

Indian Opinion

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— EDITORIAL —

Repatriation Of Indians

In spite of repeated requests by Indians who are entitled to be repatriated to India in accordance with the Immigration Ordinance, Chapter 208, large numbers of Indians have not been able to secure return passages to India.

The last ship to India in 1938 took 865 Indian repatriates—525 men, 239 women and 101 children. We are advised that 1,186 actually registered their names but 321 did not find accommodation. Since then, owing to war conditions it was not possible to make further arrangements but now that it is well known that the European War will be over quite soon, Government should invite applications from those who are entitled to return to India and not to wait until the majority of possible repatriates die out. We have no doubt that thousands of applications will be received.

It seems clear to us that it had been the policy of this Government, to repatriate as small a number as possible periodically, so that the majority of those entitled to repatriation would either die or become too old or impecunious to return to their Motherland. It must be remembered that Immigration started in 1838 and ended in 1917, and since the latter year only a small number were afforded the opportunity to take advantage of their legal right to return to India. During the first

few years of the first Great War Immigrant Ships sailed from India with thousands of indentured labourers, and we can see no great reason why, as soon as the present European War is over, every effort should not be made to organise a regular steamship service between India and the West Indies whereby this Government should carry out its legal responsibility.

We wonder if our leaders in India will be prepared to continue to take no real and abiding interest in the welfare of their Nationals in these parts. So far as we are able to gather our brethren in Trinidad, Surinam and Jamaica are also anxious to have an opportunity to return to India, and apart from this, other Indians who have not the legal right to return, would like to travel to our Motherland in the interests of business, education, etc.

Perhaps our National Leaders are not aware of the actual conditions under which our people continue to live and labour in this Crown Colony. We shall endeavour to put the position to them as clearly as possible.

(To be continued)

We Want To Know Our Position

We return this week to the sore question of education as it generally speaking affects the masses in this colony with particular reference to Indians.

We observe with a good deal of satisfaction that other West Indian Governments are taking the necessary measures to control schools, and/or to exercise control over Government-paid teachers.

We must ask why this matter is not receiving the early consideration it deserves by the local administration?

We must in the name of the Indian Masses call for this unnecessary and damaging delay. Who is responsible for this?

There are complaints from several corners over the colony on questions affecting education in the districts. Complaints against teachers for reported discrimination—complaints for lack of accommodation for school children—complaints against "insanitary"

accommodation—and among other things, complaints for the complete absence of any school, whatsoever.

Who is responsible for all this anti-social welfare campaign?

It is known by every responsible citizen that British Guiana's educational policy is governed by Compulsory Education laws

Will it interest the Administration to know that West Indian Colonies wherein such laws do not exist are taking steps to improve the educational status of their adults?

Will it interest our Government to know that active steps are being taken to eradicate illiteracy in these colonies?

What is happening to our colony?

Are the people of this country not entitled to the rights and privileges [both educational and otherwise] that are extended to their West Indian neighbours?

Let the people know just what is their position!

The Moribund Legislative Council of B G

Ten public meetings were held recently in different parts of the colony by the seven joint organisations who are engaged in the matter of obtaining Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith for British Guiana.

It was revealed at these meetings that the majority of elected members of the Legislative Council did not consult their constituency.

It is simply shocking to find that men who are supposed to represent a given area of the colony, have not had the common courtesy to consult the people of that area on such a major matter; which on investigation has been found to be contrary to what they have expressed. This is a definite breach of faith, especially when the fact is taken into account that the elected members are now sitting for 9 years in the Legislative Council without an election, four years more than what they are entitled to. The viewpoint of the members of the Legislative Council on the matter of Universal Adult Suffrage therefore is not more than that of their individual opinion and as such cannot carry much weight.

Mutual Aid Agreement With U.S.A. And India

The Government of India nevertheless have accepted the principles underlying Mutual Aid, and continued to receive lendlease goods and services from the U.S.A. and to grant Reciprocal Aid in return. This Reciprocal Aid now takes three main forms:—

(a) Reciprocal Aid to the U.S. forces in India in the shape of rations, clothing, ordnance and other stores, the construction of accommodation, airfields and connected works, and the provision of transportation, communication and maintenance facilities of various kinds.

(b) Reciprocal Aid to U.S. shipping using Indian ports, in the shape of port dues of all kinds, ship repairs and so on.

(c) Available raw materials and available foodstuffs such as tea, required by the U.S. Government directly for war purposes.

The arrangements for granting Reciprocal Aid of the first two kinds are working smoothly, but the administrative arrangements governing Reciprocal Aid for raw materials are still being worked out.

The estimated cost of Reciprocal Aid to be afforded the U.S.A., on present information, during the years 1943-44 and 1944-45 is about Rs. 26 crores and Rs. 43 crores respectively and provision has been tentatively included in the Revised and Budget Estimates of the years concerned for these sums. The total cost of such aid up to the end of 1942-43 was Rs. 12½ crores so that the estimated progressive total

amount to the end of 1944-45 is a little more than Rs. 81 crores.

It is not possible at present to say what the total financial benefit that India will receive as a result of lend-lease supplies from the U.S.A. during the same period will amount to, because the allocation of lend-lease goods and services received in India between the Government of India and H.M.G. has not yet been determined. Assuming that lend-lease goods and services continue to be received in India at approximately the same rate as is obtaining now, the total value thereof up to the end of 1944-45 may be estimated to be of the order of Rs. 350 crores. The allocation of these benefits between H.M.G. and the Government of India is a matter of great complexity since it can only be based on the actual use to which the goods and materials will have been put and the classification of that use in terms of measures for which H.M.G. and India are respectively liable. On such investigation as we have been able to make up to the present it seems reasonable to assume that India's share in these benefits will not be less than one-third. — "INDIAN INFORMATION"

Albion Cricket Club Wins Two Games Outright

DAVSON'S CUP COMPETITION

The Albion Cricket Club has defeated two teams for the Davson Cup. Both games were played on the Albion Cricket Club Grounds. One of the matches was against the Rose Hall Cricket Club and the other was against the Fyrish Cricket Club. Both teams were defeated by an innings and several runs. Baijnab, popularly known as "Sugar Boy" top scored in both games.

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Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to President Jinnah of the Muslim League

QUESTION OF COMMUNAL UNITY

"ONLY GOD ALONE KNOWS MEN'S HEARTS"

Mr. Gandhi has offered to meet Mr. Jinnah, the president of the All-India Moslem League, and the two will probably meet in Bombay to discuss the possibility of an agreement between India's two great communities, the Hindus and the Moslems.

Details of the proposed meeting are contained in the text of a letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah dated May 4, 1943, which was stopped by the Government of India last year in accordance with the policy of allowing no contact between Mr. Gandhi and the outside world.

The letter now has been published by Mr. Gandhi in response to a challenge by Mr. Jinnah's newspaper "Dawn". The letter states:

When, some time after my incarceration, the Government asked for a list of the newspapers I would like to have I included "Dawn" in my list. I have been receiving it with more or less regularity. Whenever it comes to me I read it carefully. I have followed the proceedings of the League session, reported in the "Dawn" columns.

I noted your invitation to me to write you. Hence this letter. I welcome your invitation. I suggest our meeting face to face rather than talking through correspondence, but I am in your hands. I hope this letter will be sent to you and if you agree to my proposal that the Government will let you visit me.

One thing I had better mention. There seems to be an "if" about your invitation. Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts. I would like you to take me as I am.

Why should not both you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men, determined on finding a common solution, and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or who are interested in it?

M. K. GANDHI.

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Arch-Bishop of Canterbury Advocates Complete Independence for India

BRITISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES GREAT CONCERN

POLITICAL DEADLOCK IN INDIA.

Mr. Amery, Secretary for India, received a deputation of the British Council of Churches, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which presented the following resolution:—

The British Council of Churches is greatly concerned at the political deadlock in India and at the growing alienation and distrust between the Indian and the British peoples. It welcomes the reiteration by the Viceroy, in his recent speech to the Indian Legislature, of the promise of complete self-government for India.

It urges that in spite of all the difficulties the Government should provide facilities for renewed consultation between the leaders of all Indian parties, even while some are still interned, believing that this is a necessary condition of any real progress towards a settlement.

Mr. Amery dealt fully with the present situation and expressed his appreciation of the opportunity of a frank exchange of views with the council.

Trinidad Franchise Commissioners receive Public Praise

The Trinidad Press continues to praise the members of the island's Franchise Commission for the recommendations they have made. The report is in a line with public opinion.

Can it be so said about British Guiana? Chairman of the Trinidad Franchise Commission is no other than Sir Lennox Orielly K. C.

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Repatriation Of Indian Right Of A Return Passage

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

Everyone who is a child or dependent or wife of any immigrant entitled to a return passage shall, whatever may be the period during which that person has resided in the Colony, be entitled without payment to be provided with a return passage or passage to the port in India to which his or her natural or adoptive parent or husband returns, in the same ship wherein he returns.

In a case where the immigrant becomes destitute or disabled he is entitled without payment to be provided with a return passage.

The Cost to the immigrant varies according to the time he exercises his right to a return passage. The sum which we are able to discover was paid by immigrants falling within the third category mentioned above was \$60;—or thereabouts.

Before such an immigrant, can exercise his right to a return passage he must in accordance with the provisions contained in Section 181 of the Ordinance apply for a certificate of exemption from labour which will entitle him to apply to the Agent General for a passport. When such passport is obtained the immigrant can demand a return passage and Government would have no option but to afford a return passage to him. The right of the immigrant is absolute.

By Section 193 of the Ordinance any such immigrant or anyone of those persons becoming entitled to a free passage to India in the same ship with such immigrant may, in consideration of a grant or transport of land or of a money payment, or of all or any of those considerations, surrender his right under the Ordinance or any other Ordinance to a return passage. There is nothing in the Section which compels Government to provide land or a money payment if it can provide the immigrant with a return passage, failing which, however the immigrant is entitled to ask for a grant or transport of land or a money payment, or of all or any of those considerations. This view is strengthened by the provisions contained in Section 195 where when anyone surrenders his right to a return passage in consideration wholly or in part of any grant or transport of land, a statement shall be inserted in the grant or transport that the land is granted or transported in complete or partial satisfaction (as the case may be) of that person's right to a return passage. The value of the land to be transported in our opinion must be based on the cost, to be ascertained, of the passage at the time when the immigrant first acquired the right to be provided with a return passage, half of which in the case of a male immigrant and two-thirds in

the case of a female immigrant represent Government's obligation, with respect to those immigrants introduced from the 1st day of October, 1898.

The immigrant cannot, in our view, postpone the right acquired and await a favourable opportunity when the steamship fares have been increased to demand his equivalent in land value or money payment based upon the cost of passage at that time.

Such land value or money payment is to be based on the cost of the passage when the right to demand a return passage first arose.

We would suggest to Government that a scheme of assisted land settlement as an alternative to repatriation to India should be inaugurated, the cost of purchasing the lands, laying them out and draining them should not in any case exceed the sum equivalent to the cost to Government of the proportion which Government have to contribute towards the return passage.

(Sgd.) M. B. LAING

(Sgd.) JOSEPH A. LUCKHOO

23rd August, 1943

Indian Trade Commissioner Coming to the Colony

HEADQUARTERS IN ARGENTINA

The Indian Trade Commissioner for South and Central America will soon be visiting this colony. He is Mr. J. R. K. Modi.

Mr. Modi comes from India and is an employee of the Indian Government. His head office is situated at Buenos Aires in Argentina. He is expected to be in the colony in November.

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AGENTS

Solidarity Of The Working-Man

ATTEMPTS BEING MADE TO CREATE A SPLIT

"NEW OUTLOOK" COMMENTS CHALLENGED

(By One Of The Censors)

The comments in the New Outlook—Advice to Indian Opinion Newspaper—were read with some concern. I have my suspicions that the writer and others, although they may be both Indians and Africans, are conspiring to split the solidarity of the working-man.

It is in my personal knowledge that influential persons in the community are using every means at their disposal including the offer of money to carry on an organised campaign to put the Negro worker against the Indian Worker. Is the Editor of the "New Outlook" unaware of this? If he is not, let him make enquiries from his African friends who control and/or write for weekly newspapers.

If Africans are willing to displace or supplant Indian Workers, some of whom, for lack of proper opportunities are earning less than \$2.40 per week in respect of males, and females \$1.44 per week, let them by all means supplant them. The world was told recently by our Colonial Treasurer at the Anglo Caribbean Conference that Indians were supplanting the Negroes in the ownership of Land. Now the Africans have an opportunity to really supplant the Indians by way of accepting positions with organised employers at starvation rates of wages. As we stated in our last week's editorial a word to the wise is sufficient.

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Personnel of B. G. Rice-Marketing Board Deplorable

(BY THE WATCHDOG)

The British Guiana Rice Marketing Board has fallen short of expectation. Its activities have not measured up to what was expected of it by those who are actively engaged in the industry. The general management of the Board is far from satisfactory.

The personnel of the Board is shocking to the producers of rice. There is not a single member in its composition who will meet the approval of the actual producers. These are some of the naked facts which have been brought to light recently.

It is proposed to deal today briefly with the personnel of the Board as it presently composed.

The personnel of the Board is as follows:—

Hon. F.F. McDavid C.B.E. Colonial Treasurer—Chairman, Mr. W. A. Macnie, O.B.E. Competent Authority Vice-Chairman, Prof. J.S. Dash-B.S.A. Director of Agriculture, Hon. J.I. D'Aguiar M.L.C. General Merchant, Hon. H.C. Humphrys M.L.C. Barrister-at-Law, Hon. Peer Bacchus M.L.C. General Farmer, Mr. H.G. Seaford O.B.E., Mr. R.V. Eyan Wong B.Sc., and Mr. John Fernandes General Merchants Members.

It can be clearly seen at a glance by any colonist that the Board as it is presently composed, is entirely un-

suitable for the control of the industry. As a matter of fact, according to some producers, the majority of the Members of the Board are definitely against them from a general point of view and are not interested in their welfare. Some have even gone further that some of the members on the Board do all within their power to keep the industry down as they have other interests to serve; certainly this is a sorry state of affairs to exist and it is hoped that Government would do something to remedy the situation. The Board should be constituted chiefly of producers and those directly interested in the industry and not by those who view the welfare of the producers with contempt, disgust and antagonism.

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Principal

The Price Of Freedom

Among our two peoples there has always been a great desire to drink deeply from the cup of liberty...

And we want liberty, not only for ourselves, but for all, so that unarmed men and women and smaller nations and peoples may be able to use fully the gifts and talents with which God has endowed them.

But freedom can only be obtained and preserved by sacrifice. Those who wish to enjoy it must be ready to pay a price for it, and the price usually is very high. It is gained only at the cost of pain, of sweat, of suffering and of blood; it is retained only by eternal vigilance; it is lost unless men are willing to hold it even through jeopardy to their own lives.

—by ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

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