

69. Eight Arakanese witnesses, seven of whom were members of the Legislature, maintained that Chittagonian penetration in Arakan is steadily continuing and is resented not only by the Arakanese proper but also by the settled Chittagonians. The witnesses claimed that these classes could not compete with the cheap labour supplied by the new entrants whose standard of living was lower and who were an extremely hard-working folk. The view was expressed that it was inadvisable to let Chittagonian immigration go unchecked as it contained the seed of future communal troubles. All the witnesses agreed that immigration from Chittagong should be restricted. It appeared to be generally believed that the settled population in Arakan could reap the paddy crop to a much greater extent than is now the case if cheap Chittagonian labour were less easy to find. It was thought that the restriction of immigration would result in an increase in wages which in its turn would bring forth a supply of local labour. The witnesses seemed to have no doubt that a considerable amount of labour already existed which was not prepared to come on the market for the wages paid to the Chittagonian immigrants but would come forward if the wages offered were higher. It was admitted that although it is difficult to assess the extent to which immigrant labour is necessary to harvest the paddy crop, some immigrant labour is required. The witnesses were of opinion that it should be possible to devise an administratively practicable scheme by which the numbers of Chittagonian immigrants could be progressively diminished. In any case they were all agreed that restriction was desirable.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LABOUR EMPLOYED IN THE PORT OF RANGOON.

70. Circumstances in recent years have tended to focus public attention upon the composition of the labour force employed in the port of Rangoon. The Royal Commission on Labour in India, 1929-30, called attention in its Report to various unsatisfactory features of the conditions of employment in the port and decided that "a policy of decasualisation was urgently needed." The Coringhi riots, 1930, expressed the growing resentment of Burmese workers at their inability to secure employment at the docks in competition with immigrant Indians, and the movements since Separation from India to open up additional avenues of employment for Burmans have brought into prominence the anomaly that in the capital city of the country, which as a port handles approximately nine-tenths of the total trade, the greater part of the work should be carried out by Indians.

In the present enquiry, use has been made of material collected in 1934 by Mr. Searle, supplemented by valuable memoranda submitted by the Chambers of Commerce and by private individuals as well as the evidence obtained orally from a large number of witnesses with special knowledge and experience of dock labour in Rangoon. Reference may also be made to the Interim Report of the Rangoon Industrial Inquiry Committee published on the 10th of August, 1940, which gave its attention first of all to the same problem of dock labour.

71. This enquiry has been no more successful than previous attempts at arriving at any precise figure of the total number of workers employed in the port of Rangoon, nor has it been possible to classify the workers accurately