing the expenses on that score. This privilege should, however, be extended to the non-union owners and the genuine Workers' Union (Mazdoor Sabha) unless, of course, the Government can point out anything obnoxious in their case.

An analysis of the length of the period of the license held by the 500 pullers examined in the course of this enquiry is given below :—

TABLE XXXV.

Period	No. of samples	Percentage to total
0—6 months .. .. .	154	30.8
6 months—1 year .. .. .	58	11.6
1 year—2 years .. .. .	50	10.0
2 years—3 „ .. .. .	27	5.4
3 years—4 „ .. .. .	36	7.2
4 years—5 „ .. .. .	29	5.8
5 years—10 „ .. .. .	78	14.6
10 years and above .. .. .	71	14.2
* Without License .. .. .	2	0.4

\* The presence of unlicensed pullers will be commented upon later under "sub-letting".

### Sirdars.

In some of the big and medium *khatals*, Supervisors (*Sirdars*) have been employed by the owners to be in charge of the distribution of rickshaws and the collection of hire money called *Jamma*. Usually, the old and reliable pullers are entrusted with this job and are paid monthly wages ranging from Rs. 45 to Rs. 60 without board, and Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 with board. The necessity for *sirdars* arose because :—

(i) Some of the owners have as many as 100 rickshaws and it is not possible for them to attend to their distribution and the collection of hire money, etc.

(ii) Some of the owners are engaged in other occupations and treat rickshaw business as a mere side show.

According to the owners, the *sirdar* discharges the following functions :—

1. He is expected to watch the private character of a puller living in his *khatal*.

2. He distributes the rickshaws in the morning and in the afternoon.

3. He collects *Jamma* from the pullers.

4. He is required to inspect every rickshaw before it is actually taken out of the garage and to see that it is absolutely in order.

5. He inspects the license of every puller to whom the rickshaw is let out on hire and maintains a register for this purpose.

6. In case a puller is taken into custody by the police for any offence, the *Sirdar*, on receipt of such information, appears at the *thana*, arranges for his bail and appears with him before the court the following day.

7. In the event of an accident, the *Sirdar* visits the place of occurrence and renders the necessary help.

8. He attends to petty repairs, such as correcting the alignment of the wheels, greasing of wheels, etc.

Occasional complaints are made by pullers of *Zulum* on the part of the *sirdars*. The usual complaint centres round the distribution of rickshaws and the charges of favouritism and corruption connected with it. On enquiry, it was found that, though the *sirdars* are not above suspicion, they generally exercise their powers with discretion. An important fact about rickshaw pulling in Calcutta is that the cost of all repairs and replacements is borne by owners. It is natural therefore for *sirdars* to distinguish between good and bad pullers in the allotment of rickshaws. Owners questioned have stated that, in cases where complaints of acceptance of bribes on the part of *sirdars* are received, enquiries are made and that the services of guilty persons are dispensed with.

An unscrupulous *sirdar* can of course exercise his petty authority in two ways :—

(i) if the puller fails to return the rickshaw in time, the *sirdar* may extort small amounts as bribes,

(ii) the *sirdar* may demand some hush money from the pullers by agreeing not to report to the owner damages done to the rickshaw, due to negligent handling. The usual bribe, I understand, is not more than a packet of *bidis* or cigarettes. A large number of pullers belonging to Bhowanipur have stated that they have, as a matter of practice, to give *salami* of Re. 1 to the *sirdar* on return from home leave before they can expect to take out rickshaw again.

### Jamma.

*Jamma* is the payment that a puller has to make to the owner of a rickshaw for purpose of plying it for hire. It is customary to deposit the *Jamma*

at the end of the shift when the rickshaw is returned to the *Sirdar*. The day is split up into two unequal parts or shifts. The day shift of 10 hours begins at 6 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. and the night shift of 14 hours begins at 4 p.m. and ends at 6 a.m. Though the two shifts are of unequal length, *jamma* for both is the same. There has been a steady increase in the *jamma* from 1920 onwards till perhaps the peak figure has been reached at present. The reason assigned by pullers for this increase is the increased popularity of rickshaws, but owners assign it to increased cost of maintenance and repairs. What is specially surprising is the absence of any uniformity in rates even among the owners belonging to the All Bengal Rickshaw Union. For example, the rate of *jamma* is the highest in Central Calcutta and the lowest on the outskirts of the city. This will be borne out from the table of *jamma* rates given below :—

TABLE XXXVI.

Area.					Average rate of <i>Jamma</i> per rickshaw.
					Rs.
Central Calcutta	..	..	..	..	1-28
Entally	..	..	..	..	1-15
Beliaghata	..	..	..	..	1-13
Shambazar	..	..	..	..	1-03
Bhowanipur	..	..	..	..	1-02
Ballygunge	..	..	..	..	0-97
Kidderpore	..	..	..	..	0-93
Howrah	..	..	..	..	0-64

It is obvious that the rate of *jamma* is dependent on the composition and density of the population of a locality where a rickshaw is expected to ply, as also on the popularity of the rickshaws and the earnings of pullers. Owners and pullers questioned admitted an increase of at least 100 per cent. in the *Jamma* rates in 1944 as compared with 1939.

Another interesting feature is that the *jamma* of a rickshaw depends on its age. For the first three to four months, a new rickshaw will be let out at Rs. 1|8|- per shift. For the next three or four months, the rate will be reduced to Rs. 1|6|- or even Rs. 1|4|- per shift and for the subsequent three months or so, it may be reduced further to 14 annas to a rupee per shift. It is also usual to withdraw a rickshaw from the streets for periods varying from 15 days to a month for repairs. This is usually done a month before the date of the renewal of registration. The rickshaw is then garaged, repaired and painted. After registration, the rickshaw will be let out on hire at the normal rates, i.e., the rates charged immediately prior to being garaged.

It has been mentioned earlier in the report that the cost of repairs is the liability of owners. It is also customary for owners to defend their pullers in case they are prosecuted for breaches of traffic rules and to pay fines imposed by courts. Over and above this, there also remains the responsibility for general supervision. In view of all this, big and medium owners find it profitable to hire out their rickshaws to other people on a monthly basis. The rates of hire per rickshaw varied from locality to locality from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 per month in pre-war days. From the moment a rickshaw is thus let out, the liability of the original owner ceases and all expenses referred to above are borne by the second party. The system is obviously advantageous for the owners as it ensures them a secure and steady income without any responsibility. It was widely prevalent in 1939 but the increased returns of to-day have greatly checked it.



There are four classes of persons to whom the owner hires out his rickshaw on a monthly or yearly basis. They are in order of preference as follows :—

(1) Small owners who have more pullers on hand than they can provide for.

(2) *Sirdars* of the garage, as a sort of patronage ; but rickshaws let out to them are not allowed to be kept in the owners' garage.

(3) Such of the pullers as have worked for some years with the owner ; in which case, too, the rickshaws are not allowed to be kept in the owners' garage.

(4) Outsiders, recommended by persons known to the owners.

Of the last class of persons, one interesting case came to notice during the enquiry. One of the big owners, a lady, owning 110 rickshaws, finds it difficult to manage such a large fleet even through the agency of *sirdars*. She has consequently been compelled to let out her rickshaws to *Mohalla Sirdars* at the rate of Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per month per rickshaw on an annual settlement. These *sirdars*, again, hire out rickshaws to pullers at *Jamma* rates varying from Rs. 1¼/- to Rs. 1½/- per shift. The pullers working for *Mohalla sirdars* are, however, treated by the Union and the police as pullers in the service of the original owner though actually the owner has relieved herself of all responsibility by letting out all her rickshaws. It is said that, in cases of this nature, the original owner is officially responsible for the conduct of the pullers and summons from the court are served on him, though the fines imposed for offences are paid by the second party.

*Subletting by Pullers.*—Subletting by pullers is of two types :—

(i) Pullers may be authorised by owners to sublet rickshaws, in which case they have to find their own garages and the original pullers then act as owners.

(ii) In the second case, which is more prevalent, the pullers sublet the rickshaws to other pullers without the knowledge of the owners.

Various reports received from the owners and the pullers go to show that a puller does not actually work for more than 6 hours in a shift. In some cases, where he has earned enough for the day within a short time, he lets out the rickshaw to another puller for a reduced *jamma*. Sometimes, a puller may suddenly fall ill and sublet his rickshaw to another person, the actual amount of *jamma* depending on bargaining between them.

It is reported that this practice is much more prevalent among the 'night' pullers than among the 'day' pullers. As the 'night' pullers, as a rule, earn more than the 'day' pullers, it is possible for them to make a good collection within a few hours and sublet the rickshaw for the remaining part of the shift. Mention has already been made in this report that there is a fairly large number of pullers who work on a part-time basis. It is generally this class that is found very handy for such clandestine employment. This is borne out by the fact that, out of 500 pullers questioned, there were at least two who did not possess any license. As this makes the owner, the original puller to whom the rickshaw was made over by the *khatal*, and the unlicensed puller, all liable to fine and/or imprisonment, the fear of punishment acts as a deterrent against any wide prevalence of this practice.

#### Hire Charges.

Under the Hackney Carriage Act, rates of fare were fixed by the Police in 1919 when the registration of the rickshaws was first taken over by that Department. In actual practice, however, hire rates have been usually decided by mutual bargaining and have been higher than those shown on the Fare Plate.

Of late, there have arisen a number of disputes on this point between the military personnel passengers and pullers. Some of these passengers insisted on paying the pullers at the rates shown on the Fare Plate while pullers looked upon it as sheer injustice (*sulam*). On the representation of the pullers, a Committee was formed to enquire into the matter, and the following rates have now been sanctioned :—

	Ra.	As.	Ps.
1. Per mile or part thereof : .. .. .	0	3	0
2. Per hour or part thereof : .. .. .	0	8	0
3. Every hour or part of an .. .. . hour beyond the first hour :	0	4	0

#### Literacy.

Of the 500 samples selected at random from various parts of the city, 450 or 90 per cent. of the pullers were found to be illiterate.

#### Habits.

With rickshaw pullers, who are mostly upcountry men, tobacco in the form of *Khainee* is the most common habit. They also smoke *bidis* and *hooka*. The latter is more popular among the Muslim pullers. A fair number of pullers, especially those who are Chamars by caste, have been found to be *Ganja* smokers. This class also drink toddy and other kinds of country liquors.

#### Age—Distribution.

Though the Hackney Carriage Act prescribes the minimum age of 18 for rickshaw pulling, some cases of under-aged pullers attracted notice. The following table shows the age-distribution of 500 pullers questioned by my investigators :—

TABLE XXXVII.

Age groups (in years)	No. of pullers.	Percentage to total.
15—20 .. .. .	25	5.0
21—25 .. .. .	76	15.2
26—30 .. .. .	155	31.0
31—35 .. .. .	109	21.8
36—40 .. .. .	78	15.6
41—45 .. .. .	34	6.8
46—50 .. .. .	17	3.4
51 and above .. .. .	6	1.2
Total .. .. .	500	100.0

It is essential in the interest of the pullers that a maximum age-limit should be fixed. In my opinion, it should not exceed 45 in view of the exacting nature of the work.

#### Marital condition.

Of the 500 pullers examined, 478 were married and 22 unmarried. Except in the case of local pullers, the rest live away from their families for periods varying from 6 to 8 months. This is perhaps the most fruitful cause of the spread of venereal diseases among pullers. The doctor employed by the All Bengal Rickshaw Union stated that a fair number of such cases came to him for treatment, generally in the secondary stage of infection. Illiteracy, a sense of guilt and shame and a predilection in favour of country medicines, which are advertised as capable of effecting miraculous cures within an incredibly short time, are the principal reasons why these people keep away from qualified doctors. One remedy for this would be the enlarged provision of suitable family

quarters for pullers. But there is one difficulty in their way. There is no certainty about their income and normally they cannot work for more than 5 or 6 months in a year. In such circumstances, pullers are not likely to be willing to bring their families down to their place of work unless and until they are assured of a regular monthly income throughout the year.

#### Health.

An enquiry into the health of these 500 samples was contemplated, and the Executive Officer of the local Corporation very kindly agreed to place the services of a few municipal doctors at my disposal. The idea had, however, to be abandoned in view of the opposition of the All Bengal Rickshaw Union. They were unnecessarily alarmed and, as it was felt that they might pass their unfounded suspicions on to the pullers, the proposal was dropped.

#### Earnings.

Family budgets giving a summary of income and expenditure were obtained from 500 rickshaw pullers in Calcutta. The table below shows the average gross and net weekly earnings respectively of a rickshaw puller from different sources (gross earnings include the *jamma amount*) :—

TABLE XXXVIII.

A			B		
Gross earnings (weekly).			Net earnings (weekly).		
Sources.	Per capita income in Rs.	Percentage to total.	Sources.	Per capita income in Rs.	Percentage to total.
Rickshaw-pulling	18.61	99.20	Rickshaw-pulling	11.10	98.67
Other sources	0.15	0.80	Other sources	0.13	1.33
Total	18.76	100.00	Total	11.25	100.00

It is clear from these figures that almost the whole of the puller's income i.e., about 99 per cent., is obtained from rickshaw pulling alone, while income from other sources like subletting, subsidiary occupation, etc., is negligible and does not amount to 1 per cent. on an average. The fact is that 6 to 8 hours' pulling imposes too heavy a strain on the puller and this prevents him from taking to any other subsidiary job even when it is less strenuous. Another explanation is that, owing to the presence of a large military personnel, who have taken a regular rickshaw-riding, pulling has become a very lucrative source of income and, consequently, the temptation to take to other subsidiary occupations as in pre-war times does not arise.

From the table referred to above, it is seen that the net weekly earning of a puller from pulling alone now amounts to Rs. 11.10. In some cases, it has been found that the daily net income of a puller from pulling varies from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5. Though no comparative figures were available, it has been reported that the present income from night pulling is considerably higher than that during the day. This is explained by the fact that the demand for rickshaws is greater at night than during the day, partly because of the early stoppage of buses and trams owing to the prevailing emergent situation and partly because of the large army personnel who attend restaurants, hotels, cinemas and places of amusements at night.

The income of a rickshaw puller fluctuates from day to day and from season to season. In this respect he closely resembles an agriculturist whose income is proverbially unstable being dependent on the vagaries of nature. It was reported by pullers that their daily earnings are considerably higher during the rains than in the other seasons.

### Clothing.

In the majority of cases, it was found that the clothing of a puller consists of a *gamcha*, one *ganzi* and one *dhoti*, the *gamcha* being utilized as a *dhoti* when he is indoors. This is enough to show that an average puller is ill-clad throughout the year and as such the rains and the winter are the worst seasons for him when he cannot adequately protect himself. Pullers employed by the Calcutta Corporation are provided with free khaki uniforms and a blanket and a rain coat during the winter and the rainy season respectively. Pullers of public rickshaws in Calcutta lack this essential equipment for outdoor work in all seasons and not a single case was found where this has been supplied even at a nominal cost by any of the big owners. I suggest that, even if uniforms are not supplied regularly to the pullers, the supply of blankets and raincoats should be made obligatory on owners at the time of the registration of their rickshaws. Another problem which should receive sympathetic consideration is the supply of canvas shoes to pullers in summer when it becomes exceedingly difficult for them to ply rickshaws barefooted on the intensely heated tar-macadam roads of the city.

### Dependants.

The majority of pullers have a large number of dependants, ranging from 3 to 8. Pullers having as many as 10 or more dependants were also found in the course of the enquiry. This is shown by the table below which gives the number and percentage of pullers according to the number of their dependants :—

TABLE XXXIX.

*Showing the number of dependants.*

No. of dependants.	No. of pullers.	Percentage to total.
Up to 2 .. .. .	118	23·6
3 to 5 .. .. .	269	53·8
6 to 8 .. .. .	84	16·8
9 to 10 .. .. .	17	3·4
11 and above .. .. .	12	2·4
Total .. .. .	500	100·0

### Indebtedness.

My enquiry reveals that 270, out of the 500 sampled pullers (i.e., about 54 per cent.), were indebted with a average debt of Rs. 119·94. The following table shows the frequency distribution of the rates of interest and the average amount of debt per head under each group of interest rates.

TABLE XL.

Rate of interest per cent. per annum.	No. of debtors.	Percentage to total debtors.	Average amount of debt per head.
1	2	3	4
Rs.			Rs.
Up to 24 .. .. .	116	42·96	109·97
24 to 48 .. .. .	98	36·30	149·89
48 to 72 .. .. .	6	2·22	100·69
72 to 96 .. .. .	40	14·82	75·09
96 to 120 .. .. .	3	1·11	123·33
120 to 144 .. .. .	2	0·74	67·53
Above 144 .. .. .	5	1·85	165·00
Total .. .. .	270	100·00	119·94

Most of these debtor-pullers have been compelled to migrate to the city and take to rickshaw pulling because of the inadequacy of their village income and their consequential incapacity to support themselves and their dependants. This is brought out by the following table which shows how the percentage of indebted pullers has gone on increasing with the rise in the number of dependants :—

TABLE XLI.

No. of dependants.	No. of debtors.	Percentage to total debtors.	Average amount of Principal per head.
			Rs.
0 .. .. .	5	15.56	111.20
1 .. .. .	14		87.90
2 .. .. .	23		151.85
3 .. .. .	55	82.22	111.25
4 .. .. .	58		96.83
5 .. .. .	47		154.93
6—10 .. .. .	62		87.35
Above 10 .. .. .	6	2.22	104.38
Total .. .. .	270	100.00	113.21

It will be noticed from this table that about 16 per cent. of the debtors had up to two dependants, 82 per cent. as many as 3 to 10 and about 2 per cent. more than even 10.

*Sources of Loan*—Loans are generally of two types :—

(i) Emergent expenses of an irregular character for such purposes as marriages, sickness, death of relatives, etc., are usually met by raising large scale loans from professional money-lenders of the village. These loans generally have moderate rates of interest and easy terms of repayment.

(ii) On the other hand, the necessity for supplementing income to meet day-to-day needs brings into vogue a series of short-term small scale borrowings ranging from purchase of articles required from known shops near their *bustees* on credit, to borrowing from friends and relatives, from jobbers as well as from petty money-lenders including the ubiquitous *Pathan*. Prospects of immediate relief, coupled probably with vain hopes of a suitable adjustment of the budget in the following month, compel the pullers to resort to short term borrowing in spite of its well-known dangers. Sometimes, it must be conceded that this becomes unavoidable. Borrowing of large amounts of money, more often than not, requires mortgages backed up by tangible security, but the small creditors require no security other than that of their own capacity to realise what they consider to be an equitable return for the money lent.

The sources from where pullers obtain loans are shown in the following table :—

TABLE XLII.

Purposes. 1	Mahajan.* 2			Friends & Relatives. 3			Employers and Sirdars. 4			Pathan. 5			Total. 6
	No. of borrow-ers.	Average amount of principal borrow-er.	Average rate of interest percent. per annum.	Number of borrow-ers.	Average amount of principal borrow-er.	Average rate of interest percent. per annum.	Number of borrow-ers.	Average amount of principal borrow-er.	Average rate of interest percent. per annum.	Number of borrow-ers.	% of each category to the total number of borrow-ers.		
Marriage ..	58	(Rs.) 203.11	38.5	8	(Rs.) 80.50	16.9	7	(Rs.) 128.75	10.8	Nil	Nil	73	27.0
Shikates ..	12	80.39	39.8	11	58.94	5.3	4	98.75	9.4	Nil	Nil	27	10.0
Death ..	7	102.22	22.9	1	40.00	Nil	Nil	Nil	8.6	Nil	Nil	8	3.0
Insufficiency of earnings.	88	88.79	46.8	26	49.70	8.70	17	42.13	9.0	Nil	Nil	131	48.5
Miscellaneous ..	21	141.00	36.2	4	31.50	7.00	5	183.33	9.5	1	10.0	31	11.5
Total ..	186	..	..	50	..	..	33	..	..	1	..	270	100.0

\*It has not been possible to show separately the village mahajans from whom large scale debts of the type mentioned above are obtained and the retail money lenders who are the chief source of short term regular debts in cases of insufficiency of earnings. In this table, these two separate sources have been lumped together and classified as "Mahajan".

The primary cause of indebtedness, as pointed out above, is the set of emergent expenses grouped under the title of 'irregular expenditure', but other causes are also in operation. Marriage happens to be by far the most important single cause of borrowing, 27 per cent. of the pullers being indebted on this account. This is because marriage is conventionally a pretty expensive function for all classes of Indian labour, irrespective of their economic status. Sickness and funeral expenses are the next important causes of 'irregular expenditure' accounting for 10 per cent. of the indebted pullers. Among the causes of the short term debts, insufficiency of earnings is the most important, accounting for nearly 48.5 per cent. of the indebted pullers. The group 'miscellaneous' includes travelling expenses from the city to the village, repairs to village houses, etc., and accounts for nearly 12 per cent. of the indebted pullers.

*Rate of interest.*—From Table XLII it is evident that, in almost all cases of loans from Mahajans, the rate of interest is more than 36 per cent. per annum. The rate charged by friends and relatives has been found to vary from about 5 per cent. to 17 per cent. per annum. The higher charge of the Mahajan is attributable to the fact that he prefers to remain a creditor and receive interest without desiring prompt repayment of the loans which are mostly unsecured. Friends and relatives, on the other hand, lay out their money at lower rates of interest. This is also true of the *sirdars* and owners of rickshaws. The maximum rate of interest charged by them was only about 9 per cent. per annum. The cause of the inordinately high rate of interest to the extent of 120 per cent. per annum charged by the *Pathans* is due to their lack of confidence in the repaying capacity of the pullers, who have no fixed income and who are migratory in habits. To dispense with these high interest rates, I suggest the starting of a co-operative credit bank for the benefit of pullers so that they may obtain loans on easy terms during their stay in the city. This, coupled with a thrift society, will be very useful.

Relief in the shape of scaling down of debts when these are beyond the repaying capacity of borrowers and limitation of rate of interest, in case of debt incurred by them at their village home, should be provided by having recourse to existing legislation for protecting the agricultural debtors and, if need be, the scope of this legislation should be extended so as to cover the rickshaw pullers who are essentially agriculturists.

#### Housing.

The housing of pullers may be described under the following four headings :—

(i) *Khatals*, (ii) *Bustees*, (ii) Mixed type of houses and (iv) *pucca* houses.

(i) *Khatals*.—Rickshaws are garaged by owners at garages owned by them. These are called *khatals*. There are 350 to 400 *khatals* scattered all over the city. *Khatals* are generally covered spaces with open courtyards in front. The covered space is used for garaging rickshaws and a part of it is partitioned off to form small cubicles to be used as living rooms by pullers and the *Sirdar*. The open courtyard is dumped with logs of wood for the repairing of rickshaws, rickshaws waiting for repairs, and the rickshaws brought in late at night by the pullers. The *Khatals* are roofed with corrugated iron sheets. The walls also comprise either corrugated iron sheets or plated bamboo or mud and wattle. In some cases, roof is made of *khola* or of Indian tile. The *khatal* has generally walls on three sides; the fourth overlooking the courtyard is left open. In one corner of the covered space is a small forge and a carpenter's table for petty repairs of the rickshaws belonging to the garage. The floor of the *khatal* is usually made of earth, which in very rare cases is raised a little over the ground level.

The cubicles or the rooms, measuring usually 6 ft.  $\times$  8 ft. and opening in the courtyard, are allotted to the pullers. 38 per cent. of the 500 samples examined live in these *khatal*s. 10 per cent. of these pay a monthly rent of Rs. 1/8/- per head and the rest are provided free accommodation.

These cubicles serve as sleeping and sitting rooms as well as kitchens. There are usually 10 pullers to a cubicle. I am told that, due to congestion, some of the pullers are compelled to curl themselves up between the wheels when they want to sleep at night or whatever available space they can manage to find in the garage. It is needless to say that none of the cubicles has any windows or any chimneys for the outlet of smoke. During the rains and winter, the inmates have little protection from the inclemencies of weather.

This is the usual lay-out of a *khatal* and the housing accommodation provided for the pullers. In certain cases, which are extremely small in number, I noticed raised plinth, pucca floor and front doors; but even here, no arrangement has been made either for ventilation or for the escape of smoke. In some *khatal*s there are one or two latrines which are obviously inadequate for the number of persons living in them. Normally there is no arrangement for water supply and the pullers living in *khatal*s have to use the public taps. The normal atmosphere of the *khatal*, needless to say, is that of filth, dirt and utmost squalor. The floors and courtyards, which are rarely swept, are strewn with shavings of wood and accumulated dust. Painting and petty repairs are also done in *khatal*s.

The size of the covered space in the *khatal*s varies with the number of rickshaws garaged. There are some garages with covered spaces usually varying between 50 ft.  $\times$  25 ft. and 80 ft.  $\times$  20 ft. I have been told that some owners, who maintain no garages, park rickshaws on the footpaths in front of their houses. There is no system of subletting or hiring out the garages by the owners. The garages are, as a rule, owned by rickshaw owners themselves, and used for parking their own rickshaws.

A few *khatal*s were noticed in which sleeping accommodation has been provided according to a very crude berth system. Such *khatal*s have an upper row and a lower row of berths. But the whole arrangement is terribly cramped for want of space and does not permit sufficient air and light. It is not possible even to sit upright either on the upper or on the lower berth.

(ii) *Bustees*.—Most of the pullers live in *bustees* which are thus described in the Administration Report of 1868 of the Corporation of Calcutta :—

“A *bustee*, or native village, generally consists of a mass of huts constructed without any plan or arrangement, without roads, without drains, ill-ventilated, and never cleaned. Most of these villages are the abodes of misery, vice, and filth and the nurseries of sickness and disease. In these *bustees* are found green and slimy stagnant ponds, full of putrid vegetable and animal matter in a state of decomposition, and whose bubbling surfaces exhale, under a tropical sun, noxious gases, poisoning the atmosphere and spreading around disease and death. These ponds supply the natives with water for domestic purposes, and are very often the receptacles of filth. The articles which feed these tanks are the drains that ramify over the village, and carry the sewage of the huts into them. Their position is marked by a development of rank vegetation. The entrances to these *bustees* are many, but are not easily discoverable, whilst the paths are so narrow and tortuous that it is difficult for a stranger to find his way through them. The huts are huddled together in masses and pushed to the very edge of the ponds, their projecting eaves often



meeting one another, whilst the intervening spaces, impervious to the rays of the sun, are converted into urinals and used by both sexes in common. In these huts often live entire families, the members of which occupy the single apartment of which it is not infrequently composed, and in which they feed and sleep together; the wet and spongy floor with a mat spread on it serving as a bed for the whole family. None of these villages possesses a single road or thoroughfare, properly so called, through which a conservancy cart or even a wheelbarrow can pass in order to remove the filth. This filth is laid at the door of every hut or thrown into a neighbouring cesspool."

It is deplorable that no *appreciable change* should have taken place in these *bustees* during the last three quarters of a century.

Most of the houses in *bustees* are *katcha* huts, with *katcha* walls and floor and with roofs built of thatches, corrugated iron sheets or tiles. The walls are generally made of earth or split bamboo plastered with mud. The height of these huts generally varies from 6 to 8 feet. The plinth height is about 9 inches and hence the floor is usually damp. A fair number of houses have plinths below the ground level. The size of a room including the so-called verandah is 79.65 sq. ft. and it provides accommodation for 9.01 persons. This shows the abnormal congestion and density of population in *bustees*. The house rent is reported to have been increased by 16.41 per cent. over the pre-war rates. It used to be Rs. 2.62 per room per month in 1939 and has now gone up to Rs. 3.05. It may not be out of place to mention here that the rooms are hardly used for dwelling purposes alone. They usually serve the purposes of kitchen and store rooms and the inmates find it more convenient to sleep out in the open in fair weather. A small number of pullers, 2.80 per cent. of the sample, are homeless here. They dine in a mess nearby, run by their relatives or acquaintances and generally pass their nights in rickshaws or on pavements. Sometimes, they take shelter under the porticos of buildings in the locality. During winter and rains, their miseries know no bounds.

Ventilation in these tenements is highly unsatisfactory. The rooms are, as a rule, very poorly lighted owing to lack of windows and, even where any small apertures exist, they are usually closed by the inmates in their desire to secure privacy or to avoid imaginary evils of ventilation. Usually the size of a window or an opening in the wall is not more than 2.83 sq. ft.

There is hardly any provision for kitchens. In 83.46 per cent. cases, kitchens are located in the bedrooms.

(iii) *Mixed type of houses*.—29.80 per cent. of the samples surveyed lived in mixed type of houses usually in and around the *bustees*. Houses with *pucca* floor, *katcha* or *pucca* walls and roofs similar to those mentioned above come under this group. The average plinth height and floor space of a room in such a house are 1.04 ft. and 101.79 sq. ft. respectively. The average number of inmates per room was 8.92. 71.14 per cent. of these rooms are used for both sleeping and cooking purposes. The average rent of a room was Rs. 3.67 in 1939; it has now gone up to Rs. 4.91 which is an increase of 33.79 per cent. over pre-war rates. Out of 149 houses under this group, 98 houses were owned by private persons and the rest by rickshaw owners themselves. The average size of a door and a window are 75.75 sq. ft. and 3.19 sq. ft. respectively.

(iv) *Pucca houses*.—Some of the pullers, 13 per cent., lived in *pucca* houses. Most of these were barracks meant for factory employees. Through relationship or acquaintance with the regular inmates, these pullers seem to have gained an unofficial entry into them. The average floor space of a room accommodating 8.81 persons has been found to be 144 sq. ft. The plinth height

is 1.44 ft. The size of a door is 16.60 sq. ft. and that of a window 4.21 sq. ft. The rent of a room of this type was on an average Rs. 5.21 in 1939, and is now Rs. 6.80 which shows an increase of 30.52 per cent. over the pre-war level.

What little arrangements there are to be found for water supply to the *bustee* people for drinking and bathing purposes are grossly inadequate and unsatisfactory. Where there are any water taps inside *bustees*, as many as 200 persons and probably more have to depend on a single tap to draw their drinking water from. A similar queue is noticed if a tube well is situated nearby. Sometimes, these poor people have no other alternative but to use water from some dirty pond nearby, even for drinking purposes. In some cases, water taps and wells are located within a yard or two of public latrines exposed to constant contamination from sewage drains.

*Latrines and urinals.*—The shortage of latrines is a common feature in *bustees*. One latrine is usually meant for 80 to 90 persons on a modest computation. Most of these are service latrines and are not regularly cleaned by municipal scavengers. The result is that an obnoxious smell always hangs round the dwelling places. Some of the *khatahs* were found to have no latrines, the inmates therefore have to hunt for public latrines in the neighbourhood in times of need. It has been reported that inmates of some of these *khatahs* have to walk half a mile or so to find a public lavatory. There is no reason why the number of private and public latrines in these slums should not be adequately increased and necessary arrangements made for keeping them in a clean condition.

There is absolutely no provision for any urinal in these areas. The inhabitants are therefore compelled to betake themselves to open drains, slit trenches, or even open spaces in the compound.

Drains in these slums are all open and full of stagnant water and filth. They are rarely cleaned and make therefore excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes and various kinds of bacilli.

The method of disposal of sewage constitutes one of the poorest specimens of municipal service in the city. Lanes and bye-lanes in the slums are too narrow to permit the passage of any conservancy carts. As a result, there is no end of garbage and rubbish scattered all over the place in heaps and the stench that emanates therefrom is a standing menace to public health.

“I have been horrified by what I have seen. Human beings cannot allow other human beings to continue to exist under these conditions”, thus observed H.P.E. the Governor of Bengal after paying a visit to some of the *bustees* a short time ago. He further remarked: “I am not interested in who has been responsible for allowing these conditions to come into existence and to continue. My only interest is that these conditions should be improved and neither politics nor vested interests should be allowed to stand in the way. The people of Calcutta have a right to ask in six months’ time what has been done about it”. The results of the contemplated action will be watched with keen expectancy and interest.

#### Trade unionism.

The following are the three trade unions connected with rickshaw pullers in Calcutta.

- (1) The Bengal Rickshaw Mazdur Union,
- (2) The Calcutta Rickshaw Mazdur Union, and
- (3) The All Bengal Rickshaw Union.

The Bengal Rickshaw Mazdur Union and the Calcutta Rickshaw Mazdur Union were registered in May 1944 and July 1944 respectively. It is perhaps too early to assess their work. The All Bengal Rickshaw Union was first registered as a union of owners and manufacturers in 1934 with the name of the Bengal Rickshaw Union. From 1935 to 1938, it had a moribund existence. It was given a new life in 1938 when the name and the rules were changed to make it possible to admit pullers as members of the union. This union, with a membership of 80 per cent. of employers, employees and manufacturers, is probably a unique organisation of its kind in India. How far the membership of the pullers is voluntary is doubtful. It is a fact that the union has been able to arrange registration in a speedy manner but it must also be confessed that, when the puller pays a fixed sum to the union office, he does not know that a sum of Rs. 1-11-0 is taken as a donation from him. He becomes a willing and pliable tool in the hands of the union because he knows that he would not otherwise get the necessary facilities for registration and renewal of license. The union has of late appointed five traffic inspectors with the approval of the Commissioner of Police to guide the pullers in the matter of parking rickshaws in congested streets. The need for such inspectors had long been felt by pullers and owners, owing to the alleged police harassment.

But, are not these ameliorative measures undertaken by the union selfish? It is to the interest of the owners to facilitate registration of pullers so that there may not be any shortage in their supply and that they may not be placed in a disadvantageous position in bargaining with them. Again, as the petty fines have to be paid by owners, it is to their interest to see that these are reduced. In respect of the welfare activities of the union, mention must be made of the unemployment benefit, medical assistance, etc. If it is true that 80 per cent. of the pullers are its members, the money spent on welfare activities appears negligible in comparison with their total contributions to the union. The details of the amount spent so far are given below :—

TABLE XLIII.

Years.	Unemployment Benefit			Doctor			Medicines			Total		
	Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.	Rs.	As.	Ps.
1939-40	16	6	0	429	8	0	..	..	..	445	14	0
1940-41	199	14	0	805	0	0	..	..	..	1,004	14	0
1941-42	52	7	0	861	0	0	..	..	..	913	7	0
1942-43	74	2	6	960	0	0	137	3	6	1,171	6	6
1943-44	245	14	6	1276	8	0	91	5	3	1,913	11	9
1944-45	288	6	6	1,050	0	0	158	14	9	1,477	5	3

Though pullers contribute very heavily to the union, they have no voice in the matter of administration and the guidance of its policy, which is entirely in the hands of owner-members. Hence the criticism that the union is primarily a union of owners is correct and it may be cited as a conspicuous instance of the shrewd manner in which Capital exploits Labour. A searching inquiry into the legitimacy of this organisation and the manner in which its funds are raised and utilised seems called for.

#### A few suggestions.

This report is by no means a full catalogue of the ills of the rickshaw pullers as a class. A few suggestions could be offered which, if carried out, might lead to a partial amelioration of their condition. (i) Mention might be made of the paucity of rickshaw stands in the city which has been found to be a rather fruitful means of harassment by the Police. The Corporation and the Police may be advised to allot more space for setting up an

adequate number of *stands* in proportion to the number of rickshaws on the road and in consideration of their present popularity. (ii) The supply of drinking water, which is so necessary for the rickshaw pullers when on duty, is not adequate. It would be a blessing if the authorities arranged for the supply of pure drinking water at every rickshaw *stand* in the first instance. (iii) It would be a wholesome proposition to initiate a movement in favour of introducing the owner-puller element in the business. The pullers stated during the enquiry that it was theoretically possible for them to own rickshaws but for the limitation of the maximum number at 6,000, the high price of rickshaws and the cost of purchasing an old number plate from the existing owners. It is reported that though the cost price of a rickshaw does not exceed Rs. 300 today, the price of a number plate would be as high as Rs. 800 to Rs. 900. As the Police have fixed the maximum number of rickshaws at Calcutta at 6,000, new rickshaws cannot be registered so long as the number of registered rickshaws does not fall below it. I have been told that some of the pullers are earning quite a lot of money these days and it should have been possible for them to lay out money for new rickshaws but for the difficulty of registration. I am of opinion that the efficiency of service now available cannot deteriorate as a result of this experiment. On the other hand, it is calculated to confer a few blessings on the pullers whose present lot is very hard indeed. There can be no doubt that the puller would come to have an added interest in his trade if he knows and feels that the business is his own. This is also likely to stimulate in pullers a sense of responsibility which is not so strong today. If ownership is transferred as suggested, the large scale migration which is a feature of the business today may be checked to some extent. Again, the changed aspect of the business will encourage pullers to bring along with them their families to their place of business. The advantages of a settled domestic life cannot indeed be overestimated. (iv) Owing to insufficiency of earnings and uncertainty of employment, augmented by want of accommodation, rickshaw pullers, as a class, are compelled to live alone in Calcutta, leaving their families behind in their far off village homes. This enforced separation from family life is responsible for a number of evils which naturally detract from their efficiency. For instance, when taken ill, pullers do not as a rule receive the same amount of care and nursing as family life ensures. Nor do they have any regularity of meals which in normal conditions of life adds to the man's zest for living. Suitable housing is therefore a crying need of the day. (v) The system of rickshaw business, as it obtains today, has encouraged the advent of a huge personnel in the city, wholly disproportionate to the needs. The abundant supply of labour has naturally placed the owners in an advantageous position and enabled them to strike favourable bargains. The solution seems to lie in the diminution of the number of pullers in Calcutta, as also perhaps a substantial increase in the number of rickshaws. Another means of financially strengthening the profession of pullers would be to eliminate from the service part-time pullers. It would be useful to have an enquiry to find out to what extent this evil exists and then set about finding the means for its eradication.

#### PART IV.

#### NAGPUR, VIZAGAPATAM, MURREE, MADURA, AND DELHI.

The facts stated herein are based on the replies received from Nagpur, Vizagapatam, Murree, Madura and Delhi. Though these cannot claim to be very comprehensive, they are fairly indicative of the conditions of rickshaw pullers in these centres.

#### Employment.

The total number of rickshaws, including cycle rickshaws, in 1944 in these five towns was 2,015, out of which 1,875 or 93.05 per cent, were registered as

public and 132 or 6.95 per cent. as private vehicles, besides eight, which were not licensed at all.

TABLE XLIV.

*Showing the number of Rickshaws and Rickshaw pullers.*

Name of the town.	Number of rickshaws			Number of pullers.
	Public.	Private.	Unlicensed*	
Nagpur .. .. .	900	100	0	900
Vizagapatam .. .. .	350	0	0	633
Murree .. .. .	67	2	0	339
Madura .. .. .	58	22	8	109
Delhi .. .. .	500	8	0	583
Total .. .. .	1,875	132	8	2,564

So far as the combined strength of the pullers is concerned, it did not exceed 2,564. On an average, there were thus 1.2 pullers to every rickshaw, but one should not lose sight of the fact that, at Murree, the "license for rickshaw to ply for hire shall be granted on the condition that the licensee shall not permit the licensed rickshaw to be drawn or propelled by less than four men in the case of a licensed single rickshaw and five men in the case of a licensed double rickshaw". Thus, if Murree figures are taken out, the ratio would be 1.14 pullers to one rickshaw.

Only one city (Vizagapatam) does not impose any regulations on rickshaw pullers. The other four have prescribed some rules, but only two of them (Murree and Delhi) supplied copies of the same.

#### Ownership.

As compared to the 1,875 public rickshaws owned and hired by *chawdhris*, 101 are owned by pullers—100 in Nagpur and only one in Madura. The percentage is glaringly small, but, as will be shown presently, it is the resultant effect of a combination of forces.

The purchase price of a single-seater rickshaw varies from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 400/-; and a double rickshaw at Murree costs something in the neighbourhood of Rs. 600/-. It must be remembered that, since the outbreak of war the rise in the cost of production has been, in no case, less than 100 per cent.

TABLE XLV.

*Showing purchase price and life of a rickshaw.*

Name of the town.	Price in Rupees.	Life in years.
Nagpur .. .. .	400	4
Vizagapatam .. .. .	250	2 to 3
Murree .. .. .	400	8
Madura .. .. .	200	4 to 5
Delhi .. .. .	200 to 300	2

According to the replies received, a rickshaw is said to last from 2 to 8 years provided it is repaired regularly.

\*These eight vehicles have not yet been licensed by the Police at Madura.

Two difficulties are supposed to stand in the way of ownership of rickshaws by pullers :—

(i) The pullers are too poor or too extravagant to own or maintain rickshaws. Even if they successfully continue to procure capital at low rates of interest (say, from a co-operative society), they cannot return it properly, because their repaying capacity is proverbially small.

(ii) They are generally illiterate and miserably lack sense of responsibility.

These apprehensions, are founded on mere conjectures. Ownership by pullers has never been given a fair trial anywhere. Three municipalities favour municipal ownership, though one of them regards the presence of *chawdhris* as a vital bridge between the Municipality and the pullers.

Except at Murree, where the *only* 'stand' is yearly leased to highest bidder (the amount realised for the year under review was Rs. 550/-), there are no 'stands' exclusively meant for rickshaws, and hence the question of leasing or auctioning them does not arise.

No agreement, written or conventional, exists between the *chawdhris* and pullers regarding the terms and period of hire of vehicles or any other conditions of employment. There is, however, always an oral understanding in respect of hiring out rickshaws at certain rates to licensed pullers, subject, of course, to the implied obligation that they pay the hire charges regularly and handle the vehicle carefully.

There is no intermediary between the *chawdhris* and pullers. In certain cases, no doubt, the primary puller may sublet a hired rickshaw to another puller and shift on to the latter a part of his burden of hire, but, strictly speaking, it does not imply his serving as an intermediary.

Pullers are not required to deposit any security before they are given charge of rickshaws ; what is necessary is that they should inspire confidence in and be known to the *chawdhris*.

#### Earnings.

The rates of rickshaw hire for the public vary from place to place. Except Madura, where no tariffs are laid down, all municipalities have tabulated the charges. Nagpur replies do not make a mention of the rates. At Vizagapatam, 2 annas a mile is the rate. The rates at Delhi are as follows :—

For the first half hour of engagement—Six annas.

For subsequent hours provided no engagement exceeds three and a half hours—Four annas per half hour.

The Murree municipal committee has the following schedule of rates :—

TABLE XLVI (a).

*Schedule 'A' of rates for the hire of licensed rickshaws including hire of coolies.*

Time										Rs. as. ps.
One hour	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 2 0
Two hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 7 0
Three hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 11 0
Four hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 14 0
Five hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 0 0
Six hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 4 0
Seven hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 9 0
Eight hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2 13 0
Nine hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 2 0
Ten hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 6 0
Eleven hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 11 0
Twelve hours	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3 15 0

NOTE :—A fraction of an hour will be treated as whole-hour over the first hour.

TABLE XLVI (b).

**SCHEDULE ' B ' (Schedule of fares for a single journey for a single rickshaw by distance).**

Serial No.	From	To	Fares		
			Rs. As. Ps.		
					per one trip only.
1	The Mall	Kashmir Point, Snow View, Pindi Point, Spur Cottage, Holme-lands Estate (via Kuldana Road), Willow Bank and Survey of India	0	9	0
2	Do.	Jesus and Mary Convent, Sunny Bank and Kuldana Corner	1	2	0
3	Do.	Lawrence College, Ghora Gali, Cliffden, Hays' Farm, Kuldana Cantt., Jhikagali Military Dairy Farm	1	7	0
4	Do.	Upper Tops	1	9	0
5	Do.	Lower Tops Gharial	1	14	0
6	Do.	Bhurban Golf Hotel and links	1	14	0

There is no dead level of uniformity as regards the basis of payment by pullers to *chawdhris*. In Nagpur it is determined by mutual contract, in Vizagapatam and Madura it is annas eight and annas five to six per day respectively, irrespective of the daily earnings. In Delhi it is estimated at about Re. 1. per day. The bye-laws of the Murree Municipality have, however, pinned it to 20 per cent. of the fare subject to a maximum of Rs. 1|8| in the case of a single rickshaw and Rs. 2|4| in respect of a double rickshaw.

No special checks are exercised over pullers except that *chawdhris* are very alert and keep a vigilant eye on them. In a few cases they also employ some persons to watch their movements so as to estimate their approximate earnings and determine their own share. Payments by pullers are made daily and only rough accounts are maintained, though not as a rule.

The earnings of pullers fluctuate from day to day, but a rough estimate, as given in the replies, is as follows :—

TABLE XLVII.

Name of the Town									Daily earnings of pullers.		
									Rs.	As.	Ps.
Nagpur	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	0	0
Murree	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	8	0
Madura	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
Vizagapatam	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	0	0
Delhi	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	0	0

Repairs, upkeep or maintenance and overhauling are generally the liability of the *chawdhris*. Minor repairs are done by the pullers at Nagpur. Damages due to wilful neglect or rash handling are supposed to be the responsibility of the pullers. The wearing of uniforms is compulsory *only* at Murree and Delhi and the cost is borne by the pullers at the former place and the rickshaw owners at the latter. The fees for licensing and registration of pullers and rickshaws, as shown below, are not uniform :—

TABLE XLVIII.  
Annual Fees (Rs.).

Name of the Town.						License fee of pullers.	Registration of rickshaws.		
Murree	..	..	..	..	..	3 0 0	4	0	0
Nagpur	..	..	..	..	..	1 0 0	7	0	0
Vizagapatam	..	..	..	..	..	0 6 0	0	10	0
Madura	..	..	..	..	..	0 6 0	0	4	0
Delhi	..	..	..	..	..	1 0 0	3	0	0

{ Registration fee  
Rs. 4.  
License fee Rs. 5

The license fee is highest at Murree and is paid by pullers. The owners of rickshaws are responsible for the payment of registration fees.

The number of hours worked by pullers per day ranges from 6 to 12. Rickshaw pulling is a perennial occupation at Nagpur and Vizagapatam. Not so is the case at Madura where a day puller works for about 180 days and a night puller for about 200 days in a year. At Delhi, a large number of pullers leave for their homes during the sowing and harvesting seasons. At Murree, the season lasts from the middle of April to the middle of October.

#### Housing.

The housing conditions of pullers are far from satisfactory. There is only one shed belonging to the Murree Municipal Committee with a couple of small rooms for pullers. The rest of the pullers, with the exception of a few who rent a room collectively or in groups of four or so where they cook as well as sleep, occupy road margins, temples, railway stations and other public places. A microscopically limited number lives in different slum areas with their families.

#### Age and health.

There are no hard and fast rules regarding age-limits of pullers. The minimum age-limit is 16 to 21 years as per general bye-laws of the Madura and Delhi Municipalities. Mostly, pullers fall in the age group of 18—45, but, as the replies indicate, it is desirable that age-limits should be fixed between 20 and 40.

Only at Nagpur and Murree, pullers are medically examined before the license is issued. The crying need of the day, however, is that medical test be made compulsory for all pullers at all places. They are apt to get sprains, intestinal and heart troubles, high blood pressure, varicosity of veins, sore feet and tuberculosis. No special medical facilities, except the free and charitable dispensaries and hospitals which are open to others, are available to them.

It is difficult to gauge the average expectation of life in this trade. It is however certain, according to the replies received in respect of Murree, "that it is less than that of a hillman". Apparently, rickshaw pulling shortens life. The pullers are often village agriculturists who migrate from their homes in adjacent districts temporarily to add to their incomes. They work on their lands during the off season.

#### Indebtedness.

Most of them are under debt, but it is not incurred during the period they are engaged in rickshaw pulling. In fact, at the end of the season, they take home some savings. Debts are incurred in their villages from village money-lenders. The main factors leading to their indebtedness are household expenses, land revenue, social and religious rituals like births, marriages and deaths. The rate of interest is as high as 25 per cent. per annum.



## PART V.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

This report on labour conditions among rickshaw pullers embodies the results of intensive enquiries made in three representative centres—Simla, Calcutta and Madras and an analysis of the replies to a special questionnaire on the subject received from the municipal authorities concerned in these and 5 other centres—Nagpur, Vizagapatam, Murree, Madura and Delhi. The total number of pullers covered is 14,212.

*Employment.*—The available data show that there has been a large increase in the number of rickshaws and rickshaw pullers, with the result that there has developed an unhealthy competition both among the owners and pullers. This has had an adverse effect on the earnings of the latter. The Commissioners of Police in Madras and Calcutta have restricted the number of public rickshaws to 4,000 and 6,000 respectively with a view to preventing an increase in the number of road accidents. The issue of licenses should be limited in strict proportion to the population and the traffic needs of each locality, not only in respect of rickshaws but also of pullers.

*Labour supply.*—Labour for rickshaw pulling is drawn almost entirely from the villages and districts adjoining the centres under reference. Enquiries show that the vast majority of pullers have, in fact, been driven into this profession owing to lack of full employment in their villages, rack-renting by landlords or indebtedness to money-lenders, etc. At Calcutta, factory workers and corporation menials (sweepers, street lighters, etc.), too, have taken to rickshaw pulling with a view to earn a supplementary income during their spare hours.

*Period of regular employment.*—The first and the most important peculiarity of this type of labour is its frequent exodus to its village homes. In Madras, 60.6 per cent. of the pullers were absent for a period ranging from 4 to 6 months in a year. In Calcutta, 66.8 per cent. were absent from the city for a period of 4 to 9 months in a year. This is due to the fact that the families of the majority of pullers are left behind in their villages, and that some have also to go back for assisting their families and relatives in sowing and harvesting or for attending to social and religious functions there.

Even more important than such periodical migration is the fact that a large percentage of pullers drop out of the profession after a few years of work. The percentages of pullers who have worked continuously for a period of 15 years and more are 9.73 in Simla and 7.7 in Madras. The primary reason for this is physical incapacity, due to the strain involved in rickshaw-pulling.

*Age-distribution.*—This conclusion is corroborated by the data of the age distribution of pullers. 63.9 per cent. of the pullers in Madras, 56.5 per cent. in Simla and 71.8 per cent. in Calcutta are between 21 and 35 years of age; the percentages of those above 41 years are only 15, 2.59 and 8.5 respectively. On the other hand, about 15 per cent. of the pullers in each of these three centres are between 15 and 20 years of age. There is therefore a need for fixing 20 as the lower and 45 as the upper age-limit for rickshaw-pulling on the plains. At Simla and other hill stations, where the strain is heavier on account of the ups and downs as well as the turns and twists of the roads, the upper age-limit may be fixed at 40.

*Marital condition.*—Judged by their age-distribution, it is obvious that the majority of pullers are married; the percentages of the married to the total number of pullers in Simla, Calcutta and Madras are 59.6, 95.6 and 75.9 respectively. Nevertheless, it was found that the majority of the married were living alone in their places of work, leaving their wives and children in their

village homes. Apart from the lack of timely meals and other amenities, this absence of home life, according to the evidence at my disposal, has been responsible in all the centres for much unhealthy life and there is therefore a strong case for providing suitable housing facilities for pullers.

**Health.**—As the vast majority of pullers are in the prime of their manhood, their general health is not unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, pullers suffer frequently from cold, cough, bronchitis and fever, due to their exposure to the inclemencies of the weather and from varicosity of leg veins due to the strain involved in rickshaw pulling. The susceptibility to these ailments is aggravated by their lack of sufficient clothing and nutritious diet and, in a few cases, due to excessive hours of work. The available evidence points to the need for a stringent medical test before the issue of licenses to pullers and the provision of suitable medical aid, preferably by means of mobile dispensaries. Furthermore, hours of work should be restricted by the adoption of a system of day and night shift by which the pullers of one shift would be different from those of the other.

**Literacy.**—The percentages of literates among pullers are small : 4.4 in Madras, 10 in Calcutta and 14 in Simla. It is essential that there should be some drive to impart education through the agency of adult classes during their off periods of the day or the night.

**Indebtedness.**—From the data collected by personal enquiries from a large number of sampled pullers, it was found that 79.3 per cent. in Simla, 54 per cent. in Calcutta and 61.4 per cent. in Madras were indebted with a *per capita* debt of Rs. 482, 120 and 112 respectively. An analysis of the causes of indebtedness shows that the largest number of cases of borrowings and the largest amounts borrowed were in connection with marriages or were inherited as ancestral legacies. Though such debts account for the major portion of the indebtedness of pullers, there was considerable borrowing for current requirements too, i.e., for food, clothing, etc. Such borrowings for domestic needs are due to irregularity of earnings, exodus to villages and, in some cases, to uneconomic expenditure on drink, etc. The burden of interest charges on loans borrowed is exceedingly heavy—as much as 63.6 per cent. to 105.9 per cent. in Simla. In Madras, 25 per cent. of the loans paid interest at 150 per cent. per annum, and another 23 per cent. at 75 per cent. per annum. In Calcutta, the bulk of the debt (69 per cent.) was obtained from the Mahajan or the professional money-lender at the rate of 36 per cent. per annum. Needless to point out that efforts should be made to promote thrift among pullers and organise co-operative credit societies for facilitating borrowings at lower rates of interest.

**Housing.**—There is no proper housing for rickshaw pullers in any of the centres. In Madras, among the Tamil pullers, the unmarried as well as the married, who live alone in the city are practically homeless. They sleep on the pavements, bathe under the public taps and eat their meals from street vendors. Such of those who have their families with them are obliged to live in *Cheris* (dwellings of outcastes) which are extremely insanitary and are woefully lacking in the elementary amenities of water, lighting and conservancy arrangements. The Telegu pullers, as a class, live in rented tenements of overcrowded houses which are as insanitary as the huts of the Tamil pullers and are also lacking in all the elementary amenities of water, lighting, etc. The rents paid vary from Rs 1/8 to Rs. 3/- per month for a room or hut measuring about 50 square feet. In Calcutta, the majority of pullers live in *khatahs* and *bustees*, while a few live in pucca and mixed type of houses. The *khatahs* and *bustees*

lack in sanitation and all amenities of water, lighting, etc. In Simla, the position is not very much better. Pullers have to sleep either in the very sheds where the rickshaws are parked, or in the open spaces of public buildings nearby. A few pullers are accommodated in houses rented for this purpose by the *chawdhris*, where latrine facilities, water supply and lighting arrangements are inadequate. Conditions are equally unsatisfactory in the old municipal sheds as well as the hotel sheds. They are somewhat better in the new municipal sheds, but there is on an average only one kitchen for every 24 persons.

*Welfare work.*—Welfare activities among pullers are conspicuously absent in all the centres. Attempts should be made by the municipal authorities to provide adequate shelter to the pullers and their vehicles. Canteen facilities could also be extended to them so as to enable them to buy food at cost price. Facilities for indoor and outdoor games, light music and other entertainments would go a long way to relieve the drudgery of their life.

*The Chawdhri System.*—In all the centres under reference, almost all the public rickshaws are owned by a large number of petty capitalists or *chawdhris*. In Simla, the *chawdhris* share the earnings with the pullers. In Madras and Calcutta, pullers pay a fixed hire charge for the vehicles and keep the whole of their earnings less the hire charges for themselves. The *chawdhri* system, of course, relieves the pullers of all responsibilities with regard to the purchase, maintenance and registration of rickshaws but leads to their exploitation with all its evil consequences.

Three alternatives to the existing *chawdhri* system may be suggested. Firstly, pullers alone may be made the owners of public rickshaws. An experiment of this sort was actually tried in Simla between 1938 and 1942, but was not given a fair trial. Secondly, Municipalities may own these vehicles and hire them out to pullers on reasonable terms. Thirdly, a large-scale co-operative society may be organised and entrusted with the sole responsibility of owning and maintaining public rickshaws.

*Conclusion.*—Whatever ameliorative measures may be undertaken for improving the condition of pullers, the fundamental fact should not be overlooked that *this type of labour is a degradation of human personality*. Mr. K. K. Dass, I.C.S., Commissioner of the Madura Municipality, rightly voicing the feelings of all conscientious people, has aptly stated in his reply to my questionnaire that "*the ultimate aim should be to abolish this form of conveyance as it is an offence against human dignity.*" Every word of this statement is pregnant with truth and the general consensus of opinion is that there should be a planning in respect of the early abolition of the jin and the cycle rickshaws. If light motor-cycle rickshaws could be introduced as part of an organised transport service in all towns, the stigma attached to rickshaw pulling would disappear and the rickshaw puller of today may be enabled to become the motor-rickshaw driver of tomorrow.

A. MUKHTAR.

SIMLA ;

The 4th May 1945.

## APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE.

### A.—Magnitude of Employment.

1. What is the number of registered Rickshaws in \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
How many of these are private vehicles ?  
How many of these are public vehicles ?
2. What is the number of licensed rickshaw pullers ?
3. Are there any rules relating to rickshaw pullers prescribed by the Municipality ? If so, please give details.

### B.—Ownership of Rickshaws.

4. What is the number of public rickshaws owned by pullers ?
5. What is the number of public rickshaws owned by *chawdhris* and hired out to pullers ?
6. What is the purchase price of a rickshaw ?
7. What is the average life of a rickshaw ?
8. What are the difficulties in the way of ownership of rickshaws by pullers ?
9. Is the municipal ownership of rickshaws a practicable proposition ?
10. What are the advantages of the ownership of rickshaws by *chawdhris* ?
11. Are rickshaw stands auctioned or leased by the Municipality ? If so, state the amount of the money realised from this source.

### C.—Conditions of Employment and Hire.

12. Is there any agreement, written or conventional, between *chawdhris* and pullers regarding the terms and period of hire of vehicles or any other conditions of employment ?
13. To what extent are the terms of such agreement prescribed or enforced by the municipal authorities ?
14. Is there any other intermediary between the *chawdhris* and pullers ? If so, what are his functions and earnings ?
15. Do teams of pullers hire out rickshaws on their own collective responsibility directly from *chawdhris* or do the *chawdhris* engage their own teams directly or through intermediaries ? (For Simla only).
16. Is the constitution of teams of pullers fixed or does it vary from time to time ? (For Simla only).
17. Are the liabilities of pullers to *chawdhris* and others, individual or collective ? (For Simla only).
18. Are pullers required to deposit any security before they are given charge of rickshaws ? If so, indicate the source from which pullers obtain the amount required ?

### D.—Earnings and Hours.

19. What are the rates of rickshaw hire for the public ?
20. What is the basis of payment by pullers to *Chawdhris* and intermediaries, if any ?
21. What is the proportion of hourly earnings of pullers claimed by owners of vehicles ?
22. What are the checks enforced by *Chawdhris* on the pullers' earnings to determine their own shares ?

23. What are the abuses of such a system of sharing of earnings ?

24. Are payments by pullers to *chawdhris*, etc., made daily ? How are accounts maintained ?

25. How do pullers share their earnings among themselves ? (For Simla only).

26. What are the approximate total daily or monthly earnings (including tips) per puller ?

27. Who is responsible for the repair and upkeep of rickshaws hired out by pullers ?

28. Are there any kinds of repairs, e.g., punctures, which are a liability of pullers ?

29. In case of accidents involving damage to vehicles, are the pullers responsible ? If so, to what extent ?

30. Who supplies uniforms ? Is the wearing of uniforms compulsory ? Who pays for their washing and replacement ?

31. What is the license fee for pullers and who pays it ?

32. What is the registration fee for rickshaws and who pays it ?

33. What is the number of hours worked by pullers daily ?

34. For how many months in the year do pullers work ?

35. Is there any law regarding the attachment of pullers' earnings and rickshaws for debt, etc. ?

#### E.—Housing.

36. Where do pullers live ?

Is accommodation provided for them by Municipality or by Government ? If so, describe

- (a) the type of accommodation,
- (b) density of occupation,
- (c) rentals,
- (d) sub-letting,
- (e) sanitation,
- (f) water and lighting,
- (g) arrangements for cooking, etc.

#### F.—Age and Health.

37. What is the range of ages in which pulling is practicable ?

38. Are there any rules regarding age limits for pullers ? If not, is it desirable that there should be any such rules ? If so, please indicate their contents ?

39. Are pullers medically examined before being licensed ?

40. Is it desirable that they should be so examined ?

41. What are the common maladies or diseases suffered by pullers ?

42. Are any medical facilities available to pullers ?

43. What is the average expectation of life of a puller ?

44. What is the occupation of pullers during the off season ?

45. What is their usual domicile ?

#### G.—Indebtedness.

46. Does any indebtedness exist among pullers ? If so, what are their sources of borrowing ?

47. What factors lead them into indebtedness and what is the rate of interest payable by them ?