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AN AFRICAN LABOUR FORCE

TWO CASE STUDIES IN EAST
AFRICAN FACTORY EMPLOYMENT

BY

W. ELKAN

(Senior Research Fellow, East African Institute of Social Research)

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EAST AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH, KAMPALA, UGANDA

1956

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FOREWORD

I am very glad to have been asked to write a foreword to Mr. Elkan's papers. My Company was very happy to grant him research facilities in our factories, and we have been most interested to see the results—although we do not necessarily agree with all the conclusions he has drawn.

The papers are published as he wrote them—the reports of an unbiased and scientifically trained observer. We have benefited from his work as we think any Company must benefit from the impartial scrutiny of a social scientist. We hope that our example will encourage other Companies to offer themselves for study. This is one way, we think, in which all of us can help to improve the efficiency of our industries and the quality of our human relationships.

P. J. ROGERS, *Chairman*

EAST AFRICAN TOBACCO COMPANY,
July, 1955.

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THE PEOPLES OF UGANDA



CHAPTER I

PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

These studies describe two investigations carried out by me in the factories of the East African Tobacco Company. They are not reports and this explains the exclusion of all reference to the merits, peculiarities and faults of individuals. Their purpose is rather to discuss some of those problems which face not only this Company but also other employers in Uganda, and incidentally to consider how far some of the techniques of labour management used by this Company have been successful.

The two studies which are now presented are part of a larger project on which I am engaged under the auspices of the East African Institute of Social Research at Makerere College and which has been made possible by a Colonial Development and Welfare Grant on the recommendation of the Colonial Economic Research Committee. It must be immediately apparent that the investigations which are the basis of the present book could not have been undertaken without the consent and full co-operation of the East African Tobacco Company, whose lively interest at every stage of my investigation was a constant source of encouragement. I am very much indebted to their employees at all levels, not least the many operatives and foremen who willingly submitted to lengthy questioning. I wish also to acknowledge warmly the help which I have at various times received from members of the Protectorate Government. I must thank Professor E. H. Phelps Brown of the London School of Economics and my colleagues at Makerere College and this Institute for their careful and critical reading of the first draft. The present version has gained much from the incorporation of their corrections and suggestions. Lastly, a bad linguist, incapable of typing and inaccurate at arithmetic, relies more than ordinarily on the Institute's assistants, secretaries and on Mrs. Jean Robin, who checked and improved the manuscript and saw it through the press. I thank them all very much.

The names of the places and peoples which appear on the following pages will be familiar to residents of East Africa. It may help English or American readers, however, to have a very brief sketch of the salient geographical, economic and ethnographic features of Uganda and its adjacent territories.

Unlike the two other territories which comprise British East Africa, Uganda does not touch the coast of the Indian Ocean at any point, but is separated from it by Kenya in the east. The shortest distance from the sea is 500 miles. In the north Uganda borders on the Sudan, in the west on the Belgian Congo, and in the south-west and south on the Trusteeship Territories of Ruanda-Urundi (Belgian) and Tanganyika (British) respectively.¹

Uganda lies across the equator and extends over an area of 94,000 square miles of which 14,000 square miles are open water. Although it approximates the size of England and Scotland combined its population is just under five million. The country has a general elevation of 4,000 feet above sea level though altitudes range from 2,000 feet to 16,000 feet. Its elevation explains the absence of some of the more conspicuous features characteristic of equatorial lands. Day temperatures are generally moderate

1. See Frontispiece map.

and the nights are cool. The maximum and minimum day temperatures at most stations vary little throughout the year, the annual mean for maximum day temperatures being between 80° and 85°F., and for minimum temperatures between 60° and 65°F. The characteristic vegetation is grassland, which is of two main types. Elephant grass, growing from 10-14 feet tall, is found mainly in the south, and is the natural cover of much of the most fertile land in Uganda. Short grass predominates in the drier parts, and provided rainfall conditions permit, is suitable for agriculture as well as pasture. The country is almost wholly devoid of large equatorial forests, the Mabira Forest in east Buganda being the only one of any size. It covers some 120 square miles.

Geographically Uganda may be thought of as consisting of two parts. One is an area surrounded by a series of lakes and contains Buganda, the Western Province and part of the Eastern Province. The other contains the remainder of the Eastern Province and the whole of the Northern Province and lies to the north of Lake Albert and Lake Kyoga. These large Provinces are divided into Districts which in most cases correspond roughly to the tribal areas. Thus the Western Province contains the Districts of Kigezi, Ankole, Toro and Bunyoro. The Northern Province comprises Acholi, Lango, Karamoja and West Nile (a grouping which includes the Lugbara, Madi, Alur and Kakwa peoples). The Eastern Province contains Busoga, Mbale, Bukedi, Bugisu and Teso.¹ The Kingdom of Buganda because of the size of its population ranks as a Province and is divided into four Districts.

Ethnically, the inhabitants of Uganda fall into four groups. Most of the tribes in the first or interlacustrine area, as it is called, and some of the immigrants from the Kenya side of Lake Victoria,² are Bantu. The Teso and the Karamajong are Nilo-Hamites. The Lugbara and the Madi in West Nile District are Sudanic and most of the remainder are Nilotes, like the Luo who come from the Kenya side of Lake Victoria. These very broad ethnologic distinctions are worth making here mainly because of the difference in typical physique between the Bantu and the other three groups which, as will appear later, affects the wage that each is able to command for unskilled work.

Although the two parts of Uganda are about equal in area, the interlacustrine area is the more densely populated and includes the centres of greatest economic development. Its native inhabitants produce most of the cotton and coffee which in 1953 formed 84 per cent. of the value of Uganda's exports. It harbours, in addition, the estates on which all the tea and sugar and a little of the coffee are grown. Nearly four-fifths of Uganda's enumerated labour force is employed there. Although the interlacustrine area as a whole is more prosperous and has witnessed a greater degree of integration into the world economy than northern Uganda, this prosperity is not by any means evenly spread over the area. In 1952 Buganda and Busoga between them produced 55 per cent. of the country's cotton, whilst Ankole and Kigezi in the south-west produced none, and the rest of the Western Province a mere 3 per cent. In the case of coffee, Buganda produced over 95 per cent. in both quantity and value terms of Uganda's production. In the same year Buganda alone accounted for half the total Uganda value of African-grown crops although its population was only one-quarter of the African population of the Protectorate as a whole.³

1. The name of the people who live in a District is generally the same as the name of the District except that the prefix Bu- where it occurs is dropped; two exceptions are the Kiga in Kigezi and the Dama and Gwere in Bukedi.

2. The Luhya, as they call themselves.

3. *Colonial Reports, Uganda, 1954*, London. H.M.S.O. 1955, for population figures and *Uganda Protectorate Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for 1952*, Appendix III. Government Printer, Entebbe,

The diversity of fortune between different parts of Uganda reflects differences in natural fertility and resources, differences in accessibility and differences in the typical reactions towards the opportunities of material advancement, though the last of these factors is generally less important than the first two. The economic pre-eminence of Buganda and Busoga may be considered in these terms. First, bordering on Lake Victoria and including a considerable area of elephant grass country, they embrace some of the most fertile land in Uganda with a substantial and reliable rainfall. Secondly, the Lake, and later the railway from the Kenya coast, provided a means by which the produce of the surrounding area could reach the outer world, whilst other areas were isolated by the absence of good natural communications until the building of roads over the last half-century gradually reduced, but by no means eliminated, their initial handicap. Lastly, the Ganda in particular have long been distinguished by the welcome which they extended to European culture in many of its aspects. "From the outset they were the delight of the missionary, the administrator and all concerned with the promotion of trade, for the eagerness with which they learned to pray, to read, to govern, to traffic and to produce."¹

Buganda and Busoga, apart from being the richest agricultural areas in Uganda—or, more truly, because of it—contain its two largest towns, Kampala and Jinja. Both grew up initially as centres of trade, Jinja handling much of the trade of the Eastern and Northern Provinces and Kampala that of Buganda and the Western Province. Both are important administrative centres, Jinja being the administrative headquarters of the Eastern Province and Kampala that of the Buganda Kingdom and also the seat of some of the Protectorate Government departments although the administrative capital of Uganda is at Entebbe, some 25 miles south-west of Kampala. Entebbe however, like Canberra, or Washington, owes its existence solely to the presence of the Protectorate Government whilst Kampala and Jinja owe the presence of some Government departments to their commercial importance.

Both Kampala and Jinja are the centres of a network of communications. Kampala was until recently the terminus of the railway from Mombasa. Jinja, originally the lakeside port of shipment for cotton from the Eastern and Northern Provinces, ceased to be a port in 1928 when the railway from Mombasa reached it, but continued to handle the cotton trade since it was still at the terminus of the system of railways and steamer services which connected it with the interior. Kampala is connected with the interior by a network of roads branching out to every district within Buganda and the Western Province.

The rapid growth of Kampala and Jinja since 1946 has been due in no small measure to a growth of industry. Before 1939 industrial undertakings were few and the most important group, the cotton ginneries and coffee-curing works, were in operation for only part of the year, and were dispersed throughout the growing districts. But since 1946 the prosperity which Uganda has enjoyed in common with other countries whose major source of income is from the sale of primary products, has encouraged a development of industries to provide for a growing home market. This process has been accelerated by the Government's declared policy of aiding the development of secondary industry as a precaution against a fall in the prices of primary products. The Owen Falls Hydro-Electric Works at Jinja owed their inception partly to this objective, and other large industrial undertakings, attracted to Uganda from abroad by the promise of cheap and plentiful power and the offer of official capital participation, are under construction. But the most

1. C. C. Wrigley, *The Economy of Buganda*. Paper submitted to the East Africa Royal Commission, 1953-55 ; unpublished.

conspicuous development has been the proliferation of small factories or workshops financed and managed generally by local Asian capitalists. These provide a number of engineering services and produce a variety of consumer goods including soft drinks, furniture, oil, soap, bread and confectionery.

Kampala and Jinja are thus commercial towns with an important minority of manufacturers. An indication of the rapidity with which the towns are developing is that the largest single group of employees contains those engaged in building and construction. The actual size of the two towns is not easy to determine. The official estimated figures for Kampala and Jinja are given as 38,000 and 25,000 respectively.¹ The estimates for the European and Asian sections of the population are likely to be fairly accurate. So is the estimate of the African population of Jinja. But the Kampala African population is very much greater than the official estimate suggests. The majority of Africans who obtain their livelihood in Kampala live outside its civic boundaries and therefore do not appear in the total given for Kampala in the 1948 census. It may well be that the actual African population is at least twice as high.² Kampala is without doubt a much larger town than Jinja.

A feature which characterises both Kampala and Jinja is the heterogeneity of their African populations. Men are drawn into these towns from an area which extends far beyond the boundaries of the tribal areas in which they are situated. Two-thirds of the employees of Kampala and Jinja are regarded by the local inhabitants as foreigners, and many of them come in fact from outside Uganda. A large contingent comes to Kampala from Ruanda-Urundi, a densely populated country where the opportunities to earn money are restricted. Another large contingent comes from a part of Kenya adjoining Lake Victoria, reaching either Kampala by steamer or Jinja by bus or rail. Others come from within Uganda. There is no Uganda tribe which is not represented in the labour force of Kampala and Jinja, though some tribes predominate. Thus, in Kampala there are more than a thousand employees from each of the Districts in the Western Province but less than a thousand from every other District within the Protectorate. In Jinja, the largest contingents come from other Districts in the Eastern Province and the Northern Province.

The background to this study is thus a varied agricultural community, prosperous in some parts and poor in others. In contrast to English experience in the 19th century, most of the men who come to the towns do not come to settle, but return to their homes in the country. The mass of English migrants in the early 19th century were agricultural labourers. In Uganda they are small peasant farmers who, as we shall see later, return to their homes after a year or two. Sometimes, like the Europeans in Uganda, they come for several "tours," but they come to supplement the incomes of their farms, not to supersede them. This practice of short-term migration dominates industrial life. It not only creates grave social problems, but also makes it difficult for the men to acquire the skill needed for a successful career in industry. In contrast, the minority of factory workers who are "suburban" residents are far more settled. They have or acquire small holdings in the neighbourhood of the town, where they live with their families, "commuting" daily to their work, and their attitude to their job begins to resemble that of the European townsman.

	European	Asian	African	Total
Kampala	4,000	17,000	17,000	38,000
Jinja	1,000	8,000	16,000	25,000

See Saben's *Commercial Directory of Uganda, 1955/56*. Kampala, 1955.

2. The number of persons in Kampala working in concerns which employed 5 or more persons in 1954 was 31,700.

Note : The wage rates and many of the employment arrangements discussed in the following pages have been altered and, I think, improved since this study was completed, but as the new dispensation is too young to have had significant effects on the character of the labour force, it has seemed wisest to ignore it.

PART I—KAMPALA FACTORY

CHAPTER II LABOUR TURNOVER

The Kampala factory of the East African Tobacco Company was built in 1937 and acquired by its present owners in 1948. It has in the past employed as many as 900 men. Since 1948, however, the number of employees has been gradually reduced to about 600 whilst at the same time output has increased.

This has been brought about principally by introducing more machines, but the contribution of careful labour management has not been insignificant. In some ways it is no doubt true that mechanization facilitates good labour management but conversely, unless attention had been paid to it, the introduction of the new machines might have proved disappointing in its results.

Employers in East Africa face two major problems :—how to reduce labour turnover and how to improve the efficiency of their labour force. The two problems are of course related. Workers do not reach their maximum efficiency until they have done a job for some time and to some extent the problem of how to improve efficiency resolves itself into one of getting people to stay longer in one job. In this chapter we shall be concerned with the first of these problems. We shall analyse the nature and extent of turnover and attempt to discuss some of its causes.

The tobacco factory did not begin to collect monthly turnover figures until 1952 and it was not until October, 1953, that a distinction began to be made between men discharged in the ordinary sense and men who failed to turn up again although they had given no notice of their intention to leave. We cannot therefore estimate with any accuracy the success of different attempts to reduce labour turnover, but only outline the situation at the present time.

If we exclude men dismissed for major breaches of discipline, the average rate of turnover for the months of October, 1953, to May, 1954, was 7.6 per cent. Every month, in other words, seven or eight men in every 100 employed had left the factory either because they wanted to or, in a very few instances, because they had exhausted the patience of their supervisors by being continuously absent. This figure in itself however conceals a multitude of possibilities. It matters very much who are the ones who leave and to this an average of this sort provides no answer.

A study of the employment record cards of men who left the factory between September, 1953, and June, 1954, reveals two things of particular interest. (See Table I.)

TABLE I
RESIGNATIONS AND VOLUNTARY DISCHARGES, SEPTEMBER 1953—JUNE, 1954 (KAMPALA)

<i>Length of Service</i>	<i>Ganda</i>	<i>Ankole</i>	<i>Ruanda</i>	<i>Luo</i>	<i>Other 12 Tribes</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 1 year	39	8	13	15	44	119	58
1 year and under 2 years	8	10	11	2	9	40	20
2 years and under 3 years	5	6	4	2	2	19	9
3 years and under 5 years	8	3	—	—	3	14	7
5 years and over ..	13	—	—	—	—	13	6
	73	27	28	19	58	205	100

than the rest and are therefore more likely to grasp the intricacies of the method of wage payment. Moreover, the method of engaging a tradesman is traditionally different from that of engaging unskilled workers. Instead of being taken on at a firm wage, the tradesman is taken on for trial and a wage offer is only made at the expiry of the trial. The trial may be a matter of hours but extends more commonly over a period of two or three days. Moreover, tradesmen are taken on at any time during the month so that if the offer proves unacceptable a man will have no hesitation in leaving at once and trying his luck elsewhere. In consequence there is unlikely to be a rapid turnover in the first year. If a man accepts the wage he is offered it is because he believes that it is the best he can expect at the moment. This assessment of his chances is not likely to change in a few weeks. It may change eventually and cause him then to look for a new job. There is a tendency for increases in the wages of tradesmen to taper off more quickly than the increase in their efficiency. Familiarity breeds contempt. Employers soon take the good qualities of their workers for granted and become obsessed with their faults. Men know this and reckon their chances better if they change their jobs periodically. Perhaps the opposite tendency may have the same effect ; a man who has had a series of sharp rises in his pay sometimes feels that if he is so good he can probably do even better by moving to another firm. It frequently happens that a man will leave his job just after he has received an increase in his pay. Knowing that he is unlikely to receive another for a few months he is tempted to seek it from a new employer. The tobacco factory is in this respect no better or worse off than any other firm. If anything, the average length of service of just under three years which the tobacco factory obtains from its tradesmen compares favourably with other firms. Moreover in the case of tradesmen, a turnover on this scale is not excessive. New-comers do not have to be trained from scratch and the varied experience which many tradesmen bring to their work is just as likely to be an asset to the firm that employs them as a disadvantage.

The effect of welfare services on labour turnover is more difficult to measure than that of wages or skill. In themselves they probably do little to induce a man to stay. When combined with the opportunity to earn good wages they probably do. The popularity of overalls is reflected in the difficulty which is experienced in preventing their embezzlement. The canteen is less popular. The fact that the tea and bread which they receive is a free gift is not acknowledged ; " it is really deducted from our wages " is the usual comment. Moreover men complain that they may have to take their snack at a time when they do not particularly want it and that, if their turn for the canteen comes early, they find it hard to last out until the end of the day. They resent not being allowed to bring their own food and regard the canteen snack as totally inadequate. The medical facilities are seen in a no more favourable light. Instead of being regarded as a service they are looked upon as a means of preventing men from visiting the main hospital at the other end of the town. Yet men are notoriously ambivalent. Whilst cursing their employer liberally they may at the same time have for him a sneaking affection or regard. The volume of complaint is not a reliable index to the strength of dissatisfaction in a factory. The objective test of length of service is far more reliable. By this criterion the tobacco factory, if it has not succeeded in achieving miracles, has at least scored a notable success.

We have yet to consider the working of the firm's Provident Fund. The provisions of the Fund do not differ substantially from Provident Funds elsewhere. Contribution is optional though once a man elects to join, a regular deduction of approximately 10 per cent. is made from his wage. Each man's contribution is doubled by the firm and whilst in the end a man cannot regain less than he has contributed, he or his descendants may draw con-

siderably more, the precise amount being determined by his length of service. He is eligible to join as soon as he has completed a year's service and thereafter continues to remain eligible. He does the better for himself or his descendants, the longer he contributes. But to contribute, a man must stay with the firm and a Provident Fund is therefore, among other things, a means by which the firm seeks to reduce its turnover of labour. To be effective the firm must persuade men to join it, and the benefits derived from joining it must be sufficiently attractive to compel people to let their fund accumulate. The tobacco factory has achieved only very limited success in either respect. Out of a total of about 350 men who were eligible to belong to the Fund, only 70, or just under one-quarter, had joined. Let us begin by classifying them according to the basic wage they earned.

TABLE VI
MEMBERS OF PROVIDENT FUND BY BASIC WAGE (KAMPALA)

<i>Basic Wage Shs.</i>	<i>No. in Provident Fund</i>	<i>No. eligible</i>	<i>Members as % of those eligible</i>
41-50	2	108	2
51-60	26	102	25
61-70	11	35	31
71-80	5	12	41
81-90	3	5	60
91-100	3	7	43
over 100	20	40	50
	70	309	22

The two men in the lowest wage group both earned Shs. 50/-. No one earning less than Shs. 50/-, i.e., Shs. 4/- above the basic wage for men eligible to join, elected to belong to the Provident Fund, whilst the proportion of those who belong rises with each higher income group. No doubt this reflects to some extent the ability to forgo one-tenth of the wage each month. It is therefore surprising to find so many men in the wage group Shs. 51/-, Shs. 60/- belonging to the Fund since it is often said that Shs. 50/- per month now is the bare minimum on which a man living in Kampala can survive.¹ But it must be remembered that in addition to the basic wage most men draw Shs. 13/- a month attendance bonus and that the majority of men in this wage group also earn production bonuses and overtime. Moreover, men who have spent some time with the firm receive a bonus at Christmas which may amount to as much as a month's wage.

Finally, the great majority of members are Ganda whose cost of living is generally lower than that of others and the majority of whom have greater opportunities for supplementing their income. Many of them have a small customary holding of land for which they pay a rent of under one shilling per month and on which they can grow at least part of the food they eat. Those who have such a holding are therefore materially better off and better able to afford the saving enforced by membership of the Provident Fund.

Some connection between income and willingness to join the Provident Fund is evident but one is not necessarily the cause of the other. The fact that many equally well paid men chose not to join is evidence that ability to pay is only one factor in the situation. Moreover, the predominance of Ganda in the Fund is a valuable pointer to other factors. Unlike most others, their way of life is settled and their future more or less clear in their minds. Like others they find Kampala expensive but the attractions of the town outweigh its cost. The standard of life to which they are accustomed neces-

1. See Dr. A. W. Southall, *Preliminary Report of Kisenyi, Mengo, Kampala*, p. 33. Mimeographed. East African Institute of Social Research, Kampala, 1954.

the Tobacco Company is, therefore, more attractive to the man from western Uganda or Ruanda than to those from the north or the other side of Lake Victoria. The Tobacco Company pays all newcomers impartially unless they come with some competence in a traditional skill like carpentry, fitting or typing. This helps to explain why more Luo leave their job within a few months than Ruanda, and why so few Lugbara choose to come at all. Those Lugbara who stay all work in departments where they can earn considerably more than their basic wage.

The point can be further illustrated by looking at the tribal composition of one group in the factory which is neither eligible for production bonuses nor for overtime. Of 33 sweepers and compound cleaners, 25 come from western Uganda or Ruanda. The remaining eight are distributed as follows : two Luo have been with the firm for a month only and both are in fact juveniles. A Toro, Luhya and a Gisu had each had a month's service only. An Acholi with 10 years' service is in his 50's. A Madi and a man from the Congo have each had six months' service and although both are 19, they are younger than the average for their tribe. Moreover, the average length of service of men from western Uganda and Ruanda is shorter amongst sweepers and cleaners than the average for the factory as a whole. It would be wrong to assume on the basis of this alone that even for them Shs. 57/- a month is not an attractive wage, if the explanation were simply that men are transferred to more remunerative occupations as opportunities occur ; in fact, however, this seldom happens so that the low average length of service does, in fact, imply a more rapid turnover here than in other departments. Of the 33 sweepers and compound cleaners, 27 have been with the firm for less than a year, whereas in the factory as a whole, less than 40 per cent. are in their first year of service. Of the 69 men from western Uganda and Ruanda who have less than a year's service with the firm, 25 are to be found among the sweepers and compound cleaners. We saw earlier that men from western Uganda and Ruanda do not figure largely in the turnover of new entrants as a whole. If the sweepers were excluded from the calculation, their record would be even better.

We must not exaggerate the inferences to be drawn from these statistics and it would certainly be a mistake to infer from the high turnover of sweepers that the basic wage which the factory pays is really unattractive. Wages alone do not determine the attractions of a job. Compound cleaners work in the sun and this is never popular. Both cleaners and sweepers have a lonely job. There is some satisfaction in working with a team or a gang and sweepers not only have no share in this satisfaction but on the contrary are often positively excluded. It seems to be part of the fun of working in a team that there should be some who do not belong to it. A man from another team is an unsatisfactory "outsider" since there is no contact ; the sweeper, however, is constantly around and therefore performs excellently the function of the outsider. Moreover most firms, the tobacco factory included, select for this job men who are unlikely to do well in others. It is one of the few unskilled jobs open to older men and to men with physical or mental handicaps. Older men who find it necessary to take up unskilled employment are exceptional, and usually are found to have had an exceptionally varied career. Men with handicaps do not easily become attached to any one firm ; they are often bitter about humanity and soon feel persecuted.

We have been considering the effect of the firm's wages policy on the turnover of workers as a whole, irrespective of their grades of skill. Are there any marked differences between the turnover of unskilled workers and that of men in skilled, semi-skilled or responsible positions ? In so far as all better paid jobs are heavily dominated by Ganda we need only repeat

what we have already said, namely, that Ganda will stay in a job longer than others, provided it yields them an income above the basic unskilled level. Jobs yielding an income above the basic level can be classified as follows. There are, first of all, those in which a man can augment his income by extra effort. This includes all jobs which produce a measurable output, and where differences in output can be assigned to differences in effort. Secondly, there are jobs which require a skill which is peculiar to a tobacco factory: the operation of the machines, the keeping of stores requiring particular knowledge of cigarette machinery parts, and to a lesser extent supervision. Thirdly, there are the skills which can be used in a variety of firms and industries: typing, maintenance of electrical equipment, carpentry—men who can do these jobs can find employment with a builder or an oilmill, a garage or the office of an advocate.

Only men in the third category are engaged at a rate above the basic wage. All other jobs are filled by internal promotion. The fact that machine operators and supervisors are promoted to their jobs is partly a matter of necessity and partly one of economics. Previous experience in supervising is presumably some qualification, but experience in handling men is insufficient without detailed knowledge about the processes and organization of the factory, and this a man can only obtain by working there. It is, of course, also cheaper to pick supervisors from those already working in the factory than to train men with supervisory experience, so long as there are some who are capable of shouldering additional responsibility.

The question of whether the turnover of skilled men is different from that of other workers is relevant only in relation to the third category of men who come already confirmed in their skill, and who would be able to exercise their skill in another firm at any time. We have already seen that men on bonuses or who have the chance to work overtime tend to stay longer than those who only draw their basic wage, and since sheer length of service is a major qualification for promotion to semi-skilled or supervisory jobs, one would expect the length of service of men holding these jobs to exceed the average. To document this would be merely to prove the obvious.

In the third category there are too few to make more than tentative generalizations possible. Apart from clerks there are only 19 African tradesmen employed in the factory. This number comprises five drivers, three boilermen, three carpenters, one fitter, one electrician, one painter and five semi-skilled mechanics, greasers and tradesmen's mates. The following Table (V) shows their tribe and length of service.

TABLE V
LENGTH OF SERVICE OF 19 SKILLED WORKERS, BY TRIBE (KAMPALA)

	<i>Ganda</i>	<i>Luo</i>	<i>Others</i> (5 tribes)	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% of all</i> <i>workers</i>
Under 1 year	2	1	1	4	21	38
1 year but under 2	2	1	1	4	21	18
2 years but under 3	2	2	1	5	26	15
3 years but under 5	1	—	2	3	16	12
5 years and over	2	—	1	3	16	17
	9	4	6	19	100	100

The number in each tribe is too small to permit conclusions to be drawn about the average length of service of particular tribes or groups of tribes. But their overall length of service may be compared with the average of all workers. Skilled men are less prone to leave a job within a year but no more likely to exceed three years than men of all grades as a whole. Several of the causes of rapid turnover among newcomers are less important in the case of tradesmen. They are generally more intelligent and frequently better educated

whose service is at least five years. The Ganda, by comparison, form 26 per cent. of all employees but 54 per cent. of men with three or more years' service and 53 per cent. of those whose service is at least five years.

How can we account for this marked difference? Do the Ganda fare better in industry, and therefore stay longer? To some extent education helps to bring about quicker promotion from unskilled to semi-skilled work, and the Ganda have generally had more schooling than the immigrants from the west. This gives them a slightly better chance of rising in the pay scale during their first two years. In fact, however, the man from Ruanda who has risen in the pay scale is as prone to leave in his second or third year as the man who has not; on average his length of service is neither longer nor shorter. This also disposes of the common assertion made in defence of low wages, that since the immigrant is only here to acquire a certain sum of money, the less you pay him the longer he will stay with you.¹ When immigrants stay longer it is either because they came with some skill for which the remuneration in Kampala is higher than in their own country or because they rose from the ranks of the unskilled and obtained substantial increases in their pay very soon after their arrival. The former case is more common than the latter. Or they may in some way regard themselves as misfits in their own country. Often there is a combination of causes; a case typical of many is a 28-year old Ruanda who has been in Kampala since 1949 and at the tobacco factory since 1950. His father was a lower chief, and he himself has been to a Roman Catholic primary school. After four years in the Ruanda Agricultural Department he came to Kampala with his wife. The idea of working on his father's farm did not appeal to him. He had been to school and was used to European work—"my inclination was therefore to carry on that way." We may continue in his own words—"There are plenty of jobs in Ruanda but the conditions are unpleasant. We have to sign on and if we are ill we are brought to work by force. When I came to Kampala I lived at the Naguru Housing Estate and worked for the Electricity Board, spraying insecticide on poles. I got an electric shock and left. I spent three months working as stores assistant in the Public Works Department, then I came here. I was soon given the job of examiner. I have the chance to earn overpay (incentive bonus) and in a good month my total wages may be around 90 shillings. I now live at Kireka where I managed to get a small *kibanja*.² My wife grows food there and also obtains additional food by working for farmers in the neighbourhood."

Training facilities for some of the older skills, particularly building and clerical work, exist in many parts of the country where the demand for tradesmen and clerks is only limited. Some of the missions provide technical education on this level, and many of them are remote from the main centres of trade and industry. Men so trained, therefore, often leave their country for many years on end, and if they do not settle permanently in towns like Kampala they certainly stay for much longer than the untrained migrants who make up the bulk of Kampala's labour force. Others stay because they have progressed beyond their expectations. The Tobacco Company is one of the few firms in which there are a variety of semi-skilled tasks to which an untrained man may aspire. But the odds against an immigrant's promotion within his first two years are heavy. A factory is a strange place to him. It requires many adjustments in attitude, and behaviour before he

1. It is more probable, though, and more in accordance with such data as are available that immigrants come for a limited period of time and that during this time they will earn and save what they can. Sometimes they save to buy some specific object such as a bicycle; if they have saved enough to buy their bicycle after 15 months but had planned to stay for 18 months, they will take some money home with them as well. If they have not succeeded in buying their bicycle in the allotted time they may stay on for a few months more in the hope of accumulating enough, but sooner or later—and almost invariably sooner than two and a half years after their arrival—they return.

A. smallholding.

becomes efficient. Frequently he has to learn a new language before he understands or makes himself intelligible. He has generally had little schooling beyond baptism classes. It is only men of exceptional intelligence and ability to make adjustments in their life who rise above the level of the unskilled in this short period of time.

The fact of immigrant labour, which is perhaps the most striking feature of African industrial life and which distinguishes it from European experience, is something over which the tobacco factory or any other firm has relatively little control. The habits and aspirations of the immigrant worker have, at least in the short run, to be taken as given, and are not likely to be modified by changes of labour policy on the part of individual employers.

It is, nevertheless, possible to say something about the methods by which the firm seeks to persuade men to stay in their jobs. It is hard to know by what criteria their success might be judged, since there is no other factory here of comparable size or nature ; my impression is, however, that the firm does achieve a very creditable degree of stability. After all, nearly a third of its employees have a record of three or more years' service. (See Table IV.)

TABLE IV
PRESENT EMPLOYEES BY TRIBE AND LENGTH OF SERVICE (KAMPALA)

Length of Service	Ganda	Ankole	Ruanda	Luo	Others		Total
					(23 Tribes)	%	
Under 1 year	18	40	45	50	48	38	
1 year but under 2 ..	18	29	16	16	13	18	
2 years but under 3 ..	11	21	25	16	12	15	
3 years but under 5 ..	22	7	10	8	7	12	
5 years or more .. .	31	3	4	10	20	17	
	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Again, what is interesting is that it is more successful with some groups of workers than with others. Although the Ganda figure most prominently amongst those who leave the factory within their first six months, over half of all Ganda now working in the factory have had a minimum of three years' service. In the case of the Ankole it is a tenth ; in that of the Ruanda, a sixth. The firm's policy has been more successful in retaining its Ganda workers than in retaining others.

The firm's policy appears to be to reduce turnover in three ways. First, it seeks to pay wages which compare favourably with those paid elsewhere, and in addition men are given opportunities to increase their total earnings by working overtime and through production bonuses. In the month of June only 57 men received the bare minimum wage. Secondly, it provides a number of welfare services such as free medical attention, a free snack in the canteen, overalls and sick leave. Finally, it runs a Provident Fund to which the firm contributes on a 50-50 basis.

It is not easy to decide how much influence to ascribe to any one of these factors. We have already seen that the starting pay is not such as to override all other considerations in persuading men to stay. On the other hand, once a man begins to draw production bonus, he is likely to be better paid than in most other jobs open to him. The starting wage, moreover, is more attractive to those of slight physique than to strong men. Starting wages for unskilled men are commonly determined in Uganda by physique and since there are marked differences between the physiques of different tribes, the wages obtainable by the unskilled tend to follow a tribal pattern. A Lugbara or a Luo can generally earn two shillings or more a day. A Ruanda or Ankole may have to be content with Shs. 1/70 or Shs. 1/80. The starting wage of Shs. 44/- plus Shs. 13/- for regular attendance paid by

A very high proportion of those who left did so in their first two years. Even within the first two years, the rate of leaving is a rapidly decreasing one : 58 per cent. left in their first year, 20 per cent. in their second year. Further, of the 119 men who left in their first year, 80 did so within the first two months, and 101 within the first six months. When we come to consider whether the causes of turnover amongst newcomers differ from those amongst men with longer service, the importance emerges of the background from which a man comes. The labour force is drawn from regions differing widely in their economic structure and the ambitions and attitudes of men from backward areas are distinct from those of men who have grown up in the economically more advanced parts of East Africa. The figures of the table confirm that we should try to relate turnover to men's geographical origin, or more simply, to their tribe.

Let us take first the men who leave after a few months, and who constitute the major problem. A heavy loss of newcomers may appear to be less serious than one of well-trained men, but it too has its cost. Every new man has to be medically examined. His personal particulars have to be recorded and he has to be instructed in his job and in the factory rules. Even if he is given a job which requires no training, like keeping the compound clean, his cost to the firm during the first few months may well exceed the value of his services. This overhead cost becomes negligible only if it can be spread over a number of years.

Of those who in the months September, 1953, to June, 1954, left after less than one year's service, one-third were Ganda although the Ganda only constituted one-eighth of those workers in the factory who had completed less than a year's service. In other words, the turnover amongst Ganda newcomers is very much higher than that amongst other tribes. This is illustrated by Table II.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF NEWCOMERS¹ IN THE LABOUR FORCE WITH NEWCOMERS WHO LEFT BETWEEN SEPTEMBER, 1953—JUNE, 1954, BY TRIBE (KAMPALA)

				A	B	C ²
				Present Employees (Newcomers)	Voluntary Leavers (Newcomers)	B as a percentage of A
Ganda	..	..	..	26	39	150
Ankole	..	..	..	46	8	17
Ruanda	..	..	..	35	13	37
Luo	..	..	..	27	15	56
Others	..	..	..	78	44	56
Total	..	..	..	212	119	56

1. The term "newcomer" is used for the sake of brevity to describe those with less than one year's service.
2. This comparison is not strictly meaningful but gives some indication of the differential turnover of different tribes amongst newcomers.

The substantial number of Ganda who come to the factory seems at first sight to disprove the contention, which is often heard, that the Ganda will not enter unskilled employment ; that so many leave so soon seems, on the contrary, to support it. The explanation to this apparent riddle may lie in the prospects which they find. A Ganda will stay if he sees before him a prospect of rapid increases in his earnings. Otherwise he leaves and goes from job to job. As I shall try to show later, the Ganda appear in increasing numbers to be accepting the status of permanent wage-earner (as opposed to independent farmer) and this is of course related to the keenness to get the best wage possible, even where this involves, as among the unskilled, frequent change of job.

Other causes of the heavy turnover among newcomers may be first, the method of selecting employees ; second, ignorance of the wages paid, and third, the method of payment.

A great deal of the turnover in the early stages can be attributed to the method of selection. Men are picked out from a crowd which assembles outside the factory on the first day of each month, according to the impression created by their appearance. No questions were asked until recently, when the firm decided to give preference to men with some education. But even now no proof of education is required and it is luck alone if the firm in fact picks those with the longest spell at school. The result of this procedure is that men are frequently placed in jobs which they dislike or at which they are incompetent and being new in the factory they leave sooner than ask to be transferred to other work.

Another contributory factor to the high turnover of new entrants is that men apply for jobs in ignorance of the wages paid. The factory has the reputation of paying high wages and this brings many to its gates. Few of them, however, know the exact wage at which they will be engaged, nor is there any proper procedure for informing them until they receive their labour ticket in the evening of their first day. By that time, even if their expectations have been disappointed, a mixture of apathy and uncertainty about the prospect of finding a better job after the main day in the month for hiring labour has elapsed, causes them to stay put.

Another important reason why so many men leave after the first and second months is to be found in the method of wage payment. The firm pays on the last day of the month for days worked up to the 23rd. This method is designed to spread the work of the wages department, and is not meant to be a form of compulsory saving though in fact it is. The unforeseen feature of this practice is that, being uncommon in Uganda, there are many who do not understand it. Men who are paid only three-quarters of the wage to which they are entitled at the end of their first month do not stop to complain but simply leave. If they do complain and are told they will receive the balance of the wage due to them next month, they are the more disgruntled when, having waited, they find that even now they receive no more than one plain month's wages. It is sometimes said that Africans have a remarkable grasp of complicated systems of wage payments. This is borne out neither by conversations which I had with new entrants nor by the fact that apparently nearly a third of those who leave the factory for good do so without claiming the seven days' balance of their wage.

We come now to consider the men who leave during or soon after their second year of service with the firm. Here again, the country or Province from which a man comes is related to the likelihood of his leaving. (Table III.)

TABLE III
TRIBAL COMPOSITION OF PRESENT EMPLOYEES (KAMPALA)

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>% of all employees</i>	<i>% of employees with over 3 years' service</i>	<i>% of employees with over 5 years' service</i>
Ganda	26	54	53
Ankole	21	4	2
Ruanda	12	7	3
Kiga	4	3	2
Luo	10	7	5
Others (22 tribes)	27	25	35
	100	100	100

Although men from western Uganda and the adjoining territory of Ruanda Urundi form 37 per cent. of all employees, they form only 14 per cent. of those with three years' service or more and seven per cent. of those

whose homes are nearby. They alone have the necessary opportunities. That explains why, contrary to common belief, absenteeism is heavier amongst Ganda than amongst other tribes. The following Table VII based on men in four sections of the packing floor will illustrate this.

TABLE VII
ABSENCES OF 162 MEN ON THE PACKING FLOOR DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1954 (KAMPALA)

	<i>No. in sample</i>	<i>No. with absences</i>	<i>Total days absent</i>
Ganda	53	43	177
Ruanda	36	11	32
Ankole	26	14	31
Nyoro and Toro	5	3	8
Kiga	6	2	4
Luo	7	3	9
Others	29	11	33
	162	87	294

Not only is the proportion of Ganda who take days off higher than that of others, but also the average number of days missed is four as opposed to three for all others.

It must be remembered that the firm's policy is to dismiss men who repeatedly take days off without warrant. In fact this policy is somewhat elastic. It is applied rigidly only to unskilled workers of indifferent talent. A man with many years' experience and a record of good work can take greater liberties. He may be warned but he will be dismissed only in the last resort. The rule that any man absent on the first day of the month shall be dismissed is interpreted with the same latitude. The reason for the rule is twofold. It is customary in Uganda, as we saw earlier, to engage unskilled workers on the first of each month. Men seeking a new job therefore do so on this day. Since it is only on the first or second of the month that the factory can get new men easily it has to do its hiring then. As men who are absent on the first of the month may well be looking for a new job themselves and, if successful, never return, the tobacco factory has to assume that they have in fact left for good, if it is to be sure of a full complement of men for the rest of the month. Although some of those absent on the first of the month may merely be suffering from the proverbial hangover associated with the day after pay day, the majority of men do not, in fact, return so that the firm's policy is realistic and makes excessive drinking on pay night hazardous.

Factory workers, like many others, are customarily paid monthly. There is, however, usually a demand for advances and most employers now have a regular mid-monthly advance day on which those who wish it may draw up to a certain proportion of the wages earned to date. (Many employers in addition pay for overtime on the day it is performed, so that the cash due to a worker does not all come to him at once.) The mid-monthly advance is justified on the grounds that it facilitates budgeting, and also that in the absence of a regular advance employers would be burdened by a constant stream of callers asking for varying sums of money at all hours of the day and on all days of the week. By making the advance less than the amount earned to date the danger of increasing turnover is eliminated. Absences are, however, said to shoot up whenever an advance is paid. This, if it were proved, would lend strength to the complaint that men only work so long as they are poor—as soon as they have some money in their pocket they stay away. To some extent, figures from the tobacco factory support this, but they also put it into its correct proportion. Generally speaking the advance is paid on a Saturday in order to mitigate the expected result. In August, 1954, it was paid on Monday. Table VIII shows that more

men were absent on Tuesday than on any other day of the week, but the increase in absenteeism over the previous day was after all slight. Day-to-day

TABLE VIII
DAILY ABSENCES DURING A WEEK WHEN A WAGE ADVANCE WAS PAID ON MONDAY (KAMPALA)

<i>Day</i>	<i>No. of Absentees</i>	<i>Rate of Absence</i>
Monday	27	4.5
Tuesday	38	6.3
Wednesday	25	4.1
Thursday	21	3.5
Friday	12	2.0
Saturday	17	2.8

variations of this magnitude in the rate of absence were also common during weeks when no advance was paid, and in fact the average rate of absence during this week was below the average for the month. The number of men who received an advance was 265. Thirty-eight men were absent on the following day, but of these 38 only 16 had in fact been amongst the 265 who had received the advance. We cannot presume that all 16 would have been at work but for the advance which they received, so that the effect of the advance is probably smaller than is commonly supposed.

In a country in which rapid labour turnover is still one of the major problems facing industry, monthly hiring may do something to limit it. This system and its corollary, the monthly wage payment, are therefore the next things to be considered. Monthly wage payment is frequently assailed on the grounds that it places an unnatural strain on the wage earner who has to plan his spending carefully if he is not to run short towards the end of the month. It is also said that to receive a month's wages all at once makes a man feel momentarily rich, and causes him to spend an undue portion of his wage on drink and other indulgences. Where, as in Kampala, wages are needed to buy food, these criticisms may well be justified. But monthly wage payments also help a man to save, and wherever weekly wage payment has been introduced it has been the employer's idea, and not done in response to pressure from employees. It is possible, as we have just seen, for an advance to be had in the middle of the month ; but not all men ask for an advance. Thus, in the tobacco factory in August, 1954, only 265 out of the total labour force of about 600 took an advance. The Table which follows shows the distribution of men receiving advances by basic wage rate and tribe :

TABLE IX
ADVANCES PAID IN AUGUST, 1954, ARRANGED BY BASIC WAGE (A) AND TRIBE (B) OF RECIPIENTS (KAMPALA)

<i>A.</i>	<i>Basic Wage</i>	<i>No. in factory</i>	<i>No. taking advance</i>	<i>% taking advance</i>
	<i>Shs.</i>			
	41-50/-	345	98	28
	51-100/-	223	145	65
	over 100/-	32	22	69
	Total	600	265	44
<i>B.</i>	<i>Tribe</i>			
	Ganda	166	104	63
	Ankole	120	44	36
	Ruanda	94	27	29
	Luo	56	27	48
	Lugbara	16	12	75
	Toro	13	10	77
	17 other Tribes	135	41	30
	Total	600	265	44

of the Railway station construction, for instance, are a case in point.¹ One gang was singled out from among the rest, and given scientific rations. True to expectation the gang finished its task consistently earlier than the others who merely received the ordinary ration. From this it was concluded that a balanced diet immediately increased men's output. That this is possible no one would deny, but the experiment was not the most felicitous way of proving it. As in the case of the Hawthorne experiments in America, it may well be that what was proved was no more than that to receive special attention affects a team's willingness to work.² Good industrial relations largely consist of making men feel that their work is important and that their employers care about it. The result of giving all men scientific rations may not be so good as giving them to some men only. Food intake may set a limit to men's energy, but it is not the spring from which their energy derives.

Diet, if it does not replace care in management as the source of willing work, certainly affects health. The statistics relating to sickness amongst industrial workers are marred by uncertainties. In the first place, it is impossible to say what proportion of medical certificates are faked; the allegation that all is not well with the issue of medical certificates is too persistently made to be ignored. Secondly, the penalties attached to absence due to sickness vary greatly from firm to firm and this more than any other factor explains the reported differences in rates of sickness. The official statistics compiled by the Labour Department of sickness due to malnutrition or diet deficiency could not, in any case, tell the full story, since they take account only of certified sickness. In fact men often have days off complaining of unspecified head or other aches. Their absence is regarded as frivolous unless they have a doctor's certificate. No doubt much of this absence is in fact due to hangover or sheer frivolity, but the impression one gains from conversations is that, on the whole, men may be less dishonest about their reason for missing a day than their employers sometimes suppose. In order to study the effect of diet deficiency on sickness one would need more detailed statistics than are at present available. Certainly one would need to be able to relate absence from work, for instance, to a man's tribe, age and length of stay in Kampala. Neither the tobacco factory nor any other employers keep records from which such statistics could be compiled.

As a matter of fact, in the tobacco factory, absenteeism is not high, and absences supported by medical certificates constitute no more than a small fraction of the whole. The average rate of absence from all causes except the annual holiday, during the 12 months preceding May, 1954, was seven per cent. Sickness only accounted for two per cent. A sick rate of this low order may well reflect the healthy working conditions in the factory. The building is modern, the toilets are kept scrupulously clean, and accidents are kept down by stringent safeguards on machines and equipment. It also reflects the measures taken to ensure that only those who are genuinely ill shall be counted as legitimately absent.

Absenteeism is important apart from its possible value as an indication of the amount of ill-health. To come to work with great regularity, as opposed to merely most of the time, is one of the habits which the entrant to industrial society has to learn. In the tobacco factory the average daily rate of absence other than through sickness was five per cent. in the year ended 31st May, 1954. This rate, too, is low by local standards. Absenteeism is discouraged by paying a bonus each week to men who have attended all six days and by

1. L. J. A. Loewenthal, "The Effect of Dietary and Other Supplements on the Health and Working Capacity of Banyaruanda Labourers." *Agricultural Survey Committee, Nutrition Report No. 3—Unskilled Labour*. Government Printer, Entebbe, 1939. See also *Uganda Protectorate, Annual Report of the Medical Department for 1938*. Government Printer, Entebbe, 1939.
2. cf. G. C. Homans, "Group Factors in Worker Productivity" in Newcomb, Hartley and Others, *Readings in Social Psychology*, p. 450. New York, Holt, 1947.

dismissing men who consistently fail to earn the bonus. The tobacco factory can afford to dismiss men for consistent absences because it has no difficulty in replacing them. It seldom has less than three applicants on the first of the month for every vacant job, and it is said that sometimes the ratio is as high as 8 : 1 or even 10 : 1. In fact the Employment Exchange has been known to request the tobacco factory to send on men whom they do not require themselves because other employers are short of labour. So long as it offers conditions which compare favourably with those offered by other employers in the vicinity, it has always a pool of men from which to replace the men it dismisses. The very fact that men see an advantage in working for the tobacco factory acts as a deterrent to incurring the risk of dismissal for being absent. In other words, the absence rate is low not only because the factory weeds out men who might make it higher, but also because the threat of dismissal acts as a powerful deterrent to men who might be tempted now and again to absent themselves for a day or two.

The effect of other measures to reduce absence cannot be satisfactorily isolated. Clearly the part which the attendance bonus plays in keeping down absences is not insignificant. When it was introduced in June, 1952, the average rate of absence fell. The average rate of absence during six months preceding its introduction stood at 7.6 per cent. In the same months, during the following year, it had fallen to 5.8 per cent.

The factory is now planning to abolish the bonus and to incorporate it into the basic wage. It believes that the bonus was effective only so long as it was administered harshly and that there are now too many exceptions. When it was first introduced no man received the bonus if he was absent, whatever the cause. Now it is paid to men who are sick, and to others who have leave without pay. The result has been, it is said, to make men more careful to obtain sickness certificates and leave passes, which merely shifts the categories of absence without in fact reducing the total. There is no way of proving this but it is plausible. The rate of absence in factories where good attendance bonuses, without the threat of dismissal, are used to combat absenteeism, is very much higher than in the tobacco factory where the two are used in combination.

An attendance bonus used by itself may not be an efficient way of reducing absences. It penalises men whose reason for being absent is legitimate, and is costly to administer. It also tempts men who might otherwise take off one day only, to take off two since the marginal loss in earnings is small. At the tobacco factory a man earning Shs. 1/70 a day would lose Shs.4/70 for one day's absence ; if he took off a second day in the same week he would lose only another Shs.1/70. The fact that very few absences regarded as illegitimate by the tobacco factory are of more than a day's duration is an indication that men who take a day off do so regardless of the cost. But it may well be that to men from western Uganda at any rate, the inducement of three shillings each week is more important than the threat of dismissal.

The difficulty of combating absenteeism is enhanced by the fact that absences are sometimes very profitable. Granted that much absenteeism is connected with intemperate living there is yet a proportion of men who take days off because the loss in wages which it entails is more than counter-balanced by gains of trade, harvest or inheritance. Kampala offers many opportunities to the occasional trader—to men who will peddle a load of fish sent them by relatives from across the lake or who have the occasional load of plantains for disposal. Men who have land nearby may gain more by taking days off during the planting and harvesting seasons than they lose in wages. Again, a man stands to gain more by being present at the division of a deceased relative's property than by being present at his place of work. Absenteeism due to these causes is naturally most common amongst those

come to the tobacco factory from the country means that a good deal of time must be spent in teaching what are to them new skills. Even handling a Western type of broom may be to them a novel sensation. Some men come with no previous experience of switching on a light or opening a door by a handle. Even staircases are new to them and they tread them at first with respect and then with an abandon which reminds one of nothing so much as the behaviour of children in our own society. In fact, Europeans complain that Africans are like children, and this complaint is possibly not as prejudiced as it sounds; it is only a pity that those who make it do not look further and realise that most Europeans meet only those Africans who enter our alien and complicated civilization, and who have therefore to learn, by experimenting and making mistakes, as children do. Furthermore, Europeans engaged in industry will actually tend to have contact with an exceptionally large proportion of adolescents and very young men, and it is not surprising if these behave like the youngsters they are. Men over the age of 23 on entry are the exception in the tobacco factory.

This is partly the result of deliberate policy. Experience has shown here, as it did in England in the early 19th century, that it is "nearly impossible to convert persons past the age of puberty into useful factory hands. After struggling for a while to conquer their listless or restive habits, they either renounce the employment spontaneously, or are dismissed by the overlookers on account of inattention".¹ In the tobacco factory older men are only found in one or other of three categories. They may be employees of many years' standing who are now generally in semi-skilled or supervisory positions. Or they are skilled tradesmen or clerks who have had many years' experience in their occupation, if not in this particular job. Thus, the average age of drivers, carpenters and clerks is distinctly higher than that of the men working "on the floor". Or, finally, they may be working as compound cleaners or gatemen—on work that requires a minimum of adjustment. These three categories comprise less than a quarter of the labour force. The youthfulness of the remaining three-quarters of the labour force is not, however, merely a matter of the employer's choice. The selection is largely limited by the youthfulness of those who offer themselves for work. It is of course possible that the factory's known preference for young men has the effect of causing older men to look for work elsewhere. But one gains the impression that the average age of the Uganda labour force as a whole is in the 20's rather than the 30's. This is not just a reflection of the demographic pattern—the fact that men die younger and grow old sooner than in Europe and America. It is principally due to the fact that few men accept unskilled work as a lifetime's vocation. The majority of men go out to work either before they have obtained a farm of their own and therefore an independent cash income, or in order to acquire a certain basic equipment for life, such as experience of the wider world, a bicycle, some furniture, or a wife. Twenty years ago the need to pay poll tax compelled men to look for work. Today taxation has all but lost its sting. There are few areas left in which a man cannot raise the necessary money to pay his tax by growing cash crops. But for this a man needs land and sometimes capital to start with. Often land has to be taken up at a distance away from home until the man inherits his father's land. As an Ankole put it: "So long as a man's father is alive he has no land of his own and is therefore dependent for cash either on his father or on wages. To start farming he would need capital and enterprise".

The Kampala labour force is still younger than that of Uganda as a whole. It contains a very large proportion of men in their first job. Very few of the unskilled workers interviewed in the tobacco factory had worked in

1. Ure, A., *Philosophy of Manufacturers*, p. 15. London, 1835.

Kampala on a previous "tour," and this fact that a high proportion of the labour force is, as it were, constantly "turning over," means that much of the knowledge acquired, at some cost both to employer and employee, runs to waste. The country boy is initiated into the mysteries of factory life to practise them only for a few months, or possibly a couple of years.

Yet reports from the areas from which migrants come¹ show that the average "wage-earning life" of men is longer than one tour in Kampala. The implication is that the experience of Kampala fails to measure up to men's expectations. Wages which appear high to the country dweller turn out to be barely adequate for sustaining life and leave little over to take home. They therefore do not return. Men who have once come, stay on in hopes of improvement, but when it fails to materialise they do not come again a second time. They either take a job in the countryside where food is provided free or they take up a plot of land temporarily to grow cotton. Some take a job locally, on a building site or with the Public Works Department, from which they can return home each evening. The nominal wage or return may be lower, but in fact it leaves them better off.

Many causes contribute to the rather strained and dissatisfied condition of the immigrant factory worker, and prominent amongst these is the fact, generally overlooked by the men before they come to Kampala, that wages have to cover the cost of food. Few of those who come, attracted by seemingly high wages, have thought about the cost of food at all, for food is not something which one buys. Money one spends on tea and sugar perhaps, but not on flour or plantains. To "eat one's wages" seems preposterous.

It is, of course, inevitable that industrial workers should pay for their food in cash. No English worker now resents it though he may complain about the price of food. In Kampala men also complain about the price of food, but to imagine that they will be satisfied if prices of food could be reduced by simplifying the channels of distribution is to overlook the basic resentment against the very fact that food should have a price at all.

This attitude towards food has an important bearing on efficiency. Since men resent having to spend money on food they may sometimes spend less than is necessary to maintain health and strength. The effect of diet on working efficiency can be exaggerated, but it cannot be ignored. It is doubtful whether undernourishment is such as to leave men actually hungry. But it is probable that they are illnourished, i.e., they spend their money on food that satisfies hunger, to the exclusion of things which in the long run maintain health and energy. This has three consequences. In the first place, men will not go on doing it indefinitely, and it may therefore be regarded as a contributory factor to labour turnover. One English-speaking Ankole clerk put it like this: "A man comes to Kampala to earn cash. If his wages allow him to eat the things to which he is accustomed, he will stay for a long time. But most men in order to save have to accept poor food and within a year they go back—they will not punish themselves for longer". In the second place it makes men lethargic in their work, unable to summon the energy to work hard consistently or to make the occasional extra effort required to prevent some mishap or to do a job thoroughly. Even where industrial relations are at their best, one notices an atmosphere of "I don't care", which may well be due more to the food in men's stomachs than to any native ill disposition in their minds.

This should not be exaggerated; past experiments by nutritional experts which have seemed to prove that better diet leads to better work must be interpreted with caution. The experiments carried out in 1938 at the time

1. See J. F. M. Middleton, *Labour Migration and the Lugbara*, Colonial Office (mimeographed), and also *Uganda Labour Department Annual Reports*, which contain a reference to this effect every year.

sitates a wage unless they have the capital to start farming on a scale which will yield a comparable income, and one way of acquiring capital is to earn a wage. Given a satisfactory employer they will grasp at the opportunity of "investing" part of their wage. They regard the Fund less as insurance against old age than as a means of saving for independence. As old age insurance the Provident Fund is in any case inadequate. But as a form of saving it provides a way of escape from the pressure to spend which relatives impose on them. Immigrants, being further away from their relatives, are less subject to this pressure and since few have the same opportunities for investing money in farms, it is less urgent for them to join the Provident Fund. There are of course other channels in which men can invest money, but few are likely to yield comparable returns. Farming has this great advantage over other fields of business enterprise, that by their early upbringing and training Africans are best qualified for it. Shopkeeping for instance is usually less profitable because it requires aptitudes and skill which few Africans have the chance to acquire. The same is true to a lesser extent of running a lorry. In any case, both require the man's personal attention and farming has the additional advantage of being an insurance against ill health or old age, for the head of the household is easily replaced by other members of his family. The system of individual freehold land tenure in Buganda is a stimulus to save and hence to join a Provident Fund.

Immigrants who come only for a short spell to Kampala are not attracted by a Provident Fund. Being unused to refined transactions, they suspect its purposes and the advantage of joining is in any case less immediately obvious when their intention is to return home within two or three years. A Provident Fund is insufficient to persuade men to settle permanently in Buganda. It is attractive only to those few who have in any case decided to do so. It is therefore likely to reduce labour turnover between firms in Kampala but cannot do anything to reduce the turnover which is the result of short-term migration. Even if the Provident Fund were adequate as an insurance against old age it is unlikely that it would persuade men to bring their families and settle in Kampala. The wages which they earn are inadequate fully to support a family on a standard to which they are accustomed. The difference between England in the early 19th century and Uganda today is that in England, where most country people were by then wage earners, the town had on the whole become financially more attractive than the countryside.¹

Once men decide to settle down in Kampala, they have more reason to join the Provident Fund. It is significant that few men decide to join the Fund until well after they become eligible. The implication is that the Provident Fund is welcomed once a man has made up his mind to stay but does little to persuade him to do so in the first instance.

In summary : labour turnover is only in part determined by the policies of particular firms. Much of the high turnover of newcomers in the tobacco factory might be eliminated by a reorganization of the firm's method of engaging labour and paying wages ; similarly, it is as a direct result of the firm's policy that its turnover is slow amongst men in their second year of service and that it is able to retain the service of some for many years. Against this must be set factors over which the individual employer exercises little control, and which operate impartially on all. Men from economically backward areas of East Africa come to Kampala for a limited period of time. A firm's turnover will vary with the proportions of its labour which it derives from different tribes. The cause of differences in the average length of service of men of different tribes is not an innate difference in their characteristics but variation in the economic backgrounds from which they come.

1. cf. A. Redford, *The Economic History of England*, p. 61, London, Longmans, 1947.

CHAPTER III

ATTRIBUTES OF THE LABOUR FORCE

To attempt to discuss all the difficulties which may arise in the employment of African workers would be beyond the scope of this essay ; nor could I here deal adequately with the entire range of the Tobacco Company's policies towards its workers. In what follows, I have taken up certain problems, all more or less connected with labour turnover, and have tried to relate them to the differing economic backgrounds and also, when possible, to the practices of labour management in the factory.

It is important first of all to realise that much contemporary writing about labour efficiency has little relevance to conditions in Uganda. Before men can work efficiently, at least two conditions must obtain : an employer must know how to evoke the qualities and abilities of his labour force effectively, but this in turn depends on whether the qualities and abilities, and in particular certain basic feelings about work, are there to be evoked. If much of current discussion is concerned with the first aspect of efficiency, it is mainly because in Western countries there exists now a labour force whose attitudes are appropriate to an industrial society. Uganda, however, resembles more the England of Robert Owen than that of the Institute of Personnel Management. It is often said that modern management began with Robert Owen.¹ This ignores his real contribution, which was not primarily to show how labour might be managed but how to create in workers qualities and aptitudes which are the peculiar requirements of industry and without which management in any positive sense can hardly begin. In England, the punctuality and discipline imposed on men by the machines with which they work may still be resented, but they have ceased to be wondered at and misunderstood. Two centuries of factory work have created new ways of thinking and of behaviour which take for granted the very aspects of factory life which, 150 years ago, men used to find most startling.

In Uganda, on the other hand, industry is still new and unfamiliar. The pattern of life which it imposes is seen only as the arbitrary tyranny of the employer. Qualities which single men out for praise or respect at home are not necessarily relevant in the factory and may be ignored there. The customary rhythm of work is the subject of derision on the employer's part, and is something for which he regards himself entitled to seek retribution. In these conditions the meaning of labour efficiency often must be the extent to which men have acquired the attitudes which make them effective industrial workers. It does not of course follow from this that once people begin to accept an industrial system of life and earnings, no more problems arise ; rather one type of dissatisfaction gives way to another, as we shall see later.

The attributes of a good industrial worker are assumed to be more or less clear ; they consist on the one hand of skill in performing the various tasks of a factory and on the other of qualities like regularity and identification with the job. But the customary distinction between skilled and unskilled work loses much of its significance under African factory conditions. There are few tasks in a factory which do not require skill of some sort which is new to men from the countryside. The fact that the majority of workers

¹. See for instance, L. Urwick and E. F. L. Brech, *The Making of Scientific Management*, Vol. II, p. 40. "Owen . . . was a very early exemplar of modern personnel management."

The table reveals two interesting points. In the first place the proportion of men whose basic wage is over Shs.50/- p.m. and who draw advances is more than twice as great as that of men whose basic wage is Shs.50/- or less. Secondly, the 345 men in the bottom wage group include 180 (80 per cent.) of the 220 Ruanda, Kiga and Ankole in the factory and only 47 (30 per cent.) of the 156 Ganda. In this bottom group less than one-third asked for an advance whilst of those earning over Shs.50/- p.m., two-thirds did so. The preponderance of Ruanda, Ankole and Kiga in the group where less than one-third take up an advance, is significant. If it may be assumed that those who ask for an advance save less than those who do not, then these facts support the common view that the Ruanda and Ankole come to Kampala to acquire money with which to return home and that they stint themselves to an incredible degree to attain their object.

Like the Irish who came to England in the early 19th century in order to accumulate the money for the fare to America, so the Ruanda draw upon themselves the odium of depressing the standard of living for the rest. The Irish were prepared to put up with very poor conditions—not because they were used to them, as is often said—but because they had before them the vision of better things to come. So also the Ruanda will live in houses which a Ganda would not tolerate and will eat the minimum consistent with staving off hunger, not because they know no better but because they will not squander in Kampala the precious means to a better life in their own country. For the man who has settled in Kampala and who has accepted the idea of remaining a wage earner for a large part of his life, the need to save is less urgent and the pressure to spend more severe. Unfortunately it has not been possible to correlate advances with the length of service or the length of residence in Kampala. If this were done, it would, I believe, bear out the contention that the habitual request for an advance is a valuable guide to the degree to which a man has become a proletarian as opposed to a “target worker”.

One might object that, on the contrary, the request for an advance is merely a measure of a man's ability to manage his life and that, of the immigrants at least, the only ones who stay are those who, because they have saved nothing, fear to return to their homes. No doubt there is some truth in this, particularly as the proportion of immigrants who seek advances is clearly greater than the proportion who can be regarded as settlers. For some the freedom or licence of town life has an appeal which outweighs that of home. On the other hand, the contention that only those remain as settlers who have not saved enough to return home is incompatible with what we found earlier, viz., that by and large the immigrants who have stayed are the ones who have got on well in their first two years. It is striking that the proportion of Ganda in the factory who seek an advance is so great. Most Ganda live practically rent free and grow part of their own food. Of the 26 Ganda who were recently interviewed in the tobacco factory all but six lived in their own houses on smallholdings for which they paid the customary dues only. The explanation is likely to lie not in their licentious habits, but in the fact that they form the most stable portion of Kampala's labour force. Unlike the majority of immigrants, wage employment has become their normal habit. Few Ganda would openly admit this and in fact many of them eventually take up some form of independent business, yet we can only explain their attitude to their work and their way of life if we acknowledge that wage employment has ceased for them to be the very temporary expedient which it is for men of other tribes.

The immigrant regards himself as transitory and does not care overmuch about the conditions under which he works. As he does not expect promotion for himself, he shows no concern for the method of selection to better

jobs or the differentials in the wages scale. The Ganda on the other hand is concerned with both and since wage employment has become a part of life, and not merely a way of attaining specific objects, he insists that it shall conform to his sense of equity and that the avenues for advance shall be open. The immigrant takes what is given and goes away if what he gets is not enough. The Ganda insists that what is given shall be just and shall enable him to live according to the standards to which Ganda are accustomed. Since these standards are determined less by the wages of employment than the profits of farming or trade, and since these profits are considerable at the present time, he feels dissatisfied.

One can be dissatisfied in different ways and it would be surprising if the semi-skilled operator shared entirely the grievances of the clerk. All may agree that wages are inadequate but the remedies which they will seek to apply depend upon the causes to which low wages are attributed. The unskilled labourer takes what is given and goes where what is given is most generous. To the piece-rate worker or the semi-skilled, the opportunity for increasing his earnings by moving to another firm are remote if no other similar factory exists. He largely depends upon improving his position within the firm. His chances of promotion are limited and he therefore places his main hope on concerted action to raise the general level of wages. He is, moreover, in a better position to do so than either the craftsman or the unskilled labourer because it is more difficult to replace him. His skill, unlike that of the craftsman or the clerk, is not produced except by the factory where he works and is one specific to it, so that if he leaves his successor would have to be trained from scratch. Clerks and craftsmen are interchangeable between firms ; so are the unskilled. It is natural therefore that any desire to strike should come very largely from this group of semi-skilled workers. The tobacco factory's strike of January, 1953, makes sense only in these terms. It has been remarked that the Ganda took a leading part in it. They did so, because they dominated then, as now, this middle group of workers. The strike was a strike of the Ganda, as the notice which its leaders put up made abundantly clear. But innate tribal characteristics have nothing to do with that. The Ganda were the backbone of the strike because of the economic position in which they found themselves. Because they had a long-term interest in wage-earning, few of them were amongst the lowest income earners. They dominated the one group who, as we have seen, had nothing to gain from changing jobs, and everything to gain from pressing for a general rise in pay. The demand for a cigarette-making machine operator is limited to the tobacco factory ; anywhere else his skill will count for nothing. The unskilled co-operated reluctantly, or, as in the case of the re-drying plant, not at all.

On the Works Committee which was formed after the strike, the Ganda again predominated. Only one of the elected members was a non-Ganda, although the Ganda constituted less than half the working force. The non-Ganda was the Ankole representative of the re-drying plant, who had this in common with his Ganda colleagues : he had been with the firm for several years, and when interviewed, made it clear that though he would return to his home for holidays, he had no intention of relinquishing wage employment. That Ganda are better educated than the rest thus explains only partly their position on the Works Committee. The decisive reason is that only the middle group of workers are interested in the Committee, and that Ganda predominate in this middle group. They are elected to the Committee even by Departments in which they are a smallish minority (in the cigarette-making department, for instance, they constitute only 14 per cent.) primarily because they alone are interested in the Committee's objects, and not because they are the " natural " leaders of the rest.

General complaints that wages are too low, that they have failed to keep pace with rises in the cost of living, or that they do not adequately reward workers for long service or skill, figure prominently in the minutes of the Works Committee, composed as it was largely of the semi-skilled. To skilled men the world looks different again. To them the barrier is not the wage paid by a particular firm, since they are free to move about from firm to firm. At every step, however, they are aware that their progress is checked by the presence of Indians and Europeans. They tend therefore to express their dissatisfaction by drawing attention to the gap between their wages and those of other races. This antagonism becomes the more acute, the more their own job conforms to that done by expatriates. A clerk who takes over the job of an expatriate demands that the wage he gets should be no less. This attitude is natural and the circumstances which engender it are likely to prove a major obstacle to industrial expansion since industry cannot in the long run afford to pay wages which exceed those paid in other countries. It is not easy for an African to understand why, when he replaces an expatriate in his job, he should not also receive his wage. Wage grievances of this sort are the more acute the more they are accompanied by differences in status accorded on a racial basis. The value of small perquisites like tea or cigarettes becomes magnified, and in turn magnifies the grievance over differences in pay. The answer to this problem is not simple and has been rendered the more difficult by the logic which is now to guide the Government in its wages policy. "The rate for the job" sounds an equitable basis for wages policy, but is unworkable if that rate is to be permanently fixed by the exceptional circumstances of the early stages of economic development.

PART II—JINJA FACTORY

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON OF THE TWO FACTORIES

In Part I, I tried to show that the success of particular techniques of management is affected not only by the skill with which they are applied but also by the types of worker employed. The figures collected in the Kampala tobacco factory show that although the men were treated impartially there were wide variations in their reactions to incentives like the bonus for good attendance, or inducements to stay permanently with the firm, such as the Provident Fund. These variations proved not to be random but to follow broadly a tribal pattern. I therefore argued that the measure of success of a particular management technique might be determined to a considerable extent by the tribal composition of the labour force. To prove this is perhaps not possible. Industry is not a laboratory and the social scientist is never able to test his hypotheses by controlled experiments. Ideally one would wish to study two factories in the same town, differing only in the tribal composition of their labour force and identical in their employment arrangements and management techniques. In practice one has to work in less perfect conditions. Nevertheless, the existence of two tobacco factories in neighbouring towns, managed by the same company and along broadly similar lines, goes some way towards meeting the condition of comparability, and makes it interesting to review some of the conclusions reached earlier in the light of the experience of the factory at Jinja.

I propose to begin by comparing conditions in the two factories. In the first place, there is no doubt that the Jinja factory is a pleasanter building. It is more spacious, has more light and is surrounded by carefully tended lawns and flower beds. The lighter tobacco which is processed at Jinja gives off less powerful vapours in the preparatory stage and superior ventilation makes the atmosphere less clammy. On the other hand, Jinja as a whole is a hotter place than Kampala and this might to some extent vitiate the more favourable accommodation of the factory. Unlike the Kampala factory, the one at Jinja is set in larger grounds and is therefore able to provide superior cloakroom facilities and, above all, a canteen and kitchen large enough to provide a substantial midday meal, free of charge.

The wage rates paid by the two factories are the same except that women are paid two shillings a month less at every step in the wage scale. The ratio of skilled and supervisory employees is also the same in both factories, but not the proportion of workers at each step of the pay scale. (See Table X.)

TABLE X

PROPORTION OF WORKERS WHO FALL INTO MAIN CATEGORIES OF BASIC PAY, KAMPALA AND JINJA, JUNE, 1954

Basic Wage Rate per month Shs.	Kampala		Jinja	
	Men	Women	Men	Men & Women
Under 50	57	50	55	
51 to 100	38	34	33	
101 and over ..	5	16	12	
	100	100	100	

Whether we reckon men alone or men and women combined, the proportion in the group whose basic wage is above Shs.100/- per month is greater in Jinja than Kampala. This is largely because Jinja has been more successful than Kampala in recruiting men who warrant a substantial salary to its higher cadres. The ratio of supervisors to workers is the same in both factories but the ones in Jinja are more "high-powered." Further, even at the base of the pay scale promotion is somewhat quicker than in Kampala. Within the wage group under Shs.50/- there are proportionately more at the ceiling than in Kampala. Nor does the Jinja factory insist that all start at the bottom. Bright young men who show promise that they will do well at a semi-skilled job when they have been trained for it are not expected even for a while to live on the basic wage of Shs.44/-. In Kampala it was noted how well informed many of the men were about wages in the Jinja factory. Their information proved very accurate and their complaint that they were the Cinderellas of the Company was, in a few instances, well founded.

Apart from these differences in basic wages there are no differences between the monetary rewards in the two factories ; both pay a cash bonus of three shillings a week for good attendance ; both pay the same annual increment and allow their employees to join a Provident Fund on the same conditions ; the production bonuses are similar if not alike, and the only difference is in fact that in Jinja there is no mid-monthly advance on wages.

It is more difficult to compare the management of the two factories. The organization of management is similar : European managers at the head and in charge of most departments ; a small and dwindling number of Asian supervisors and an established hierarchy of African supervisors ranging from welfare supervisors to assistant headmen in charge of a handful of men or women.

Finally, there are differences in the composition of the labour force. The Jinja factory employs 250 women, the Kampala factory none. In Kampala there was a strong nucleus of Ganda, whilst over a third of the workers came from western Uganda and the adjoining territory of Ruanda Urundi. In Jinja these latter number 37, or four per cent. of the labour force, whilst Ganda and Soga together constitute over half of all workers and just under half of men alone. (See Table XI.)

TABLE XI
TRIBAL COMPOSITION OF PRESENT MEN EMPLOYEES AT JINJA AND
KAMPALA, JUNE, 1954

		<i>Kampala</i>	<i>Jinja</i>
		%	%
Ganda	26	13	
Soga	—	32	
Samia	—	16	
Luo	10	7	
Ankole	21	5	
Acholi	—	4	
Teso	—	4	
Gisu	—	2	
Gwere	—	2	
Kiga	4	—	
Ruanda	12	—	
West Nile	6	3	
Others ¹	21	12	
	100	100	

1. This comprises tribes which are represented by less than two per cent. in the labour force ; e.g., since Soga in the Kampala factory constitute less than two per cent. of the labour force they are shown here in the figure for others.

A striking difference between the two factories is the proportion in each whose country is far removed. Distance as the crow flies is a bad index because of the uneven facilities of transport, and it is fairer to take the cost of a third class fare from the administrative headquarters or principal town of each of the main districts from which the factories draw their labour. (See Table XII.)

TABLE XII
CHEAPEST FARE TO KAMPALA AND JINJA FROM THE CHIEF TOWN OR TRANSPORT TERMINUS OF THE PRINCIPAL AREAS OF LABOUR SUPPLY¹

	To Kampala Shs.	To Jinja Shs.
Kisumu (Luo)	7/60	19/50
Busia (Samia)	12/30	7/30
Mbarara (Ankole)	19/40	24/40
Gulu (Acholi)	14/00	12/00
Soroti (Teso)	11/60	9/60
Rhino Camp (West Nile)	15/00	13/00
Mbale (Gisu)	16/80	11/80
Pallisa (Gwere)	13/40	8/40
Kabale (Kiga)	31/20	36/20
Kyaka Ferry (Rundi)	15/60	20/60
Kisoro (Ruanda)	38/70	43/70

1. The fare given is that of the mode of travel normally used by immigrants. Thus Luo coming to Kampala travel by lake steamer but to Jinja they go by bus.

The Table shows that on the whole the immigrants in the Jinja factory pay a smaller fare than those who come to work in the Kampala factory. In Kampala, the Ankole, Kiga, Ruanda and West Nile between them constitute 57 per cent. of all the immigrants ; none pay less than Shs.15/- to get there. In Jinja only 25 per cent. of the immigrants pay Shs.15/- or more. Further, it must be remembered that in any case the proportion of immigrants in the Jinja labour force is much smaller (55 per cent. non-Ganda or Soga instead of the 74 per cent. non-Ganda in Kampala).

It would have been easier to compare standards of attainment in the two factories if the tribal composition of their workers had been more alike. In Kampala we could contrast the performance of Ganda with that of workers from the remoter west and of Ruanda Urundi. This comparison is not possible in Jinja. There are hardly any men from western Uganda. It is also important to notice, as we shall see later, that a smaller proportion of the "local" tribes, i.e., Ganda and Soga, are actually living on smallholdings on the town's outskirts. In a random sample of men workers, only five out of eight Ganda and six out of 14 Soga were "daily commuters." (See Table XIII.) The rest lived either in the Municipal Housing Estate close to the factory where they paid Shs.12/- per month in rent, or—more commonly—rented a house without land in one of the settlements on the east side of the town at an average rent of Shs.21/-. Of the 11 "daily commuters," one Ganda and four Soga had themselves acquired their smallholdings whilst the remaining four Ganda and two Soga were living either where they were born or where their family had always held land. Of the three immigrant groups, three-quarters in the sample lived in the Municipal Housing Estate—the African Quarters as they themselves call it. New-comers tend to live in the housing estate, which is surprising in view of the reported waiting list for accommodation. Older employees move to a suburban house or acquire a smallholding if they have the opportunity and the cash.

TABLE XIII
STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLE OF 30 MEN BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION
IN JINJA

(i) Tribe and Accommodation :

	No. in Sample	Type of Accommodation		
		Municipal Housing Estate	Rented Suburban House without land	Small-holding
Ganda	8	1	2	5
Soga	14	3	5	6
Samia	5	3	2	—
Luo	2	2	—	—
Acholi	1	1	—	—
Total	30	10	9	11

(ii) Wage Group and Accommodation :

Basic Wage Shs.	No. in Sample	Type of Accommodation		
		Municipal Housing Estate	Rented Suburban House without land	Small-holding
Under 60	10	4	4	2
61 to 100	10	5	2	3
101 and over	10	1	3	6
Total	30	10	9	11

(iii) Length of Service and Accommodation :

	No. in Sample	Type of Accommodation		
		Municipal Housing Estate	Rented Suburban House without land	Small-holding
Under 1 year	6	5	1	—
1 year and under 2	6	1	2	3
2 years and under 3	3	—	1	2
3 years and under 4	4	2	2	—
4 years and under 5	2	2	—	—
5 years or over	9	—	3	6
Total	30	10	9	11

(iv) 11 Workers with Smallholdings by tribe and wage group :

	Type of Accommodation		
	Under Shs. 60	Shs. 61 to Shs. 100	Shs. 101 and over
Ganda	1(2) ¹	1(2)	3(4)
Soga	1(4)	2(5)	3(5)

1. Figure in brackets is total number in sample.

We may now proceed to compare the two factories in respect of labour turnover and absenteeism.

Turnover

We saw that in Kampala labour turnover was high partly because many men had come under the false impression that starting wages were higher than proved the case and therefore left within a few weeks, and partly because a large proportion of the labour force came from remote parts of the country to which they were determined to return within two years or so. The average monthly turnover resulting from those who leave of their own accord is practically the same in the two factories.¹ This is surprising since conditions at Jinja are apparently so much more favourable, and there is also a preponderance of local tribesmen. However, as we saw in Kampala, crude figures of labour turnover are not helpful in analysing its causes. We must know who are the ones who leave, and after what period of service.

1. In Kampala 7.9 per cent. In Jinja 7.5 per cent.

Surprisingly there is no marked difference between the rates of turnover of men and women ; both are between seven and eight per cent. per month. Further, the proportion of persons with less than a year's service among the leavers is similar if not the same, viz., three-quarters in the case of men, and four-fifths in that of women.¹ Since turnover amongst men and women in the Jinja factory is similar in type and dimension, it seems legitimate to combine them for comparison with the labour turnover in Kampala. Such a comparison shows, first, that Jinja is even more afflicted than Kampala by a stream of men and women who, as it were, drift through the factory, but do not stay long enough to strike roots. In Kampala 58 per cent. of those who left did so before they had completed a year's service ; in Jinja the comparable figure is 76 per cent., the great majority having left within their first three months. The corollary of this condition is that since total turnover is the same, Jinja loses far fewer old hands than Kampala. Turnover amongst those with a year's service or more in Kampala is 5.3 per cent., in Jinja it is 3.8 per cent.²

Table XIV shows the proportion of workers employed in the two factories in each category of length of service.

TABLE XIV
DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS IN KAMPALA AND JINJA FACTORIES ACCORDING TO LENGTH OF SERVICE

	Kampala (600 men)	Jinja (608 men and 240 women)	Jinja (Men only)	Jinja (Women only)
	%	%	%	%
Under 1 year	38	54	43	73
1 year but under 2	18	13	17	6
2 years but under 3	15	9	8	12
3 years but under 4	6	6	7	4
4 years but under 5	6	5	7	5
years and over	17	13	18	0
	100	100	100	100

In view of the foregoing one would expect to find a higher proportion of workers with long service in Jinja than is in fact the case. The explanation why this is not so is threefold. First, these figures are affected not only by voluntary turnover but also by dismissals, and the dismissal rate has latterly been higher in Jinja than in Kampala. A number of older employees in particular have been dismissed in the last year because it was found that age and vested interests in the status quo had made them unfit for the changes which were being introduced. Secondly, the rate of turnover appears to have been very much higher some years ago when the factory was losing labour to the Owen Falls Construction Company, which offered its workers houses and better pay. Although eventually the Tobacco Company raised its own wages and so stopped the drift, it had meanwhile lost many workers who might otherwise still be with the firm. Thirdly, since women have only been employed since 1950 there are no women with very long service at present, although there may well be eventually.

Since the women's turnover is closely connected with other factors relating to women, we shall defer discussion of their rate of turnover to the chapter dealing with women. In Kampala we argued that much of the turnover amongst newcomers was due to inadequate advance information about the wages which were paid in the factory. Men left because what they

1. There are, of course, fewer women than men with very long service since women have only been employed by the factory in the last five years.

2. These figures are derived by expressing the number of leavers with one or more years' service as a percentage of the number of workers currently employed, who have a year's service or more.

found did not measure up to their expectations. In Jinja, too, disappointed expectations appear to play a large part, at least in the case of men, in causing them to leave before they have been with the firm a year. Amongst them, as Table XV shows, there is a substantial group whose members have been to school but who were receiving only the minimum wage, and another of men from tribes which generally command a higher wage for unskilled work in Uganda than the factory offers to newcomers.

TABLE XV
SAMPLE OF 26 MEN WHO LEFT OF THEIR OWN ACCORD BETWEEN MAY-OCTOBER, 1954, AFTER LESS THAN ONE YEAR'S SERVICE, BY TRIBE AND EDUCATION¹ (JINJA)

	No Education	Primary I-III	Primary IV-VI	Secondary	Total
A. Bantu :					
Soga	—	1	2	2	5
Samia	4	1	3	—	8
Others (5 tribes)	—	1	3	1	5
Total ..	4	3	8	3	18
B. Non-Bantu :					
Luo	2	—	—	—	2
Teso	—	—	1	1	2
Others (4 tribes)	3	1	—	—	4
Total ..	5	1	1	1	8

1. All but two were receiving a basic wage of Shs.44/-, the minimum paid by the factory. All but five had less than three months' service.

As in Kampala, lack of care in selection is evidently a major cause in turnover. The figures show that two-thirds of these leavers had been to school whereas the average for the present employees is half. The proportion of men who have been to school is particularly high in group A, being nearly four-fifths. Group B members, comprising the non-Bantu tribes and accounting for nearly a third of this turnover, presumably leave for a different reason.

It is evident that this turnover of newcomers amongst men is largely due to two causes. First, men who have been to school expect preferential treatment in wages and perhaps the type of work on which they are employed. When they fail to get this, there is danger that they will try their luck elsewhere. One of the most frequent complaints heard from educated workers, particularly newcomers, is that the factory does not take proper account of their education in fixing their wage. Second, men from the non-Bantu tribes (Group B) are much in demand for heavy work, and since heavy work is the least well paid in the tobacco factory, they are tempted to leave for work in the railway yards or elsewhere, where they can command a higher wage. The second cause is one which the factory can eliminate if it so wishes. The first is more worrying. Primary education is becoming very common and unlike the Nilotic physique is ceasing to command preferential treatment. The young men who leave the factory because they deem their education insufficiently recognized are unlikely to fare better elsewhere. If they depend upon employment they are likely to remain dissatisfied, at least until such time as primary education has become universal throughout the country and can therefore not be expected to entitle one to preferential treatment. If they do not depend upon employment they will prefer to make their living in other ways. It would be a pity, however, if industry continued to depend for its supply of unskilled workers on those who have not been to school. Although in the short run it makes little difference to the employer of unskilled workers whether his men have been to school or not—and this

explains why they pay no premium for primary education—in the long run it is bound to be easier to improve the efficiency of a labour force which has been trained to read and write and which has been conditioned, however slightly, to Western ways of thought and behaviour.

The tobacco factory is anxious to attract and retain men who have been to school. The attraction is there. The magic of the machine is beginning to supersede that of the pen and the factory is seldom short of applicants from amongst school leavers. I believe that a little ingenuity and tact would substantially reduce the number who leave again so soon after they arrive. This is not the place to make detailed suggestions, but a friendlier welcome from welfare officers and supervisors and possibly some degree of segregation of those who have been to school from those who have not, may go some way towards solving the difficulty. There is no inducement to stay more powerful than a feeling of belonging. Men who leave the factory without giving notice—and nearly all the newcomers who leave do so—have clearly never “belonged” to the factory. To have recognition and status may help them to do so. High labour turnover involves the engagement of large numbers of workers each month. This in turn is often given as a reason why employers cannot afford to give time to selecting prospective employees but prefer to take on any man whose face or physique may fit. It is a vicious circle. If my analysis is correct, then labour turnover, if it is not exclusively caused by careless selection, is certainly increased by it. Since a high labour turnover is both costly and demoralizing there is a strong case for adopting some simple selection process designed to eliminate as far as possible the applicant who is unlikely to stay. My impression is that the recruiting practices of urban industry are still in large measure based on those which were appropriate to agriculture, which has suffered from a chronic shortage of labour. But attractive factories in Kampala and Jinja are seldom short of labour, and are hence well placed to reduce their turnover by a weeding-out of applicants.

We now come to consider the rate of turnover amongst men who have “survived” their first few months in the factory. In Part I, which deals with the Kampala factory, it was argued that there were distinct differences in the length of time which men of different tribes were prepared to spend in the factory and that at best a management can ensure that men will stay for the whole period of their stay in Kampala, but that no inducement at present practicable was sufficient to persuade them to stay more than a limited period. The same proved to be true of Jinja, though the contrast between local men and immigrants is less marked, partly it appears, because the immigrants come from different areas. Direct comparison is only possible in the case of the Ankole : as in Kampala, few of them stay for three years and none for five.

It is clear, however, that Ganda and Soga alone are more heavily represented amongst men with five or more years' service than amongst men of all lengths of service as a whole. (See Table XVI.)

Two features are worth noting in this Table. One is that the Soga figure most prominently amongst the “old timers” and the Ganda less so. As we saw earlier, fewer of the Ganda employees are settled on smallholdings on the outskirts of the town than was the case in Kampala and that explains why fewer of them stay for long periods of time. Secondly, the disparity between the proportion of a tribe to all employees and to those with three or five years' service is less marked, except in the case of the Ankole, than in Kampala. This reinforces the argument that it is not so much the mere fact of migration which determines the length of stay but the region from which the worker is drawn.

TABLE XVI
TRIBAL COMPOSITION OF PRESENT EMPLOYEES (JINJA)

<i>Men Only</i>	<i>% of all employees</i>	<i>% of employees with 3 years' service and over</i>	<i>% of employees with 5 years' service and over</i>
Ganda	13	15	14
Soga	31	50	59
Samia	16	12	8
Luo	7	4	4
Ankole	5	2	—
Acholi	4	5	4
Teso	4	1	2
Gishu	2	2	1
Gwere	2	1	1
Others	16	8	7
	100	100	100

As in Kampala, length of service and rate of pay are closely related, partly as cause and partly as effect. (See Table XVII.)

TABLE XVII
BASIC WAGE RATE BY TRIBE (JINJA)

<i>Basic Wage Rate in shillings</i>	<i>77 Ganda %</i>	<i>190 Soga %</i>	<i>103 Samia %</i>	<i>40 Luo %</i>	<i>27 Ankole %</i>	<i>26 Acholi %</i>	<i>25 Teso %</i>	<i>10 Gisu %</i>	<i>108 Others %</i>	<i>606 Total %</i>
41-45	24	22	40	43	74	39	48	40	51	36
46-50	14	15	12	13	4	15	20	—	13	14
51-60	15	23	23	23	14	28	16	60	12	20
61-70	3	7	7	8	—	—	4	—	2	5
71-80	4	6	3	—	—	15	4	—	2	4
81-90	7	2	3	2	4	—	4	—	5	4
91-100	4	2	5	2	4	—	—	—	1	2
101-150	11	10	3	7	—	3	—	—	8	7
151-200	7	7	2	—	—	—	4	—	3	4
201-300	10	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	3	3
over 300	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The Ganda and Soga who comprise the largest proportion of men with long service also figure most prominently amongst those with high wage rates. But whereas the proportion of Soga with long service is very much greater than that of Ganda, when it comes to wages it is the Ganda who figure if anything more prominently in the upper ranges. This is not surprising. The higher wage rates are earned by supervisors, clerks and tradesmen. In all three categories Ganda are represented more heavily than Soga. Whereas there are 2.3 Soga for every Ganda in the labour force as a whole, amongst tradesmen the corresponding ratio is 2 : 1, amongst clerks 1.9 : 1 and amongst supervisors 1.5 : 1. For many years Buganda supplied the rest of the Protectorate with its administrators, clerks, and artisans, and they retain to this day some of the advantages to be derived from longer experience and better educational facilities. This also explains why the proportion of Ganda earning Shs.200/- per month or more is nearly twice as high as that of Soga.

One last feature is to be noted in this Table. The Ankole who have neither the advantage of a strong physique nor that of long contact with Western industry or ideas, fare distinctly worse in the wage scale than any other tribe.

We have seen (page 30) that the rate of turnover amongst those who have had a year's service or more is lower in Jinja than in Kampala. Let us now consider whether this is in some way associated with membership of the Provident Fund, in the two factories. (See Table XVIII.)

TABLE XVIII
MEMBERSHIP OF PROVIDENT FUND BY BASIC WAGE (A), TRIBE (B), AND
LENGTH OF SERVICE (C) (MEN ONLY) (JINJA)

A.	<i>Basic Wage (shillings)</i>	<i>Number in Provident Fund</i>	<i>Members as % of those eligible¹</i>		
	46-50	16	19	(2) ²	
	51-60	33	27	(25)	
	61-70	17	61	(31)	
	71-80	21	88	(41)	
	81-90	15	68	(60)	
	91-100	11	79	(43)	
	over 100	78	80	(50)	
	All Men	191	50	(22)	
B.					
Number in Provident Fund	<i>Ganda</i>	<i>Soga</i>	<i>Samia</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Members as % of those eligible	36	92	18	45	191
	52%	62%	30%	38%	50%
C.					
		<i>Number in labour force</i>	<i>Number in Provident Fund</i>	<i>(b) as a % of (a)</i>	
		<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>		
1 year but under 2	.. ..	101	20	20
2 years but under 3	.. ..	48	27	57
3 years but under 4	.. ..	40	23	58
4 years but under 5	.. ..	43	31	73
5 years and over	.. ..	112	90	80
Total	.. ..	344	191	56

1. All those earning Shs.46 per month or over have been reckoned eligible in both Jinja and Kampala, although in fact some men earn Shs.46 or more in their first year and are therefore not eligible. These percentages must therefore be regarded as conservative estimates. The actual percentage for all men is 56 per cent. (See Section C of this Table.)

2. The figure in brackets is the corresponding percentage in Kampala.

We may note the following similarities and differences in the two factories. First, whereas in Kampala only 22 per cent. of those eligible to join the Provident Fund had elected to do so, in Jinja the corresponding proportion among men is at least 50 per cent. Second, as in Kampala, the proportion who elected to join is higher at every step of the wage ladder. Third, although local men again outnumber all others in the Provident Fund, they do so only in the ratio of 2 : 1, whilst in Kampala the Ganda, who constitute a much smaller proportion of the labour force, were virtually the only ones who had joined.

The conclusions which we reached in regard to the Provident Fund in Kampala are on the whole reinforced by similarities and not invalidated by the differences. The number who elect to join the Fund is greater in Jinja, partly because there are more local men in the labour force, partly because the real earnings of workers in Jinja are higher and partly because, even amongst immigrants, there is not the same determination to return home within a strictly limited period of time as we found amongst men from western Uganda and Ruanda working in Kampala. It is significant that, as in Kampala, few men join the Provident Fund until well after they become eligible. Apparently men join the Fund because they have decided to stay in Jinja, not vice versa. On the other hand, the lower turnover amongst men who have become eligible to join may well be a response to the magnetic power of the Fund, in that a decision to stay in Jinja is not necessarily identical with a decision to remain in the tobacco factory, and the Provident Fund may well help to prevent a leakage of workers to other employers in the town. In the first ten months of 1954 approximately 150 workers who were eligible to belong to the Provident Fund left the factory of their

own accord. Of these 150 only 28 were members. Further, Table XVIII(C) shows that the longer a man has been in the factory, the greater the probability that he is a member of the Fund. The implication is that once men join, they tend to stay at least until the time when they become eligible for the employer's contribution to their fund.

High labour turnover, or industrial instability, is often regarded as the root cause of most of this country's ills. Consequently employers take pride in the proportion of workers who have served them for many years. Long service is rewarded by special privileges, bonuses and medals, and no inconvenience is regarded as too great to reward the old and trusted servant. This reaction is natural, but it has disadvantages which are at times overlooked. In the first place, the excessive "fawning upon" those with long service may be discouraging to the newcomer. If a newcomer feels that the firm "is run in the interest of the old timers" he may prefer to go where eagerness to learn and intelligence receive equal reward with long service. Secondly, if there are few workers with long service in relation to the total labour force, they may form a clique or oligarchy, hostile or merely indulgent in their attitude to the rest. It is natural that where 800 people are employed under one roof, they should split into groups and this can be a force for good ; but a group of old-timers, comprising many of those in responsible positions and jealous of all who come after them, may also do harm. It is not suggested that men should be dismissed after a period of years. What is suggested is that employers beware lest in their anxiety to reduce labour turnover they set up new sources of friction and so reduce the causes of turnover at one end whilst adding to them at the other.

Absentees

The average number of workers absent each day is lower in Jinja than in Kampala. It might be thought that this is because women are employed in Jinja, but since the rate for men and women is roughly the same, the fact that Kampala employs no women is probably irrelevant. Moreover the difference between absenteeism in Kampala and Jinja is not as great as the figures at first sight suggest, but it is sufficient to require explanation. (See Table XIX.)

TABLE XIX
ABSENCES IN JINJA AND KAMPALA, NOVEMBER, 1953-OCTOBER, 1954

		<i>Kampala</i>		<i>Jinja average daily absent</i>	
		<i>average daily</i>			
		<i>absent</i>			
		<i>%</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
		<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
1953	November	5.3	3.6	3.2	4.0
	December	7.5	3.8	2.8	4.0
1954	January	8.1	4.5	2.5	4.0
	February	7.9	4.7	4.9	5.0
	March	7.5	4.0	1.9	4.0
	April	4.7	3.3	0.6	3.0
	May	6.5	3.2	4.0	3.0
	June	9.7	2.7	3.4	3.0
	July	8.2	2.5	2.1	3.0
	August	6.3	2.7	0.9	2.0
	September	9.2	2.2	2.2	2.0
	October	8.2	1.6	2.1	2.0
Monthly Average		7.5	3.2	2.5	3.3

First, as to the method of calculation : a worker is counted absent if he was not present on a day when his name appeared on the Muster Roll. The great majority of workers in both factories leave without giving notice, and generally, when a man is absent for days on end and no one knows

why, it is eventually presumed that he has left and his name is struck off the Muster Roll. The number of times he is counted absent will depend upon the mood or patience of his departmental manager, i.e., upon the number of days which elapse before he is finally struck off. In Jinja a man is usually given three days' grace ; in Kampala he may not be struck off until the end of the month. On the whole the decision tends to be made more quickly in Jinja and this explains in part why absenteeism there is apparently lower.

There is another source of discrepancy. The average daily absence is calculated in Kampala as the monthly total divided by the number of working days. In Jinja the monthly total is divided by the number of days in the month. Again this will tend to make the Kampala rate higher than the rate at Jinja.

Even so, the higher rate of absence in Kampala needs further explanation, since, on the basis of the earlier analysis, one would expect it to be actually higher in Jinja. In Kampala absenteeism was greater among the local tribe, the Ganda, and as Ganda, together with Soga, form a larger proportion of the labour force in Jinja, one might expect more absenteeism there. But the crucial factor appears to have been that these Ganda had homes nearby, within relatively short distance of the factory, and could therefore turn a day's absence to profit. We have seen that a smaller proportion of the Ganda and Soga workers in Jinja were in this position.¹ Moreover, Jinja is a much smaller town than Kampala, and therefore does not offer the same opportunities for the occasional "fiddle." This may also explain why, contrary to the experience of Kampala, all tribes contribute to it in roughly the proportion in which they are represented in the factory as a whole. (See Table XX.)

TABLE XX
230 MEN ABSENT DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1954, BY TRIBE
(JINJA)

	Total %	Ganda	Soga	Samia	Luo	Ankole	Acholi	Teso	Gisu	Others	Unidentified
Proportion of all workers % ...	100	13	32	16	7	5	4	4	2	18	—
Proportion of absentees % ...	100	11	34	12	7	3	4	3	1	7	18

The rate of absence has not always been low at Jinja. In the years when employment opportunities were expanding most rapidly² absenteeism was a major problem. The attempt to reduce the number of absences by a bonus for good attendance proved to have only limited success. The Tobacco Company introduced such a bonus in 1950 and claimed to have reduced its rate of absence from 25 per cent. to 10 per cent. But within a year it was forced to double the bonus as the rate of absence had crept back to 25 per cent. once more. This had the immediate effect of reducing the rate to 17 per cent.—still a very high figure, though later in the year it fell to about nine per cent. Throughout 1952 it remained at an average of nine per cent., dropping to six per cent. towards the end of the year where it remained until the general increase in pay in July, 1953, when it fell to between three per cent. and four per cent. despite the reduction in the attendance bonus from four to three shillings. These figures are closely related to two factors : total earnings in the factory and the speed of expansion in employment in Jinja as a whole. The attendance bonus was effective only in so far as it was a supplement to earnings. Every increase in earnings reduced absenteeism. Similarly, absenteeism reached its peak at the time when employment opportunities

1. In fact the proportion of the total labour force who have smallholdings within a short distance of the factory is practically the same. On the basis of sample surveys in both factories it has been estimated as 20 per cent. in Kampala and 18 per cent. in Jinja. Other things being equal—which they are not—one would therefore expect the rate to be the same in both factories.

2. See p. 39.

in Jinja were expanding most rapidly and declined when the various employers concerned with the building of the Owen Falls dam had built up their maximum labour strength.

The rate of absence in Jinja is as low as any factory could wish for. It tends to rise a little during the cotton season but for the rest of the year it is remarkably low. It is undoubtedly relevant that real wages are higher in Jinja. There are more men in well paid jobs and some of the bonus schemes are more generous. It follows that a day's absence is more costly and that the inducement to take a day off is smaller. There may be other, less tangible factors. The canteen may help to reduce absences which are caused by headaches, etc., attributable to malnutrition, and it also serves as a daily attraction. During one week in November, 1954, when a check was kept on the number of meals served each day, an average of 95 per cent. of men and women present availed themselves of the meal. Like English workers, Africans are conservative in their eating habits and often leave half their food on the plate, but their passionate complaints when the meal does not meet their expectation is a guide to the importance which they attach to the canteen. The Jinja factory, as we said earlier, is a pleasanter building to work in and, finally, the recent improvement in the figures may well reflect the determined efforts that have recently been made to improve "morale" by joint consultation and the replacement of inept supervisors.

CHAPTER V

THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

A comparison is sometimes made between the present-day economic development of Uganda and the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century in England. The comparison is appropriate in many respects. Uganda faces the same problems, arising from the rapid growth of towns which, in turn, owe its origin to the development of trade and of power driven machinery. Like 18th century England, Uganda is faced with a shortage of capital and lacks the organization for harnessing such local accumulations as exist. It has the same difficulty in finding men with the necessary skill to make machines and to keep them running. It has the same maladjustments in the supply of labour ; i.e., overcrowding in areas where the demand for labour is negligible, and shortages where development is proceeding most rapidly. Both the problems and the manifestations of change are comparable though the differences are at times as marked as the similarities. One feature of the situation which is in striking contrast to 18th century England is that women, though they contribute to the national income in other ways, are largely absent from the field of paid employment. There are no reliable employment figures for 18th century England and we depend for our knowledge on literary descriptions and random figures ; but from these it is clear that there were few industries from which women were altogether excluded, and that in a number of principal industries, like textiles and pottery, women outnumbered men. In Uganda, however, out of a total of some quarter of a million employed persons, women only account for 3,000-4,000.¹ Moreover, in contrast to 18th century England, few of these women are employed in manufacturing industry. The 1952 enumeration gave their number as 350 ; agriculture and forestry absorbed 1,100 women and the medical, health and education services absorbed another 1,176 women.

The employment of 250 women in the tobacco factory is therefore unique. This study was undertaken not because the tobacco factory in Jinja is in this respect typical or representative, but for the light which the experience of this one large-scale employer of women might throw on the feasibility of extending the practice of employing women in factories ; and also on the question as to whether larger numbers of women would be willing to work, should employers seek their labour.

It may be useful to explain briefly how this study was carried out. I began by learning as much as I could about the history of women's employment in the factory, from the personal record cards of present and past employees, from an analysis of labour turnover and absence figures, from letters in the factory files, from letters and minutes in the records of the African Local Government and from conversations with managers in the factory and with others who spoke English. From the knowledge thus gained

1. The 1952 Enumeration of Employees gave their number as 3,000, but in fact this is likely to be an underestimate. Employers are at times reluctant to declare that they employ women because they fear that in so doing they may be infringing the law. The 1952 Enumeration also excluded seasonal employees in ginneries and coffee plantations, in both of which women are to some extent engaged. Finally, most children's nurses and shop assistants escaped enumeration because their employers seldom employ more than five persons. But even if these omissions were to halve the true figure of women in employment, the number would remain insignificant in relation to the total labour force.

I was able to draw up questionnaires, and to select a sample of 29 women and 30 men¹ who were interviewed with the aid of the questionnaires.

More specifically the object of the study was to find answers to these questions : Why does the factory employ women ? Who are the women who accept employment ? What is the attitude of men both inside and outside the factory to the employment of women ? How does the women's performance at work compare with that of men ? Finally, what special problems or costs attach to their employment ? It was hoped that the answers to these questions would enable us to speak more generally about the nature and prospect of women's employment in Uganda. The remainder of this section will follow the order of the questions set out above.

Women were employed by the factory for the first time in February, 1950 ; by the end of that year it was employing 120 women in a total labour force of 1,000. The decision to employ women was taken as a precaution against labour shortages which were beginning to be felt then, and which were expected to become more acute. When the factory started production in 1929, Jinja was a small market town and the headquarters of the District and of the Province. There was little competition for labour and the factory had no difficulty in finding workers. In 1930 Mirams estimated Jinja's population at just over 3,000, of whom 2,200 were Africans.² It had been larger in the 1920's but the effect of the Depression was to curtail employment opportunities and consequently many Africans left to return to the country. By 1948 commercial prosperity had returned to the town ; the number of Africans had risen to 4,400 and that of Asians had increased from 800 in 1930 to 3,800.³ The growth of population was largely a reflection of the rising price of cotton, which is extensively grown in the province and for which Jinja is the chief collecting centre. In 1948, Jinja was a market town and an administrative centre. In the years since 1948 the town has assumed another function : it has become a centre of industry. The plan to build a hydro-electric station there, itself a major engineering project, immediately opened up the prospect of cheap and plentiful power and made Jinja attractive as a centre of industry. The contracts for the building of the dam were placed in 1949 and by May, 1950, construction was in full swing.⁴ By 1951 the construction of the dam alone was employing 1,600 Africans, and the whole economy was becoming diversified. The dam workers attracted others to supply their needs. There was a boom in retail trade and small factories and workshops began to multiply. The township was forced to build more roads, drains and lamp posts, and the African labour force of the Public Works Department nearly trebled between 1949 and 1951.⁵

These developments, if they did not cause an immediate shortage of labour, put careful employers on their guard against future shortages. The Tobacco Company had hitherto had no labour shortage and neither turnover nor absences had been in any way excessive. But from 1949 onwards the Company came to be plagued by a constantly shifting labour force and by very high rates of absence. This was clearly the result of the new opportunities which Jinja offered to its workers. An increase in the demand for labour does not necessarily lead to a shortage, but it is more than likely to lead to an immediate increase of turnover. New employers must in the first

1. The women were chosen from all departments ; equal numbers were drawn from those with a year's service (28 per cent.) and those with less than a year's service (72 per cent.). The men were chosen from the principal manufacturing departments, the office and the workshops. Equal numbers were drawn from three groups distinguished by their basic wage. The first group (70 per cent.) comprised those earning less than Shs.60 per month ; the second comprised those earning Shs.60 to Shs.100 per month (15 per cent.) ; the third group (15 per cent.) included all others. All names were chosen at random.

2. A. E. Mirams. *Report on Town Planning and Development of Jinja*. Government Printer, Entebbe, 1930.

3. 1948 Census. *Geographical and Tribal Studies, Uganda*. East African Statistical Department, 1950.

4. C. and R. Sofer. *Recent Population Growth in Jinja*. Uganda Journal, Vol. XVII No. 1, March 1953.

5. Sofer *ibid*.

instance offer higher wages to attract labour ; those already in the town will transfer to the new employer whilst newcomers will go to the older employers. The older employer may be able to fill his vacancies but the vacancies continually recur. Similarly the rate of absence goes up partly because what looks like absenteeism is in fact turnover and partly because in a period of rapid expansion there are likely to be all sorts of opportunities for temporary, but very remunerative, employment.

The high labour turnover and absence rates in 1950 made the Tobacco Company fear that the days when it could command unlimited numbers of workers were coming to an end. It also anticipated that with the growth of Jinja would come a growth of industrial unrest. Both prompted the Company to make plans then for contingencies which had not yet arisen. The employment of women must be seen in the general context of the Company's decision to do everything possible to stabilise their labour force.

In what way was the employment of women likely to help ? In the first place, female labour was thought to be more "docile" than male labour, and to have a substantial number of jobs performed by women was therefore regarded as an insurance against industrial unrest. Secondly, it was thought that the supply of female labour was more elastic than that of male labour, or in other words, that it would be possible to engage increasing numbers of women without having constantly to increase wages. This belief was well-founded, for employment opportunities for women are very limited in Uganda. The nature of economic development has been such that most occupations require the physical abilities more commonly found in men. Much of the labour force is employed on heavy work. In 1952, of 202,000 employees who were enumerated, 93,000 were engaged in public works, public utilities, transportation, mining, quarrying and construction. 24,000 were engaged in manufacturing industry, but since most of Uganda's industries are heavy—at least in the sense that they process heavy or bulky raw materials—they provide few opportunities for the employment of women.¹ The low level of wages and high cost of capital have moreover retarded the adoption of labour-saving devices and that process of mechanization which has in Western countries caused an increasing proportion of industrial occupations to be semi-skilled and light, and therefore suitable for women. In Uganda it is common practice to divide all workers into clerks, artisans and "porters." The term "porter," though a relic from the early years of the century when in fact the principal occupation for all except clerks and artisans was the carrying of loads, is symptomatic of the nature of most of the work performed by them today. Such opportunities as exist for the employment of women are mostly in skilled or professional work, where a good education, sometimes followed by a period of training, is a prerequisite. Teaching, nursing and the care of European and Asian children are the principal examples. For the uneducated and even the educated woman the opportunity to find employment is therefore rare.

The tobacco factory in Jinja differs from other factories in Uganda in that the methods of production which it uses are very similar to those used in tobacco factories in Western countries, i.e., not only the processing of materials but also their handling has been to a great extent mechanized. Heavy physical work is practically confined to the godowns and stockrooms. All other work is light, clean and not unduly hot. Tobacco factories are therefore suitable places for the employment of women, and women are in fact employed in most of the world's cigarette factories, including one in West Africa.

1. The typical industries of Uganda are flour, oil and saw mills, brick and stone works, breweries and bottling plants, soap works, bakeries, furniture works and the processing plants for coffee, tea, cotton and sugar.

The Jinja factory has apparently had no difficulty in attracting female labour, though, as we shall see later, there was in the early stages considerable opposition to their employment not only from the men working in the factory but also from the rest of the male population of the district. Most of the women who now work in the factory are from the local tribes ; less than one-sixth are neither Ganda nor Soga, but it is noteworthy that whereas amongst men Soga outnumbered Ganda by 2.5 : 1, amongst women it is the Ganda who outnumber the Soga. There are 180 Ganda and only 80 Soga. This is no doubt in part a reflection of the Soga men's dislike of seeing women work in the factory, though in part it may also be a reflection of the greater breakdown of men's control over women among the Ganda.

Though women from the local tribes predominate in the labour force, none of those whom we interviewed were born or spent their childhood in Jinja or its environs, and for the majority the move to Jinja was the first move in their life. Nearly half (14) had grown up at or very near to one of the main trading centres or towns, and others in the economically advanced areas. As is to be expected the great majority gave their father's occupation as farmer, grazier or fisherman, but it is to be noted that what many in fact said was not "farmer" but "cotton grower" or "coffee grower." Eight were the daughters of craftsmen, cooks, or small entrepreneurs, and five had chiefs for fathers—one of them a deputy *saza* (county) chief. The significance of all this is difficult to assess, but at any rate it appears that these women do not come from the backwoods, and the money economy was not something which was likely to have struck them as novel on their arrival at the factory. We asked them whether they had themselves ever earned money before they came to the factory. Only three said they had not. Twelve had grown and sold cash crops such as maize, cotton and coffee ; six had served in bars or eating houses ; four had made and sold handicrafts ; at least three had earned money as prostitutes and one had taken care of a European child. Some of them had in fact been in Jinja for some while before they came to work in the factory ; most of these, however, were newcomers of less than one year's standing.¹

What brings these women to Jinja and to the factory ? We did not attempt to ask this question directly because we did not believe that the answers were likely to reveal the truth. Motives are generally to be discerned more accurately from the facts of people's lives than from the statements they make about them. Few people are both able and willing to display their real motives and the statements they make about them tend to be stereotyped. In the case of the women in the factory there is one strain which passes through all their lives : disruption of normal marital relations. All but four of those we interviewed had been married and had left their husbands before they came to Jinja. The remaining four had had extra-marital relationships which had caused them to be ostracised by their families. Seventeen had between one and four children.

The reasons why they had left their husbands were, of course, varied and it is not easy to be sure that we heard the full story in every instance. Some typical replies may be quoted as illustrative of some of the reasons which were given. One woman had married a man, as frequently happens in other societies, because he was handsome and wealthy. But it turned out that he habitually beat her and that he appropriated the proceeds of the sale of maize and cotton which she had grown. She left with her three children. "It is better to marry a poor man of character than a rich drunkard." Another woman was forced by her father to marry a man who had made her

1. Amongst newcomers five out of 15 had spent a year or more in Jinja before they came to the factory ; amongst those who have completed a year's service it was only one out of 14.

pregnant whilst she was still at school. The marriage did not work and she left, taking her child with her. A number had come from "broken homes." One, the daughter of a drunken Ganda fisherman, was told by her grandmother who looked after her, that it was time she got married: "I met a Soga whom I 'loved.' Grandmother told me to go and live with him, and as he was a Soga no bridewealth was asked for. I went to live with him to see if I would like it. After seven years he told me to get out as I had produced no children." Some left when their husbands brought in other women. Others left because their husbands were impotent or would not sleep with them: "An impotent man is difficult to live with. He does not make you happy. You do not have a child. When you become friendly with other men, he beats you. I used to sleep with other men and he beat me. I left him to become a prostitute in Kampala until I grew tired of it; then I started to work here in the factory. Now I live with a man on the Housing Estate."

Many women whose marriages break up presumably do marry again and do not come to Jinja. Others come to Jinja but do not come to the factory. There is a living to be made out of prostitution or near-prostitution, and some of the women, as we have seen, had been prostitutes before they came to work in the factory, coming to the factory when prostitution ceased to be profitable or preferred. Others abandon prostitution as soon as there is an opportunity to obtain a livelihood in other ways; they are grateful to the Tobacco Company for "saving" them. Only a minority of the women in the factory had been prostitutes before they came to the factory and the allegation that many of them combine two "trades" seems to be largely unfounded.

It is still, however, not easy to generalise about the motives which bring women to a town. The breakdown of marriage or pre-marital promiscuity is common to all those who come, but the number of marriages which break down is far greater than the number of women who leave the countryside and in many instances marriages may have broken down for the very reason that the woman has become dissatisfied with conditions of rural life and has wanted to escape into the greater freedom of a town. The answers to our questions had often an air about them which was reminiscent of nothing so much as the *avant garde* of the 1920's in Europe. As we have seen, only a minority of the women had engaged in prostitution proper, but nearly all were living with men; admittedly the difficulty of finding housing accommodation generally left them little alternative, but it is interesting to note some typical attitudes towards living with them. One explained that she had a "town friend" who visited her every night. When they first met she made sure that the friendship would not cause disruption in his own family. She refused to live with him or to accept money presents because it would "give him rights" over her and he would steal her wages. He might object to her working in the factory but he could not prevent it as she did not meet him at her parents' home. Her father had wanted her to marry again when her first marriage came to grief, but she told him it was better to go to work than to take a husband who might beat her. Many stressed that friendship was better than marriage: "you get all you need" and the factory enables you to feed and clothe yourself. One girl explained that her town friend gave her very little: "I do not want him to give me more as it would give him rights over me." The manager has been approached on several occasions with a request either to provide houses for single women or to persuade the Housing Estate to let houses to them. These requests might be interpreted in more than one way but we formed the impression that in most cases they were made neither from an urge to live a life of chastity nor yet to practise prostitution more effectively, but were inspired by a real

desire for independence and for emancipation from the control of men. The largest number of women we interviewed were living in the Municipal Housing Estate close to the factory (41 per cent.). Most of the remainder lived in one or other of the suburban settlements on the industrial side of the town. Substantial minorities lived at Masese and Mpumude and none lived further out than Bugembe (four miles). Since women do not normally ride bicycles, they must necessarily live close enough to their place of work. A few get a lift on the back of men's bicycles, but the great majority walk and none travel on public transport.

A surprisingly large number of the women (16) claimed either that they lived alone or that they lived with a sister. It might be thought that this number includes many who were ashamed to admit that they lived in the houses of men friends and it is probable that at least some of these 16 were living in houses rented for them by lovers. But since none of them appeared to make any secret of the fact that they were visited by or visited lovers, we have no grounds for discrediting their stories. The fact that all but seven said that part of their wages went on rent, suggests that the number who live independently may be even greater. Only two women lived with husbands, and both were married in Jinja to men working in the town.

The aim of the tobacco factory is to attract young educated girls as they leave school. The factory has had some success in attracting girls around the age of 20 who have been to school. Remembering that girls have fewer opportunities of going to school than boys, it is remarkable that the proportion of all women who had been to school proved to be almost as high as that of men, though naturally they had on the whole spent fewer years at school (See Table XXI.)

TABLE XXI
EDUCATION OF ALL WORKERS IN THE FACTORY (JINJA)

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
	%	%
None	50	56
Primary I-III ..	15	23
Primary IV-VI ..	24	19
Secondary I-III ..	10	2
Secondary IV-VI	1	—
Total	100	100

TABLE XXII
AGE AT ENTRY OF ALL WORKERS IN THE FACTORY¹ (JINJA)

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
	%	%
Age at Entry ..		
16-20	49	42
21-25	26	30
26-30	15	21
31 and over ..	10	7
Total	100	100

1. NOTE—(a) the age is normally that given by the recruit and is subject to error.

(b) the personnel record cards from which these details were taken were introduced only five years ago. The clerk who made the entry for existing employees appears to have entered their age at that time and not the age of entry. This means that the proportion of *men* in the higher age groups is in fact lower than these figures make it appear.

One hesitates to draw conclusions from the differences in the age at entry of men and women. In the absence of proper registration of births it would be rash to treat the ages given by newcomers as more than a rough indication of their real age. Nevertheless it would appear that a greater proportion of women than men come to the factory as mature adults. Moreover the mature adults tend to stay longer than the young girls—

pregnant whilst she was still at school. The marriage did not work and she left, taking her child with her. A number had come from "broken homes." One, the daughter of a drunken Ganda fisherman, was told by her grandmother who looked after her, that it was time she got married: "I met a Soga whom I 'loved.' Grandmother told me to go and live with him, and as he was a Soga no bridewealth was asked for. I went to live with him to see if I would like it. After seven years he told me to get out as I had produced no children." Some left when their husbands brought in other women. Others left because their husbands were impotent or would not sleep with them: "An impotent man is difficult to live with. He does not make you happy. You do not have a child. When you become friendly with other men, he beats you. I used to sleep with other men and he beat me. I left him to become a prostitute in Kampala until I grew tired of it; then I started to work here in the factory. Now I live with a man on the Housing Estate."

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perhaps because their chance of marriage or re-marriage is less. The fact that more women than men come as mature adults is only a reflection of the different reasons which bring them to Jinja. Men come when they have not yet inherited land of their own and do not have the resources to buy land or go into some other form of enterprise.

What do the women do with their wages ? Naturally, a good portion of their wages are needed for the ordinary necessities of life—food, rent, clothes and domestic utensils. Ten women also spent money on school fees or books for their children, five sent money to their parents, and two were paying off their bride price in monthly instalments. Many of them saved : of those who had had less than a year's service just under one-half saved ; of the other 15, the savers constituted four-fifths. Newcomers said they found it difficult to save as they had to build up a wardrobe and a household ; the manager also remarked on the surprising improvement in the standard of dress in the first few months after the women arrived. In addition to saving, over two-thirds (11) of those eligible contributed to the Provident Fund, whereas in the case of men, only about half of all those who were eligible in the factory belonged to it, and the proportion of those we interviewed who saved in addition to their Provident Fund contribution was two-fifths (7/17). The reasons given for saving varied from vague phrases like "to assist me afterwards" or "to help me when I am in difficulties" or "to help me when I am old" to highly specific purposes like the repayment of bridewealth and school fees for children when they reach school age. Three women put their savings into the Post Office Savings Bank ; two send the money to their mother who trades with it so that it may multiply.

Has the experiment of employing women been successful from the technical point of view ? In the West, employers prefer women for work that requires speed or nimbleness. Women are much faster than men at wrapping chocolates and they excel at monotonous repetitive work which men find hard to endure. In the Jinja tobacco factory it is found, however, firstly, that women are consistently slower than men at every task. They perform work like the packing of cigarettes into boxes of 50 and feeding tobacco leaves into a machine which removes their stems—jobs which in England women do more quickly than men—and their output is always lower than that of men. (See Table XXIII.)

TABLE XXIII
HAND PACKING OF PLAYERS' "CLIPPER" CIGARETTES INTO BOXES OF
50. MEN AND WOMEN (JINJA)

Highest recorded individual output :	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Number of cigarettes packed per day ..	75,000	50,000
Average individual output :		
Number of cigarettes packed per day ..	48,150	38,400

This is perhaps due to the differences in the backgrounds of English and African women. African women, it must be remembered, are used to farm work, and work in the fields at that. The qualities required for such work are strength and, above all, endurance. Hoeing does not develop subtlety of touch and one does not hoe fast when one has to do it day after day in the sun.

Secondly, women reach their maximum efficiency more slowly than men. Women have come less into contact with Western gadgets or modes of thought and behaviour than men, and it is consequently more difficult to train them, though this handicap varies with the type of job for which they are to be trained. As we shall see, this difficulty is increased by the fact that hardly any of them speak Swahili, let alone English. The gap between the speed

at which men and women reach maximum efficiency is greatest where the job to be learned is most complicated. The gap is greater in the training of machine operators than in the training for purely manual jobs like packing. In other ways there are, however, fewer differences between the performance of men and women. We saw earlier that the rates of turnover and of absenteeism are almost identical for men and women, and they are neither more nor less prone to be late for work. It is sometimes said that women are more "docile," that they are more easily contented and less prone to strike. It is true that they find it easier to spend long hours without a break on monotonous, repetitive work, and they are less likely to be involved in organized strikes. Thus, in a strike at the Kampala ginnery of the Uganda Company in 1951, the 20 women took no part. In England, many women's reluctance to take part in strikes or to join trade unions is usually explained by the fact that they regard employment as a merely temporary phase in their life. But as we have seen, for many women in Uganda employment has the same significance which it has for middle-aged spinsters in England. They depend on it no less than some men and more than most. The numbers of women employed in Uganda are too small really to make it possible to speak with certainty about their attitude to strikes, but their keen and intelligent participation in joint consultation in the cigarette factory, and the fact that 30 of them, including many of the oldest workers in the factory, were recently dismissed for a spontaneous strike action cannot be easily reconciled with the view that women are more "docile" than men.

What is the attitude of men to the employment of women? On the whole it is highly unfavourable. Men object to the employment of women in occupations which they have come to regard as men's. From these occupations only teaching, nursing and the care of children are exempted, though approval even of these occupations for women is far from universal. Men oppose the employment of women principally because they judge that a woman's contribution to prosperity is greater in the home than in the factory. In our society the saying that "the woman's place is in the home" is a rationalization of the fear of being undercut at work, a fear born of, and borne out by, a long history of insecurity and unemployment. The same phrase in Uganda has a wider significance. The opposition to the employment of women in Jinja and the surrounding district rests on two sets of arguments, though in the minds of particular men both sets might run concurrently. The first is that women are taking men's jobs and that since women are exempt from poll tax, the opportunities for earning money ought to be reserved for men. Despite the fact that many employers find it difficult to fill all their vacancies, men are obsessed with the fear of being edged out by women workers. This fear was voiced unsolicited by seven out of the 30 men whom we interviewed in the factory. This argument, as is to be expected, is peculiarly that of the women's fellow male workers. It is seldom seen in writing because men have no representative organs as workers.

The second set of arguments is more general. First, there is the fear that women who go out to work will not bear children. Urban life spells immorality. Women drift into prostitution and either cease to bear children or, at best, bear only half-castes. As a result population will decline and with it the power and wealth of the country. Not only does "the fundamental wealth of a state consist in the multitude of subjects; for it is men that Till the Ground, produce Manufactures and manage Trade" but since the revenue of the African Local Government is largely dependent upon the number of poll tax payers, it is not surprising that a fear of depopulation should assume principal importance in the minds of those who dominate it. The argument is familiar to students of the 17th century. It is in fact common in any economy in which capital plays only a minor part in production.

Women not only bear the men that Till the Ground but they themselves till it and the argument against the employment of women therefore is as urgent in the short run as in the long run. "Women are to us, what an investment in a bank is to a European," as one man put it. "We expect a return on the money which we have spent on them as husbands or fathers, just as you Europeans demand interest on your investments." It might be thought that it was a matter of indifference to the father or husband whether this return took the form of labour or wages, but presumably it is easier to gain access to the fruits of labour than to a woman's wages. Even if women appropriate the proceeds of cash crops grown by them, there is never any question that food grown by the women belongs to the family as a whole. The opposition is not only to their own wives working for wages but extends to any employer who is prepared to employ women, since the very opportunity of working for wages acts as a threat to the power of men to prevent women from leaving them.

These beliefs are widely held and rigorously defended. In 1950, when women were first employed on a large scale in Jinja, the local African District Council which stands for the rural population as a whole rather than the insignificant section of wage earners who might be thought to have been primarily affected, spent four full days debating the issue and eventually voted 65 to 12 for the abolition of female employment though in fact the decision lay outside their competence.¹ "To employ women for such work," they explained, "is contrary to our customs. Women's work is to maintain land, housewifery and motherhood." An appeal to the District Commissioner fell on unsympathetic ears and caused the Council to take the issue further to the Provincial Commissioner, again without success.² Three years later the issue was still a major grievance to be presented as one of 10 points of complaint in an interview with the Protectorate Governor.

The Government has been adamant in its refusal to act upon these complaints. Whilst not encouraging the employment of women in industry, it regards the spread of this practice as an inevitable concomitant of economic development. "African women are likely to be employed more and more widely in industry as women of other races have been in other countries and (the men) would do well to reconcile themselves to this idea and to accustom themselves to it." The charge that employment of women encourages prostitution is dismissed and instead employment is held up as the only alternative to prostitution; women would be inevitably forced into prostitution since "it is well-known that men nowadays do not wish to marry."

The Government's policy of *laissez faire* has probably been the only feasible one, even if its defence has not been persuasive. There is clearly nothing "inevitable" about the employment of women in industry as the longer history of industrialization in South Africa shows. The argument over the connection between employment and prostitution arises from the different meanings given to that term by Europeans and Africans. For the European the payment of money fixes the divide between un-virtuous living and prostitution, but for the African all extra-marital intercourse spells prostitution. It is significant that the same word—*malaya*—is often used to describe both tramp and prostitute. Employment may save a woman from having to sell herself but it also enables her to escape from the traditional rôle ascribed to her, and to indulge in promiscuous relationships as she wishes. Employment does not lead to prostitution in the European sense but it undermines the husband's or father's control, and given the fear of depopulation, objections to the employment of women are rational. Em-

1. Busoga District Council Minutes, 25 June, 1950.

2. Letter from Kyabazinga of Busoga to Provincial Commissioner, Eastern Province, 21 November, 1950.

employment is not necessarily the only alternative to prostitution in the European sense, for custom makes provision for the return to their families of wives whose marriages have come to grief. The availability of jobs in towns may, however, cause more women to remain independent or to enter a life more casual than that permitted to them by tradition.

The opposition to the employment of women is not, however, universal. As is to be expected, the "town friends" of the women in the factory are not averse to the advantage of female company which does not entail any major cost. A few of the women said that their town friends could not stop them from working even if they wished to, but the majority told us that their friends liked them to work in the factory. In this way the men did not have to support them; they did not have to make provision for their children, and if their parents needed money the women could send it out of their own wages. Few of the men we interviewed were prepared to agree that the employment of women had advantages. One or two conceded that there were some women who might not be able to support themselves without employment, perhaps because their parents and husbands were dead and they were too old to find anyone else to support them. Some said jokingly that once women had experienced the difficulties of living on wages they would be more sympathetic to their husbands and would cease badgering them for luxuries they could not afford to buy.

Normally, to have a wife in town means to forgo a farm in the country. At present, the income to be derived from a farm is well in excess of the wages a woman might earn in town. Even if the women have children, they can still run a farm in the men's absence, but if they lived in town they would find it difficult to combine employment with the rearing of a family and they would have to rely on their husband's support. Few men therefore bring their wives with them when they come to work in a town. This contributes to the instability of the urban labour force. One man said outright that he thought more women should be employed in towns because their presence induced men to stay longer than they otherwise would.

In conclusion, we must try to answer the question: what is the prospect of employing women to a greater extent than is at present the practice? The potential demand for female labour is certainly increasing. The projected development of light industry of which the textile mill in Jinja and the biscuit factory in Kampala are conspicuous examples will create tasks which could well be performed by women. But whereas female labour in Europe and America is generally regarded as cheap labour, this may not be the case here. As in the West, facilities like cloakrooms and surgeries have to be duplicated where both men and women are employed. There must, further, be separate supervision, since male supervision of women proves to be very unsatisfactory and so impairs working efficiency. No doubt if enough women are employed, separate cloakrooms and supervisors pay for themselves; but what advantage would it bring the average employer, other things being equal, to employ these large numbers? We saw earlier that on the whole women are less efficient than men. To pay them substantially lower wages for unskilled work is not open to employers where the wages of unskilled men are already close to the subsistence level. To pay them lower wages for more responsible work would only serve to increase the suspicion of the men. In any case, though there is no doubt that at present there are a number of women who would take up employment if they had the opportunity, this must not delude us into assuming that there is a vast reservoir of unemployed women ready to take a job at almost any wage.

The supply of female labour is severely restricted. In the first place, so long as agricultural prices remain at their present level, and land continues to be available, wages in industry will have to be substantially higher before

it will pay women to give up farming. Secondly, it is far from easy for women with children to take up full-time factory employment. There is no tradition, as in the north of England, of combining factory work with family life. Since most women marry young and start to bear children at once,¹ few will find it worth while to enter industry. It might, of course, be argued that if more jobs were open to women they would perhaps not marry quite so early. For the present, however, great pressure is brought to bear on women not to enter employment, and this pressure happens for the moment to be solidly supported by economic forces. There is not likely to be any major relaxation of the social sanctions against the employment of women in industry until such time as the relation between the level of wages on the one hand, and the level of earnings in peasant agriculture on the other, has undergone a major change. Until that time, the employment of women is likely to continue to be, as at present, an unusual feature in the economy of Uganda.

1. Dr. A. I. Richards found that in a sample area in Buganda women married between the ages of 16 and 20, and that their average age at the first pregnancy was 18.5 years. But it must be remembered that between one-quarter and one-third of all women appear to remain involuntarily childless. See A. I. Richards and P. Reining, *Report on Fertility Surveys in Buganda and Buhaya, 1952*; in F. Lorimer and others, *Culture and Human Fertility*, UNESCO 1954.

CHAPTER VI

JOINT CONSULTATION

The East African Tobacco Company is distinguished from many other employers in Uganda not only by the existence of machinery for consultation with workers, but also by the importance which the Company attaches to consultation. In other countries, this practice has been forced upon employers by the growth of trade unions which have insisted upon consultation in matters affecting their wages, hours of work and other conditions of service. In Uganda, however, there are few trade unions, even when that term is used to indicate all sorts of associations whose objects are only broadly similar to those of a trade union. In 1953 three trade unions open to Africans were registered, comprising about 500 African members out of a total labour force for the whole of Uganda of just short of a quarter of a million. Two of them were of Government and municipal employees and only one—the Busoga African Drivers' Union—could be regarded as industrial.

Some explanation of the absence of trade unions may help us also to understand some of the problems involved in joint consultation. First, where employment is only one of a number of alternative ways of securing a livelihood, there is little incentive to organize. A switch from wage labour to, say, cotton growing when the latter seems more remunerative is a simpler way of attaining a higher income than the chancy and difficult procedure of bringing organized pressure to bear upon employers. It might be argued that many workers are migrants, who are not in a position to "switch" in the short run; but their impermanence is equally an obstacle, for it means that the labour force is constantly changing, and that organization would be as difficult as it was amongst the Irish in England during the early 19th century. Thirdly, a trade union needs funds if it is to do its business properly. With workers whose wages are low, even a small subscription might prove a heavy burden. In any case, men who do not intend to remain workers for more than two or three years would be reluctant to subscribe regularly to a permanent fund even if they were willing to subscribe to a fund for some specific and immediate object. Further, it would be difficult to find men who were trusted to administer the funds solely in the interests of their subscribers. Even in 19th century Britain, where there was an incentive to form trade unions, these practical difficulties retarded the growth of an effective trade union movement for many years. There are other reasons why trade unions have not developed. It has been said that, amongst Bantu people particularly, an institution based on the idea of conflicting forces and organized resistance to, or defence against, a chieftain—in this case the employer—is alien and unnatural. One does not "organize" against people who stand *in loco parentis*¹. But this seems incompatible with the persistence of strikes or even riots like those of 1949 in Buganda. Besides, amongst many East African people the institution of chiefs is as alien as that of trade unions.

Finally, those most likely to succeed as leaders of a trade union or to form themselves into one, the skilled or clerical workers, are least likely to be interested. They will not openly lead a union of unskilled workers because they would be exposed to victimization and they have, unlike the farmer turned labourer, something to lose. Fear of victimization may explain why strikes often occur in Uganda without apparent leaders. For instance,

1. Beaglehole, E., *Cultural Factors in Economic and Social Change*, International Labour Review, Vol. LXIX, No. 5.

during a recent strike at the Uganda Transport Company in Kampala, the strikers engaged a solicitor to act on their behalf, partly because the organizers of the strike feared dismissal if their identity became known to their employers. Nor are the skilled workers anxious to form their own trade unions because the wide differences between the wages of men in the same trade persuade them that they may, with less trouble, improve their position by seeking the favour of their employers. It is true, as we saw in Part I of this study, that these opportunities are restricted by the presence of Asians and Europeans, but Africans see this, not as an industrial but as a political problem, which requires political not industrial organization.

The absence of organization amongst workers has left a vacuum in industrial relations which only the most short-sighted regard as a blessing. Absence of organization is not synonymous with industrial harmony, and the larger the unit of employment the greater the danger of sudden conflict arising from lack of contact between employers and workers.

This, then, is one of the justifications of joint consultation. Lack of contact between workers and their employers has long been recognized as one of the major sources of friction in the older industrial countries. It is the product partly of the hierarchical organization of industry, and partly of the differences in ways of thought and speech, one might almost say of culture, at each step in the hierarchy. Even in England actions and words have different meanings to people from different social backgrounds, and since the hierarchy of industry repeats the hierarchy of society as a whole, there is room for a good deal of misunderstanding. In Uganda the possibilities for misunderstanding are infinitely multiplied, and there is not even the football score or the Test match to make a bond and give an incentive to communication. Class differences are reinforced by colour and by culture, and differences in the nuances attached to words or phrases become differences in language as a whole. The workers' native language may be any one of a number but is never Swahili, in which they will normally be expected to communicate with their managers and supervisors if these are European or Indian. Thus, in a sample survey in the tobacco factory, out of 29 women nine knew only Luganda and therefore had no way of communicating with European members of staff directly; 16 also knew a little Swahili and the remaining four understood in addition a little English though none could speak it. Amongst men, only one was restricted to Luganda whilst 17 claimed to know some English and the remaining 12 understood Luganda and Swahili in varying proportions. But the sample of men was heavily biased towards well-paid employees. Swahili, as it is spoken in Uganda, is in any case a code rather than a language and its sole virtue is that it is easy to learn for all concerned. Such "languages" are efficient as a means of communication in the measure in which there is basic understanding between those who use them. The jargon of economics, for instance, is efficient so long as it circulates amongst economists who are all interested in the same aspect of life. Swahili is similarly efficient when it is used in those everyday situations which are familiar to all. But it has three limitations. First, it is inefficient as a medium for instruction, since the need to instruct often presupposes that one of the parties is unfamiliar with the situation in which he is to operate. Secondly, it is inefficient in that it tends to restrict all contact to the very limited situations covered by the tiny vocabulary. Finally, its invariable use with Europeans deprives them of the kind of intimate acquaintance with people which comes from casually overhearing their conversation in a bus or a market place. Given the wide disparities in the social and cultural background of those who come together in a factory, the language barrier practically ensures that in the absence of formal machinery for communication, misunderstanding shall be abysmal.

We might summarize the preceding paragraphs as follows : The pattern of industry in Uganda, as in England, is hierarchical. This in itself is a potential cause of friction. The probability of friction depends on two things. First, it depends on the extent of difference in social and cultural background between those on each step of the hierarchy. Secondly, it depends on the amount of contact which exists between the steps. This contact may be informal or formal. The greater the social and cultural disparities, the less informal contact there is likely to be. In Uganda these disparities are very wide and contact must therefore be largely formal. In England this formal contact is between trade unions and employers and the practice of joint consultation which is described here has followed rather than preceded the development of collective bargaining. Since there are practically no trade unions in Uganda, contact between employers and workers must depend upon other arrangements and these arrangements must be initiated by the employers. I have been arguing that there is a need for formal machinery of contact between employers and workers. My case is not necessarily that which moves the Government to urge employers to start joint consultation, or that which persuades the Tobacco Company to adopt joint consultation without being urged. The Government's case is set out in the Annual Report of the Labour Department for 1950. Works committees, it argues, "provide not only a safety valve for the airing of grievances, but also a valuable channel of communication whereby management can explain changes in conditions of employment. Machinery of this sort also serves to educate the African in the ways of negotiation through representatives, the electoral principle and the proper conduct of meetings."¹ In other words, it sees in joint consultation not only a method of achieving contact between workers and employers but also a way of teaching English methods of negotiation. By 1952, 43 works committees covering 29,000 employees had come into existence and the annual report for the year boldly hazards the prediction that "joint consultation has come to stay and will be a permanent feature of industrial life in Uganda."² The Tobacco Company sees joint consultation primarily as a means of raising "morale." It has, however, a second motive for encouraging it. Its experience in other countries, and notably in West Africa, has taught it to expect that eventually its workers will combine in a trade union and it therefore regards joint consultation as a way of training the future leaders of such a trade union. It agrees with the Labour Department that negotiations are most easily conducted along formal lines and it sees in joint consultation a way of making potential leaders of a trade union familiar with formal procedure. It also believes that negotiations with a trade union are made smoother if the union leaders have confidence in the sincerity of their employers and that they are more likely to have confidence if they have had experience of contact over a period of time preceding the formation of the union.

The purpose of my study of joint consultation in the tobacco factory was not to discover statistically its impact on output, attendance or turnover. I do not believe that these connections can be satisfactorily established by any known method of investigation. Rather its purpose was, given the aims of joint consultation, to study its operation in detail. We tried to find out what men and women in the factory thought about it, how representatives were elected, to what extent representatives represented the views of all sections of workers, and what were the problems involved in holding meetings in more than one language. We may begin with a brief account of the development and organization of joint consultation in the factory.

1. *Uganda Protectorate. Annual Report of the Labour Department for 1950*, p. 14. Government Printer Entebbe.

2. *Ibid.* p. 19.

The first attempts were made at the behest of the Labour Department, under a previous manager, in January, 1952. A single works committee was formed, comprising the whole factory. It was to meet at monthly intervals and was composed of the manager and the assistant manager, the welfare officer and 16 workers' representatives. The manager, acting as chairman, made it clear in the first meeting that he welcomed suggestions but that he alone could decide what action to take. The workers' representatives were appointed by the manager and were chosen from among the more intelligent and articulate men. Supervisors therefore dominated the committee and this in turn meant that the committee was dominated by Ganda and Soga. The committee met less regularly than was at first planned, mainly because it did not appear to achieve any concrete results either in the eyes of management or in the eyes of the workers. Eventually it died a natural death.

Under the new manager another attempt has been made to institute joint consultation. If the previous attempt was in one sense a failure, it was also a great help in that it pointed to mistakes which could be avoided in future. These errors were principally three. In the first place, it was a mistake to exclude from the committee most of the members of management ; it caused resentment and suspicion. Resentment, because those excluded not unnaturally felt it a slight to their position. Suspicion, because they feared that the meeting was being used as a channel for complaints against them. Some of the complaints raised by the workers did in fact concern departmental managers who were excluded from the committee and therefore could not properly defend themselves. Although only questions of universal interest were to be raised, naturally these often arose out of a specific incident. For example, a senior employee was dismissed without notice by his departmental manager. The matter was brought up as a matter of principle, but inevitably the particular instance which gave rise to it was discussed, and was therefore discussed in the absence of the manager who was most closely concerned. There is another aspect of the exclusion of departmental managers. Workers tend to judge their employers by the man who has the immediate control of their destinies : the departmental manager. It is at his level that contact with the workers is therefore most important and in this case precluded by the composition of the committee.

The second error was that the representatives were, other than in their own eyes, in no way representative of the workers as a whole, as is evident from the questions which they raised. At the first meeting these were the subjects brought up by the workers' members :—

1. Grading of clerks
2. Inadequate pay for long service
3. Time of starting, too early
4. Annual leave too brief
5. Bicycle thefts
6. Discharge of senior employees without notice
7. Insufficient sugar in tea.

Of the seven subjects, only the last is likely to have been of interest to immigrant labourers who then, as now, form the majority of the workers. Two of the questions (2 and 6) were of concern only to a minority of men with long service, mostly Ganda and Soga. The time of starting (3) was—and still is—a grievance only with those who live some distance away—Ganda and Soga who live on small holdings on the outskirts of the town. The same is true of bicycle thefts (5). The danger of having a bicycle stolen in the factory is small when compared with the danger of having it stolen at the kind of houses occupied by most of the immigrants. The concern over annual leave (4) is deceptive. Since it is immigrants who live furthest away

one would expect that it was they who were most concerned to have longer holidays. In fact, however, few immigrants would think it worth their while to travel home even if their period of leave were trebled. It is the local men whose homes may be in the remoter parts of the district who are anxious to have travel time.¹ Finally, the grading of clerks (1) was again only important to a minority and these also were men from the local tribes. It is not suggested that the interests of Ganda and Soga should not be fully represented on a works committee but it is idle to pretend that a works committee which occupies itself exclusively with the affairs of less than half the workers, and those the better-off ones in any case, is representative of the factory as a whole or can hope to command the interest or allegiance of all. The African welfare officer could hardly be expected to do otherwise than answer in the affirmative when asked to state "on behalf of the employees whether he was quite satisfied that the departmental representatives present could properly represent their opinions and wishes." His answer should not have allowed the chairman to be persuaded.

Thirdly, the works committee was used by the management as a platform for lecturing the workers' members about the workers' misdeeds and for threatening terrible fates to those who would not reform their wanton ways. It is as natural a temptation as it is fatal to the emergence of a spirit of co-operation. It is particularly pointless when the threats extend to those present even though they had been selected in the first place because of their distinction from the majority.

As we saw earlier, the committee, though never officially wound up, ceased eventually to meet. A new start was made during 1954 and the lesson of the defunct committee was carefully studied and learnt before a new attempt was made to institute joint consultation. In the first place, it was decided that what was required was a hierarchy of committees and not just one factory committee. It was recognized that the whole concept of joint consultation through representatives was new and strange to the majority of workers. It was therefore decided to inaugurate it in stages and to leave the difficult problem of representation until all workers had become familiar with the idea of consultation. Initially therefore, meetings were held under the chairmanship of departmental managers in which all members of the department participated. The purpose of consultation was explained and an immediate attempt was made to test its efficacy by the introduction of a proposal which was not to be put into effect unless general agreement could be obtained. In one department it was proposed to institute weekly instead of monthly pay ; it could have been done irrespective of the views of the workers. Instead they were asked and persuaded ; they refused to agree unconditionally but in the end agreed to it for a trial period. When at the end of the month they unanimously asked to go back to the former practice of monthly pay, the pledge not to force the issue was honoured.

The next stage was to establish contact with departmental managers through representatives, and at the same time it was announced that, later on, the representatives from all departments would have an opportunity of meeting together under the chairmanship of the factory manager. This gave the departmental managers an opportunity to teach the members something about committee procedure and to give them an idea of which kind of topics were appropriate to the departmental committee and which would have to be taken to a higher level. Matters in which the departmental managers had competence were settled on the spot and each departmental manager was instructed to accede to reasonable requests and see to it that changes asked for and granted were put into operation immediately in

1. Amongst soldiers stationed in the Orkneys during the War, it was the Scots, not the Londoners, to whom it mattered whether weekend leave was to start on Friday night or Saturday morning.

order to convince the workers that the management was determined to make practical use of these meetings.

The first factory meeting was held three months after the first meetings in the departments at which all employees attended, and other meetings have been held since. Before considering the agenda of this first meeting, it may be instructive to analyse the membership of the factory committee. On the management side, all heads of manufacturing departments (Europeans) are members as well as the factory manager and assistant manager. The two African welfare supervisors are present in that capacity and they also act as interpreters. In addition, there are 21 workers' representatives including six women. Different departments are unevenly represented; thus, the packing department which employs 180 workers has four representatives, whilst the leaf department which employs half that number has twice as many representatives. This is clearly unfortunate; the cause is that the factory committee is simply the total of representatives on departmental committees and that the departments were left free initially to have committees of any size they chose. However, no one seems to object to the present disproportion.

TABLE XXIV
WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVES ON THE WORKS COMMITTEE BY TRIBE
AND LENGTH OF SERVICE (JINJA)

TRIBE	LENGTH OF SERVICE						Total
	<i>Under 1 yr.</i>	<i>1-2 yrs.</i>	<i>2-3 yrs.</i>	<i>3-4 yrs.</i>	<i>4-5 yrs.</i>	<i>Over 5 yrs.</i>	
Ganda ..	1 + (4)*	1		1 + (1)	1	1	5 + (5)
Soga ..			1	(1)		5	6 + (1)
Samia ..			1				1
Gisu ..					1		1
Lango ..						1	1
Ruanda ..		1					1
Total ..	1 + (4)	2	2	1 + (2)	2	7	15 + (6)

*The figures in brackets denote women

The Table shows two things. First, Ganda and Soga are more heavily represented than they are in the factory as a whole,¹ particularly in the case of men (four-fifths of the women in the factory are in fact Ganda or Soga). Secondly, that members tend to be chosen from amongst those who have worked in the factory for some time. At first sight both these features seem natural. Representative government does not mean that the representatives must in every respect mirror their electors. The middle class Labour members of Parliament far outnumber the proportion of middle class Labour voters in the country and the average age of the House of Commons is well above that of the electorate. It might therefore be thought that a preponderance of Ganda and Soga with long service merely reflected their natural leadership in the factory. Our sample survey did not bear out this supposition. It shows that while Ganda and Soga are satisfied with their representatives, men from other tribes are satisfied only in departments where they are

1. See Table XI, page 27.

represented by men from other tribes. But there is one further difference between those who are satisfied and those who are not. The latter also claimed either that they were not present at the election or that their representative was selected by the management whilst the former were able to give accounts of the election of their representatives, corroborated by others.

It is clear that the methods by which members were chosen differed from one department to another. Thus, in the box-making department, various names were suggested and the man who obtained the largest number of votes won. Everyone participated including the supervisors. In the box-making department, one member was chosen in the same way by the lower grade of workers whilst another was chosen, again in the same way, to represent the interests of supervisors and other elite workers. A third member in a different section of the department was chosen only after a short list from amongst those nominated had emerged. In the largest department, two names appear to have been agreed upon by small groups of elite workers. The supervisors then appear to have taken these two round their respective sections and introduced them as the men's representatives. It is not suggested that there was determined opposition to their selection. No doubt the majority of men find choices of this sort difficult to make and are, if anything, relieved if the choice is made for them, but the experience of the box-making department shows that when an election is carefully prepared and genuinely "free" men are more generally loyal to their representative. This is no less true of women. Little interest is shown in joint consultation where a woman has been chosen by the management as in one department, or by the foreman as in another, even when she tries to do her work well. But in a department where the representative is properly elected, the interest shown in joint consultation is more than merely formal.

We have seen that the composition of the works committee is directly related to the method of election. This varies from one department to another largely because no rules are laid down by the management for the form which elections are to take. It is generally left to the supervisors to decide and their decisions are not always wise. The method of election really seems central to the success or otherwise of joint consultation. Insufficient attention has been paid to it largely perhaps because of the difficulty of explaining election procedures in a foreign language. Part of the success of the present works committee is due to the fact that at least some of the members are true representatives. This is borne out by the comments of some of those who were interviewed and by the objections of some supervisors and clerks who complain that the committee does not adequately represent their views. It is also borne out by the agenda for the first meeting which seems to cover wider interests than those of the earlier committee. It comprised items which had been passed on from departmental meetings. Twelve of them were in the form of requests, two were requests for clarification.

Agenda for the first meeting of the Factory Committee

Requests for

1. An increase in basic wages to cover increased cost of living.
2. Cost of living allowance for all and not just for employees on monthly contract as at present.
3. Continuation of monthly pay and the abandonment of attempts to persuade them to accept weekly pay.
4. Longer annual holidays.

Manager's Answer

- A decision will be made in two months' time.
- Will be investigated. Decision in two months' time.
- Accepted reluctantly, but with good grace.
- Not accepted. "Favouritism" towards Indians explained.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5. Discontinuation of the practice of marking lateness on a man's record card.
Discontinuation of the practice of deducting two days' wages from men absent on Mondays. | We use discretion. When good cause is shown, we do not mark the record card.
Will be accepted within two months. |
| 7. A school for employees' children. | Unfortunately not possible at present. |
| 8. Facilities for training in England. | Since the Jinja factory is identical with ones in the U.K., there is no point. We can give equal training here. |
| 9. Improvement of cloakroom facilities, including clothes hooks. | Hooks will be provided and doors if the architect says it can be done. |
| 10. Provision of a store for those who bring in cotton to sell after working hours. | Not granted. |
| 11. Working hours to be put forward half an hour. | Accepted. |
| 12. The Manager to try and persuade the Municipal Housing Estate to rent houses to single women employed by the factory. | We shall try. |

The two questions on which information was sought were, whether annual increases in pay ceased when a man had reached the ceiling of his grade and whether the rules about eligibility to the Provident Fund might be translated into Luganda and Swahili as there were many uncertainties in people's minds. At least half the items¹ were of concern to a substantial section of the workers and the interests of all sections were represented.

It was a long agenda. But before work could begin on the agenda the members had to be persuaded to agree to sign every decision that was recorded. This was to safeguard both the management and the workers against misunderstandings. The management could not afterwards be accused of breaking a promise it had not made and the workers' representatives could not be held responsible by the departments for not raising questions which they had been asked to raise. The insistence on signatures caused a lot of ill-feeling at first. It was thought that a signature implied concurrence in the decisions reached by the manager, and three meetings were held on consecutive afternoons to settle the issue. A further two meetings were then necessary to get through the agenda. "The atmosphere at the last two meetings was much improved," was the manager's comment.

The present composition of the committee, whilst it ensures that the topics discussed are of universal interest, also raises a number of problems. We have already drawn attention to the uneven representation of different departments and to the effect on people's attitude to joint consultation of different ways of selecting members. There are two other problems. First, some departments are not represented at all. Neither the godowns nor the engineering department is represented, but this may have been due to a shortage of European staff who could initiate consultation and will no doubt be rectified in time. Secondly, the "democratic" character of the committee has meant that some of the members have not always understood the proceedings correctly and have in consequence misinterpreted what was said at the meetings and broadcast inaccurate accounts. This has been particu-

1. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 12 and the second request for information.

larly noticeable where the management has used a meeting to announce some new policy or change in existing arrangements. The less sophisticated members have found it difficult to grasp, let alone put across to their electors, the more intricate points with the result that instead of facilitating communication the procedure has had the effect of starting the very rumours which the management sought to avoid. An example was the attempt to broadcast the purpose of our investigation through the works committee. After the fourth day of interviewing, rumours that our purpose was to send the women back to their husbands became so persistent that we had to address an assembly of all the women. Several of the more educated men whom we asked why the works committee members had not allayed their fears explained to us that they were too uneducated to put our points across and that in any case they commanded neither respect nor authority and were therefore unable to make themselves heard. In fact, we soon realized that we had not even succeeded in making ourselves clear to the committee members themselves. Another example can be given. A change was recently made in the method of computing wages. One of the changes, the incorporation of the attendance bonus into the wage, left employees better off than before because they could not now lose it through absence ; the other was intended to remove a discrimination whereby a man absent on Monday lost two days' pay. Formerly, the company had divided the month into 30 or 31 days :—those absent on any day other than Monday lost a 30th of their monthly wage. It was now proposed to regard the month as consisting only of working days, i.e., 26, and to deduct a 26th of the monthly wage for a day's absence. As a result, men who have absences would be slightly worse off except that they would not now lose an attendance bonus. This change in method was announced at the same time as a general rise in pay. Each point was carefully explained and all questions were patiently answered. Nevertheless our interviews in the following days showed that few of the representatives had passed on the information and that some of them were themselves firmly convinced that the company was proposing to cut out Sunday pay and that the nominal rise in wages did no more than cover the loss of attendance bonus.

A factor which contributes unnecessarily to misunderstanding, is that interpretation from English into the vernacular is not always as polished as it might be. Instead of choosing as interpreter the man who has the greatest experience of interpreting, the task is always given to the welfare supervisor. Moreover, at times he is also expected to speak in his capacity as welfare officer, so that it might seem wiser to use as interpreter one of the office clerks or even, if necessary, an outsider who would be recruited solely on the criterion of his interpreting ability. Another possibility would be carefully to explain the new policy to the interpreter or the welfare officer before the meeting and to leave it to him to make the initial announcement in his own words. It is easier to translate something which one fully understands oneself.

The whole question of the efficiency of using works committee meetings as channels for the announcement of new policies may need review in the light of the committee's composition. First we may ask, is it the most effective way of publicising, for instance, a new wage structure ? Secondly, is it right to announce policy decisions to the general body of workers before the supervisors have been informed ? Is it not possible that the new wage structure would have been better understood if it had been explained to the workers by their supervisors ? Objections could still have been raised, or clarification sought, through the works committee at a later stage. It seems a little unreasonable that supervisors should have to learn of decisions from those they supervise. In the West, the development of trade unions

has inevitably undermined the position of the supervisor. In East Africa, where the difficulty of finding good supervisors is most pressing, nothing should be done which might unnecessarily undermine their position, particularly when, as in this instance, nothing would be lost by making use of their presumably superior ability to grasp and to explain difficult questions. At present only one supervisor sits on the works committee and his presence is accidental rather than deliberate. It may not in fact be desirable to have special representation of supervisors on the committee but in that case supervisors should have some other opportunity for representing their views formally to the management. One solution may be to have monthly meetings of all supervisors during which the supervisors are kept informed of developments relating to their work and are given an opportunity to make representations to management if they so wish. It is not desirable to make the composition of the works committee less "democratic" than it is. Even so it might be wise to allow the supervisors to elect one of their number who would attend the factory works committee meetings as an observer. Supervisors should also be brought more closely into touch with the departmental works committees. At present they are used as interpreters in some departments and excluded in other departments altogether. The reasoning which brought departmental managers into the works committee should also have brought the supervisors at least into the departmental committees. Their conduct may well be discussed at such meetings and even if it is not they may suspect that it is. Further, the committee will be most useful when it discusses details connected with the arrangement or methods of work and since the supervisor is equally concerned with them his views should be available to the committee. To use him as interpreter is far from satisfactory; since the subjects on which he is expected to interpret concern him, there is a natural temptation to translate in a way which will give the impression which he may wish to give rather than that which the speakers had intended, if a divergence between their views exists. Since none of the departmental managers know sufficient Luganda even to follow the trend of what is said in that language, they must rely implicitly on the disinterestedness of the interpreter. Cases where a supervisor deliberately misinterpreted the complaints of members because these complaints reflected on his own behaviour came to light during the investigation, though it would not be proper for me to cite them.

In conclusion, we may discuss the usefulness of joint consultation as a whole. That it is popular with the employees is beyond question. In our interviews we heard not a single objection to joint consultation as such and in the Kampala factory we were on several occasions asked why the manager had ceased to call meetings of the works council—both by members and others. Moreover, the increased representation of the lower status workers is appreciated by them if not by the others. Nothing should be done to go back on the principle of "democratic" election. The recent Public Works Department strike was a warning of what may happen if the members of the works committee do not have the confidence of the workers as a whole.¹ Our comments on the difficulty of relying on the "lower status" members to understand and transmit information accurately is not meant as a criticism of having these people on the committee, but as a warning that it may not be possible to rely on the works committee alone when it is desired to announce complicated changes. Language, as we have seen, is a major problem in industrial relations in Uganda; it becomes the more difficult an obstacle the more closely employers and workers are drawn

1. The employees formed a committee of their own for the express purpose of obtaining redress, by strike if necessary, for grievances which the works committee was not prepared to advance. The fact that the employers in the end acceded to some of the requests is an indication that they were not altogether unreasonable.

together. Joint consultation is a case in point. Even when the problem of interpretation has been solved—and in the case of Swahili speakers who know no Luganda it seems insoluble—it remains true that contact can never be as close and natural as it is in some of the best works committees in England. Consultation must necessarily remain somewhat formal. The thorniest obstacle to success in joint consultation is, however, the unwillingness of many employers to use it. We saw earlier that the Labour Department is anxious to persuade employers to start works committees. In so far as it is advocating it in a general way and perhaps helping employers who wish to start consultation by giving them advice, its policy is manifestly sound. But when a manager is pressed into adopting consultation either by the Government or his own company against his inclination and better judgment, the result may be to aggravate rather than to resolve ill-feeling. A feeling that consultation is an irksome waste of time may be difficult to hide from those with whom consultation takes place. Many managers learnt their craft in the days before industrial democracy became the fashion and are now too set in their ideas to alter their ways. It does not necessarily make them worse at their job for they may have developed techniques of management which compensate in other directions for what they lack in democratic ideas. Such men retain respect and trust in other ways :—by unrivalled knowledge of the technical aspects of their job, by a willingness to roll up their sleeves when the situation demands it or by showing patience and kindness with individuals. But in a meeting they feel ill at ease and are easily irritated ; they dismiss questions as trivial, complain that the representatives “ just like to get up on a soap box,” scold members for repeating a question which had been answered previously, etc. The effect is not to improve relations, but to worsen them. If there has been latent mistrust it is turned into open hostility. Joint consultation is no end in itself. If it fails to achieve the end desired it is best left alone. If its aims are neither understood nor appreciated by those who pursue it, they are unlikely to be attained. Other forms of communications may then have to be developed or joint consultation adapted to the circumstances. There is no law which states that it must take place at factory level and it may under some circumstances be preferable to confine it to a departmental level, leaving it to the chairmen of the departmental committees to inform the factory manager of requests which go beyond his jurisdiction. Alternatively, the factory manager may attend departmental committees in turn but leave the conduct of the meetings to the departmental managers. It is desirable that meetings should be presided over by those who are convinced of their value since it is inevitably the chairman who sets the atmosphere of a meeting. If the factory employs a personnel manager, it may well be left to him to take the chair in these meetings whilst the departmental managers attend merely in that capacity. The experience of the tobacco factory has shown that joint consultation can be of great value. Under East African conditions the problem of how to maintain satisfactory relations between employers and workers cannot be left to find its own solution, but requires that employers shall make a conscious effort to solve it. There can be no simple solution. Joint consultation is a potent way of solving it but not a simple one. If it is to be successful it has to be planned and executed with great care. The conditions of success vary from time to time and from place to place. Care and imagination are necessary to ensure that the method of consultation which is adopted shall at all times be appropriate.

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