

INDIAN OPINION

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NOTES AND NEWS

Coronation Gift For "Untouchables"

A CORONATION gift to the non-European communities of Johannesburg, to take the form of a civic centre and including a hall about the size of the City Hall, at a total cost of £90,000 or £100,000, has been recommended by the Native Affairs Committee to the General Purposes Committee. The scheme, for which suitable sites are available, would also include a library and an art gallery, and there would be supplementary rooms and facilities, which would make the whole undertaking a cultural centre on the most up-to-date lines. The hall and adjoining rooms would be available for dances, receptions, concerts, theatricals and all the various activities which are at present enjoyed by Europeans at the City Hall. With such an amenity, it would also be possible for the Mayor to hold receptions to meet the non-European sections, and they themselves would be able to stage functions in honour of distinguished Asiatic and African visitors. It is pointed out by those who have sponsored the scheme that at present the facilities for such activities, whether by Asiatics, coloured people, or natives, are entirely inadequate and that, owing to European prejudices, it is not possible for them to use the City or Selbourne Halls. The matter is to be discussed shortly by the General Purposes Committee, and if the proposal is accepted, those in touch with non-European organisations believe that it will be a big step forward towards bringing about more contentment among that half of the city's population which contributes so greatly to its prosperity. At the same time, it is held that for these communities there could be no more fitting commemoration of the Coronation of King George VI.

A Gift Or A Price For Our Honour?

A similar scheme to the one referred to above was proposed some time ago in order to avoid the City Hall being used by Asiatics and other non-Europeans, but it was not heard of again for the reason, presumably, that it did not meet with an adequate welcome from those concerned. The scheme is, no doubt, an extravagant one and glorious for those who have accepted the position of "untouchables."

By them, this Coronation gift will be looked upon with the greatest delight. On the other hand, however, Asiatics who are not prepared to accept the status of "untouchables" which the rulers of South Africa wish to forcibly thrust upon them, will look at this gift as an insult even though it may be ten times costlier than it is proposed to be. Asiatics consider themselves to be as civilised a nation as Europeans and are not by any means prepared to accept a lower status than that of the white people of South Africa. A very welcome and fitting Coronation gift would have been the abolition of the colour bar altogether. The City Hall can, by no canon of justice, be the monopoly of the white people. It is a public place and every ratepayer has the right to enjoy the benefit of it. How a Municipality can preclude, on the basis of colour, a section of the burgesses from entering it, is beyond our comprehension. The acceptance of this proposed Coronation gift would, in the circumstances, amount to selling our national honour and self-respect at the price of £100,000. What is more valuable? Our community shall be judged by the civilised world according to the choice it makes. The proposed gift will be a welcome gift if those, to whom it is to be made, are not precluded from the right to make use of the City Hall and the Library on equal terms with the white burgesses. Otherwise it cannot be welcomed as a gift but looked upon as nothing but an insult.

What Others Think

We reproduce below a letter from Mr. G. F. Van Der Haer, on the Johannesburg City Council's proposed gift to non-Europeans, appearing in the *Star* (Johannesburg):—

Sir,—The erection of a substitute Johannesburg City Hall and library for the non-Europeans in Johannesburg appears to be a splendid gesture on the part of a generous City Council, but a closer examination will reveal that the scheme, if carried through, is merely the price the white man is willing to pay to satisfy his colour prejudice.

There must be no suggestion of equality for all citizens, black and

white. It may be argued that as far as the European is concerned a long-felt want is supplied; it can also pertinently be asked, "Why does such a want exist? Why may the non-Europeans not share the privileges of their white fellow-citizens?" The answer to these questions is that the Johannesburg public mind is too small, too unfraternal, and too warped by colour prejudice to grant their darker brethren the privileges they are entitled to.

Much is made of the white pioneers who blazed the trail to the goldfields and founded this city, but nothing is said of the loyal band of coloured and native servants who helped the white boss and suffered the hardships of the early days with him. To-day these trusty builders are forgotten, their honoured record is disregarded.

When the Great War came the black man gave his services and his blood to keep out the tyrant and preserve the freedom of his country. But that does not count now. The battles in East Africa, the glory of the Palestine campaign, and the sinking of the Mendi are no longer worthy of even passing comment. Instead, the children of these dusky heroes are pushed from pillar to post by the Slum Clearance Act, deprived of work by civilised labour policy, and stifled and repressed by un-Christian colour prejudice.

Finally, the Johannesburg ratepayer is asked to pay for a £100,000 monument to white intolerance. This symbol of ingratitude will spell the doom of the non-European citizen's dream of ever enjoying the privileges of citizenship. He will be forced to accept the City Council's "Nigger Heaven," or have nothing at all.

What the non-European demands is reasonable access to the present City Hall and the Public Library. He does not want imitations in the shape of non-European city halls. If the Council wants to spend money on a Coronation gift to non-Europeans, give them playing fields for their children, better streets in Sophiatown and Newclare, and swimming baths, or build and maintain an additional ward to the overcrowded non-European hospital.

Pirow On White Supremacy

Speaking at the Voortrekker celebrations at Winburg, O. F. S., Mr. Pirow is reported to have said that to realise the importance of the race ideology created by the voortrekkers, it was only necessary to look at North America, South America, India, the Netherlands East Indies, Australia and New Zealand, where the aboriginals were treated on a basis of equality. The difference between the European and the non-European had, to all intents and purposes, disappeared, and there was no obstacle to miscegenation. In South Africa, however, the small white minority was surrounded by overwhelming numbers of non-Europeans, but was determined not to allow its authority to be usurped. He was not prepared to hand over control to the black people. This racial philosophy was affecting policy elsewhere in Africa, as it was the only policy which guaranteed the existence of white civilisation. Wherever the whites found themselves in a minority in South Africa, that policy of white supremacy would ultimately have to be accepted. Southern Rhodesia was beginning to apply South Africa's policy towards the natives; while the people of Kenya and Angola looked to the Union for a policy which would ensure the existence of white supremacy. But it was necessary to look to the east where hundreds of millions of people were not content with white supremacy. "The yellow peril," said Mr. Pirow, "is here." The position contained dangers of which white South Africa must take cognisance. In the West nations were prepared to commit suicide by exterminating each other in devastating wars. In the East the "yellow man" was tiring of white domination. Midway between the two lay South Africa. "A white South Africa, at any rate south of the Equator, would constitute a valuable bulwark for the West," said Mr. Pirow.

Mr. Pirow seems to forget that in all the places he has referred to, where the aboriginals were treated on a basis of equality and where the difference between the European and the non-European had, to all intents and purposes, disappeared, the white supremacy still remained unharmed. And we do not know that it would not remain so in South Africa, too, if she were to treat her aboriginals more generously and humanely. South Africa's present policy is undoubtedly endangering white supremacy beyond imagination. Time alone will tell how.

Indian Opinion

FRIDAY, MAY 7TH, 1937

The Coronation

EARLY next week the Coronation Day celebrations will be observed throughout the British Empire. South Africa will play its due part in it, and our countrymen too will join in sending their loyal greetings to Their Majesties on that auspicious day. In doing so, however, let us quite frankly admit, our countrymen are not joining with an open heart as those who enjoy the freedom and happiness and equality of justice which are supposed to be the ideals of the British constitution. The reason is because we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are not treated as equal members of the British Commonwealth of Nations but as helots of the Empire. The hope of the great ideal of the British Constitution of equality of justice for all British subjects, irrespective of race or colour, ever being realised is becoming remoter and remoter as the time goes by. It is realised more and more that those ideals are reserved for the white people only and, what is more painfully realised is, that they are reserved for even foreign nations like Japan but not for British Indians. When we see this it makes us all the more conscious of our helotry. The term "British" attached to Indians in South Africa has no meaning. The British Government has, to all intents and purposes, disowned us in this part of His Majesty's dominions. We are left at the mercy of unsympathetic rulers without being given even the elementary rights of citizenship.

A glance at our Motherland, India, fills us with more pain. Here, in this country, at least, we are under a power which has been given complete independence. But

in India we are under the direct rule of the British Government and the lot of our people there is not much better than our's in this country.

These thoughts naturally arise in our mind when we think of the significance the Coronation Day has for our countrymen. We reconcile ourselves to the fact, however, that whilst we are grieved under the British Government we have nothing but the highest love and esteem for His Majesty The King George in person. His ideal is to treat his subjects with equality. His happiness depends upon that of his subjects. The genius of the British constitution requires that every subject of the Crown should be as free as any other, and if he is not, it is his duty to demand and fight for his freedom so long as he does so without injuring anyone else. There is no room for helotry and slavery in this constitution, though both exist abundantly. Largely it is the fault of the helots and the slaves themselves. Thus understanding the spirit of the British constitution, though we suffer from disabilities in this sub-continent and though we are far from happy in the sacred land of our birth, we cannot but pray that the Crowning of King George the VI may not only bring happiness to Their Majesties the King and Queen and the members of the Royal Family but that it may also result in the realisation of the great and noble ideals attached to the British Throne thus bringing happiness and contentment to all His Majesty's subjects.

LAST SUNDAY'S MEETING

A MASS MEETING of the Colonial Born And Settlers Indian Association was convened last Sunday at the Victoria Picture Palace, Victoria Street, Durban, to consider the present position of Indians in South Africa and to protest against the assurance given to the Government by the Congress representatives to secure, by voluntary action, the dismissal of European women employed by Indians in certain cases and to ask them to desist from employing them.

As a result of string pulling from the Congress side, the first difficulty experienced by the officials of the C.B. and S.I.A. was in obtaining the Hall. At first Mr. Christopher, president of the Association, was promised by the management of the Victoria Picture Palace that the Hall would be at his disposal whenever he required it but later, it was blankly refused. After a great deal of argument the Hall was procured under certain conditions.

The next thing was that, on that particular day, there were several wedding ceremonies and there was, in the circumstances a poor attendance of those who were expected. The Congress, however, had engineered a crowd to be present at the meeting with the avowed object of creating a disturbance and smashing up the meeting.

President's Speech

The meeting was opened up with the presidential address by Mr. A Christopher who reviewed, in some detail, the present position of the Colonial born Indians in South Africa. He said they formed the biggest number and, therefore, they should consolidate their forces and make themselves heard in the affairs of the Indian community. The advent of the Agency of the Government of India had, he said, created a position within the community which was intolerable. By siding with one organisation against another or with one set of people against another, the Agency had disintegrated the community and this accounted for the division in the community. Referring to the assurance given by certain members of the Indian community to the Government in connection with the employment of European females, Mr. Christopher said that it was inconceivable how any member could bind the community in this way.

Mr. P. R. Pather then moved the following resolution: "That this mass meeting of Colonial Born and Settler

Indians hereby records its emphatic protest against the 'assurance' given to the Union Government by certain members of the Indian community for the cessation of employment of European females by Indians, in that the assurance stigmatises the Indian community as unfit and denies them the choice of their employees."

Disturbance

Immediately Mr. Pather was on his feet the disturbance commenced. As soon as the resolution was seconded one of the leaders of the disturbers came up on the platform to move an amendment to the effect that the assurance given was quite in order and that it was the lesser of the two evils. The proposer was given the latitude of holding the platform as long as he liked and was given a quiet hearing.

After the amendment was seconded Mr Manilal Gandhi rose to speak and the crowd got infuriated and did not want to listen to him at all. Amidst great disturbance, filthy abuses, the cries of "you will have rotten eggs thrown at you" Mr. Gandhi said: "You have given a hearing to your own man and if you are honourable men you will give a fair hearing to me. Even the Judges in the Law Courts give a hearing to the guilty person before condemning him, and you may abuse me or murder me if you like after you have fully heard me." Mr. Gandhi said he was no enemy of the community. He was prepared to sacrifice the last drop of blood in serving their cause. He was really shocked to see the temper of the house when really they should have gathered there in all seriousness to consider their future in this country which the Government had once for all decided with a series of legislation against them. Amid interjections Mr. Gandhi tried to explain that the resolution put before the meeting was not with a view to depriving Indians of their employment. This was not a question which affected the Indian community materially. It was a question of vital principle. It branded the whole community as immoral and was an insult to the whole Indian nation, and, he went on further to say, if Indians in South Africa had not learnt from the Europeans the value of a principle and to lay down their lives for the sake of a principle then, indeed, they had learnt nothing.

Mr. Gandhi further explained that the amendment proposed really amounted to adding insult to injury to those whom the proposer of the amendment had intended to defend, for they had really denied having given an assurance on behalf of the community. In that case, if the Government was under an illusion, it was only right on the part of every section of the community to hold such meetings and to disillusion the Government by saying to them that the community had not given any assurance of the nature described. Mr. Gandhi's words, however, had no effect upon the crowd which had come with the fixed determination to smash up the meeting and not to allow a word of sense to enter their ears lest they may be converted.

The meeting was, therefore, declared closed by the chairman with Mr. Gandhi still holding the platform.

The ring-leaders of the rowdy crowd then gathered outside the Hall and had the satisfaction of carrying their amendment.

[Note:—These tactics, on the part of the Congress, are highly deplorable. It seems to be a characteristic of the Congress, both in the Transvaal and in Natal, to adopt these tactics. At meetings convened by the Congress in Johannesburg it seems to be a rule that there must not be a single word uttered against the Congress or there are men ready to smash the heads of those who have uttered it. Cases of heads being smashed have in fact happened. Similar tactics, it would appear, are now the order of the day in Natal. We must say, in all seriousness, that they do not tend to unite the community. Rather do they cause disruption and tear still further asunder the various sections of the community. Those who are responsible for creating these scenes, which are most unbecoming to a community which claims to be civilised, are doing the worst possible disservice to the community and their cause in this country. We have associated the name of the Congress with last Sunday's occurrence because we have reason to believe that its officials have been working behind the curtain. If the Congress were not responsible the officials owed a statement to that effect to the public and their condemnation of the display of hooliganism mentioned above.—Ed. I.O.]

TRADE UNIONS AND COLOUR BAR

We cull the following interesting portion from the debate in the House of Assembly on the Industrial Conciliation Bill which has now been passed:—

White Factory Girls

ON Clause 9, which dealt with the constitutions of trade unions or employers' organisations, Mr. Haywood (Nat., Bloemfontein South) moved a proviso that the qualifications of membership shall preclude European and non-Europeans from being members of the same trade union. They wanted to prevent the mingling of white girls and coloured men in factories and in labour demonstrations. There were a number of unions which had white and coloured members. This was a growing menace which had to be stopped.

Mr. Erasmus (Nat., Mooresburg) said the Government was subscribing to the principle that workers were compelled to belong to certain trade unions as the Chamber of Mines had done. Who was to say that they would not in future compel workers to join trade unions with coloured members?

The Government, he knew, would not accept the amendment because it came from the Nationalist Party, so if United Party members wanted to see the principle adopted they should bring forward a similar amendment themselves. How could they go back to their constituents and tell them that they had failed to support a motion for separate trade unions for Europeans?

Non-European Unions

Mr. Burnside said that if there were one thing calculated to submerge the European race in South Africa it was the sort of legislation advocated by the Nationalists. They would force the non-Europeans to form non-European trade unions which would be numerically stronger than the European organisations and would eventually swamp them. If there were individuals who were going to undercut the European workers then the only hope was to bring them into the unions.

"I am not concerned with the colour of a man's skin as far as a consciousness of human justice and the welfare of South Africa are concerned. There are many coloured men who could give the members of the purified Nationalist Party points."

A Nationalist Member: You are ploughing a lonely furrow.

Mr. Burnside: I may be, but you are ploughing your own grave.

In Capetown

He said that in Capetown there were thousands of white girls working side by side with coloured people and Malays. He did not see any particular reason

why they would not work side by side. His concern was the wages they received for their work.

Although they worked with coloured people they did not necessarily stay with them. What the Nationalists would end up in accomplishing if they had their way was not a segregation of non-Europeans but a segregation of Europeans. Separate unions would be disastrous to the white employes. The employers would go to the coloured union and get them to work for the lower wage and the white girls would be discharged.

The Nationalists had been so concerned with the soul of the people that they had forgotten that the people had a stomach. If the Nationalists wanted to keep the non-European in the gutter they would find that they would have to stay down there with him. They forgot that the employers would always take the cheapest labour.

Same Interests

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Hofmeyr) said that the amendment would not have the effect of preventing Europeans and coloureds working in the same factory. He regretted as much as anyone that that should have to happen through economic circumstances. The way to encounter that was not through this amendment, but through improving the economic position of the people. In industry there were non-Europeans and Europeans with the same interests. What the amendment aimed at was to prevent these people from uniting on behalf of those common interests. Mr. Alexander had proposed an amendment that there should be no differentiation on the basis of colour in the constitution of a trade union. He had opposed that, saying that a trade union which wanted to put a colour bar in its constitution would be free to do so. Similarly he opposed the proposal that there should be a provision that there should be a colour bar in the constitution of every trade union. That would be against the whole principle of free association. These people must have the right to order things in their own way. If the workers, European and non-European, decided that it was in their interests to organise into the same trade union, the Government could not interfere. All these years the Nationalists had been satisfied with the position. The cause of their present dissatisfaction was the desire to make a little propaganda.

Far More Undesirable

Mr. Madeley (Labour, Benoni) said it was undesirable to have natives work-

ing alongside white girls in factories, but it was far more undesirable to have natives working in more intimate association with white women in domestic spheres. The Nationalists' amendment would not separate Europeans and non-Europeans in factories. Rather would it turn the attention of the employers to the possibility of obtaining more cheap coloured labour in place of white labour.

Mr. Martins (Ind., Wakkerstroom) said that if a coloured and a European man worked in the same factory and received orders from their employer that did not mean that they were equal. But if they deliberated together in a trade union they were equals. The amendment would not accomplish a great deal but it would achieve something the effects of which would only be felt when they succeeded in preventing Europeans and non-Europeans from working together in the same factory.

On a division the amendment was lost by 46 votes to 17.

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Sir Raza Ali On Deadlock In India

SIR Syed Raza Ali, Agent-General in the Union for India, addressed members of the Capetown University Club at a luncheon on the present critical situation in India. He said that in his opinion the only way out of the impasse between the Government and the Congress Party was to arrange a meeting between the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, whose knowledge of Indian affairs was second to none, and Mr. Gandhi. Interviews which Mahatma Gandhi had had with Viceroys in the past had always resulted in the lessening of the existing tension and Sir Syed said he was certain that in the present crisis a compromise could be arranged which would entail no loss of self-respect to either Government or Congress. On the other hand it was clear that if no solution was found soon there would be serious trouble in India in the near future.

Fountain of Wisdom

It is a mistake to suppose that men succeed through success; they much sooner succeed through failure.

—SAMUEL SMILES.

GANDHI THE PULSE OF A NATION

WHILE the political situation in India remains obscure there are other sides of Indian life to-day about which it is possible to write with certainty.

During the writer's recent stay in India it was made clear by abundant examples that the moral weight of Mahatma Gandhi's practical wisdom still turned the scale in every big decision.

He has an authority which no one, among the representatives of the common people ever dreams of challenging. In a remarkable manner he keeps his finger on the pulse of the nation and feels each throb. Here, he never makes a mistake, and as a consequence his influence remains constant.

A interesting example of this was the issue raised by Dr. Ambedkar concerning the depressed classes. Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to fast, even to death, in order to obtain for them entry into the Hindu temples. Dr. Ambedkar, on the other hand, poured scorn on Gandhi's programme, claiming that while they were suffering from chronic starvation it would be useless to appeal to them with any purely religious motive. But Gandhi knew far better than Ambedkar what was their true need, because his own life of extreme poverty was lived closer to them. He, therefore, made the question of "temple entry" the centre of all his activities on their behalf. In the end he has won his way against immense opposition.

The Maharajah of Travancore, influenced by the Maharanee, has opened all the temples which belong to the State, fifteen hundred in number. Since in Travancore "untouchability" was at its worst, this one act of the Maharajah has revealed suddenly an entirely new prospect for these pitiably poor people throughout the length and breadth of India. While before they had been humiliated to such an extent that they were obliged to keep at a distance from their fellow-men, now they can enter the temples themselves side by side with the high-caste Brahmins.

The long accounts which I have received in private letters from those who saw their rejoicing speak of nothing less than a religious revival not only among the outcasts but among the high caste people also, for the latter are realising with joy, perhaps for the first time, what true brotherhood in these directions means. Not merely, therefore, has religious equality been acknowledged but the agricultural problem of serfdom has at the same time been considered afresh. Indeed, it would already appear certain that extensive economic improvements will go side by side with religious reforms.

Gandhi to-day is the Masaryk of Indian politics. Again and again I

By

C. F. ANDREWS

have read with amusement Press telegrams which have fore-told in Europe and America, that his influence was on the wane; that he was a "spent force" in Indian political affairs. I have not doubted the sincerity of the correspondents, but I have wondered at their lack of imagination. For what has been appreciated by them is the way in which Gandhi has been moulding politics in India all the while nearer to his own conception of the village life as the heart and soul of everyone's concern. In this respect he has been brilliantly successful.

When I visited him in his village home in Segaon a short time ago the president of the All-India National Congress and the leading members of the Congress Working Committee had come hundreds of miles, travelling night and day, to see him. They were spending every moment with him, talking out all their deepest problems before him and gaining his own practical insight. For they knew that his acceptance of their programme would ensure its acceptance by the country at large. It speaks well for our Press representatives from the west that their past misunderstanding concerning this "waning influence" have recently been corrected, for all the leading newspapers have acknowledged Gandhi's paramount importance during the past political crisis.

While I have been staying with Mr. Gandhi and trying to get his perspective three points have come into prominence, and in each of them I have gathered hope.

First of all, the women of India have made an astonishing advance. Every time that I go back this strikes me more and more forcibly. They now hold their own in every sphere of the national life with grace and ease combined. Probably, in earlier days, I have not realised how much of this has been due to Mrs. Gandhi, who has moved forward step by step—albeit with some difficulty—along with her husband. Her strong conservative Hindu character has made each step she has taken all the more assured when the time came at last to take it. Undoubtedly the women of India, more than anyone else, have given to Mr. Gandhi his invincible power. They follow his lead implicitly and carry out with simple fidelity his whole programme.

In the second place the village (as I have already reported) has now become the goal of every thought and aspiration towards political progress. This is, in many ways, a change of perspective more important even than my third point—namely, the emancipation of the

depressed classes. No one would value more highly than I should this third point. But I have put the village programme in the second place rather than the third, because this curse of untouchability can never be removed unless the village problem is dealt with as a whole.

Mahatma Gandhi has now realised to the full the significance of this sequence. Therefore, he is now at the height of his moral power. While seeking to restore those rights which had been taken from the depressed classes he has come back at every turn to the village. He lives in a remote hamlet in the country which in the monsoon time can only be reached through deep mud. He has suffered from malaria along with the villagers themselves. He remains there working out every detail, from the gruesome subject of sanitation to questions of handicraft and nutrition. Nothing escape his notice.

Perhaps in all Gandhi's recent triumphs the proudest moment was reached when the vast annual gathering of the National Congress was held at a village 12 miles away from any railway station. That event was a parable of modern India. For there modern India recognised at last the incomparable debt of the city to the village. It recorded the fact—which the impact of the West had tended to obscure—that the village, not the town, must ever remain the centre of Indian life.

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S. A. Indian Congress

"Congresswala" writes in *The Star* (Johannesburg):—

SIR,—The South African Indian Congress now desire to make a diplomatic retreat on the promises they made to the select committee with reference to the removal of European girls from employment by Indians. At the meeting of the South African Indian Congress Executive, when members of the executive invited others to hear their report and support them in their views, nearly 75 per cent. of those present were strongly against the action of the two spokesmen. The congress has not enhanced its prestige in this country and more especially in India. On the one hand, the congress wants equality and on the other, it becomes a docile party and meekly promises to carry the wishes of the European legislators by voluntary agreement. The South African Indian Congress must put its house in order. There are many men to-day who are out of it and should be in it. The congress has become a sectional body and the only thing for it to do is to change its name and the whole thing will be complete.

India Letter

(EXTRACTS FROM A. I. C. C. FOREIGN LETTER)

Why Army Should Be Indianised

INDIA wants complete Indianisation of the army not merely on the sentimental ground of patriotism; the Indian demand is based on more solid ground of economy. The latter position was confirmed by the Secretary to the Defence Department of the Government of India who stated, the other day in the Assembly, that the expenditure per British soldier was roughly something over Rs. 8 and per Indian soldier something over Rs. 4. The same authority also stated that the total annual medical expenditure on the British element of the army in India was something less than 70 lakhs while on the Indian element something over 54 lakhs.

A Costly Administrative Machinery

The Indian administration is a costly machine which squeezes out the life-blood of the people and feeds on it. Time after time the Congress has demanded the reduction of the cost of administration, on the one hand, by reducing the salaries of the superior staff and, on the other, by abolishing the superfluous posts. A recent action of the U.P. Government has proved that the Congress demand was not an idle cry for the millennium and that substantial savings are possible if superfluous posts are clipped in the interest of economy. Without effecting any territorial redistribution the post of the Commissioner of Jhansi has been abolished. This single act of belated wisdom will, it is officially stated, effect savings to the extent of about Rs. 37,000 per year. (1 rupee is equal to 1s. 6d.)

Muslim Support For The Congress

Remarkably, though slowly, Muslim opinion in India is veering round the Congress and progress for which the Congress stands. The phenomenal success of the Congress in the general election has opened the eyes of the Muslim leaders and many of them seem to have realised that they can serve their community best by allying with the Congress. It is significant that in Bengal, where the Congress party is in the minority in the Legislature, and where, therefore, the question of its accepting Ministry does not arise, Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister-designate, has hailed the release of Mr. Subhas Bose with delight and has publicly invited him to enter the Legislature and take up his proper place as the Leader of the Opposition so that the antagonistic forces in the Assembly may be marshalled under a master-mind whose patriotism will no.

permit of unfair tactics in our political warfare. In Behar the biggest Muslim party has placed itself under the Congress party. Mr. Jinnah, too, has publicly expressed his readiness to co-operate with every progressive party in the country.

But the most outspoken pronouncement was made by Sir Wazir Hassan, a former Chief Judge of Oudh Chief Court and the President of the last session of the Muslim League. "In my opinion," said he, "the time has come when the Mussalmans of India should join the Indian National Congress in thousands and thousands and co-operate with it on all lines for the attainment of freedom for our country." In his condemnation of the new India Act, he rose to the height of any Congressman and in his appeal to the Muslims to join the Congress he threw in patriotism and fervour of the highest order. The constitution, he said, did not give power to the Legislature to carry out any radical changes either in the administration of the country or in the social system which had brought untold miseries, destitution and poverty among the masses of the Indian people. Such radical changes could only be effected when India was an independent self-governing nation. "To attain this condition as speedily as possible," he added, "is the aim of the Congress and let it not be said to the shame of the Indian Mussalmans that they failed at this critical juncture to co-operate with this great organisation in the country."

India's Foreign Trade

The grand total of the imports, exports, and re-exports of private merchandise of British India during 1936 amounted to Rs. 3,10 crores as against Rs. 5,78 crores in 1929, the pre-depression year and Rs. 4,26 crores in 1913. It was less than half of that in 1925 when it amounted to Rs. 6,33 crores.

Imports of private merchandise in 1936 showed a decline of 8.4 per cent as compared with the preceding year while the export trade recorded an increase of 15.3 per cent.

In the year under review Japan purchased 399,000 tons of cotton as against 305,000 tons in the preceding year. The United Kingdom increased its purchase from 68,000 tons to 101,600 tons. Thus Japan increased her purchase by 94,000 tons while Britain increased hers by 33,600 tons only.

That the gold reserves of India are rapidly nearing the point of exhaustion is borne out by the figures of gold export which recorded a sharp fall in the year under review. The exports of gold

during the year amounted to Rs. 33 crores as compared with Rs. 44 crores in 1935 and Rs. 61 crores in 1934.

Labour Unrest

The agrarian situation in Monghyr (Behar) continues to be tense. Several prominent leaders of the Peasant Movement are under arrest and security proceedings have been started against them. A contingent of armed police were despatched to the district from the headquarters and the villages affected have assumed the appearance of an area under seize. The case of the landlords on whose requisition the military force has been despatched, is that, incited by the speeches of the leaders of the peasant movement, the tenants started forcibly cutting and removing crops from the lands belonging to the landlords. On the other hand, the case of the peasants is that they cultivated and sowed the fields held by them under occupancy rights and that, therefore, they had a right to the fruits of their own labour. Several such disputed cases are at present awaiting adjudication in civil courts and judgment in these cases cannot be expected in the near future. In the meantime, it may be stated, however, that the trouble in Behar is due to the system that prevents the actual tillers of the soil from acquiring any right in the land they till and sow. The incongruity is just a phase of the problem of land tenure which constitutes the base of the Indian agrarian problem.

The strike situation in the Bengal jute mills remains unchanged. More and more labourers are daily coming out and up till now over 80,000 persons are reported to have joined the strike. Over three hundred workers of the Britannia Biscuit Factory near Calcutta have also gone on strike as a protest against the existing low scales of pay. A ferment, which is daily gaining strength, is evident among all sections of workers. Signs are unmistakable that the sleeping laviathan is waking up to demand its just political and economic rights.

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, a member of the Congress Working Committee and one of the most influential leaders of India, who was so long detained without trial, was released recently in a shattered state of health. He was so weak and emaciated at the time of his release that his attending physicians could not advise him to proceed to Delhi to attend the meetings of the A.I.C.C. to which he was most cordially invited by President Nehru and which he so earnestly wished to attend.

Civil Liberties

Reports of interference with the civil liberties of the citizens are pouring in as usual from all parts of the country. At Allahabad a young man was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment and fine on charges of being member of the Communist Party of India and distri-

buted literature thereof at an election meeting. In Shahjahanpur district 46 school teachers attached to the District Board Schools were dismissed because during the last provincial elections they voted for the Congress and worked for their success. At Aligarh the Secretary to the U.P. Provincial Congress Volunteers corps was prosecuted under a

security section for delivering alleged seditious speeches during the elections. Another worker is at present awaiting trial at Amritsar on the same charge of sedition arising out of his election activities. At Delhi and Barisal (Bengal) several houses were raided in search of proscribed literature.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

IS THE AGENT LOOKING AFTER OUR INTERESTS?

TO THE EDITOR "INDIAN OPINION"

SIR,—I am not a member of any mutual admiration society, but I must say, with regard to your leading article appearing in your issue of April 16, headed "Should We Laugh Or Cry?" that it is really an admirable and courageous exposition of the real state of affairs as far as Indians in South Africa are concerned. The Agent-General, claiming to represent both the Government and the people of India, as well as Indians in South Africa, should have rigorously protested against the slight offered him thrice, as mentioned in your said article. It is not only the question of the honour of India, but of the self-respect of all Indians, who are quite naturally very sensitive about their position no matter in what part of the world they reside. Looking after the honour and self-respect of Indians is, I believe, one of the duties assigned to the Agent-General in South Africa, but, let me say, he has failed in that duty. The Agent-General did not act in our interest when he advised, or passively approved, the action of the so-called leaders of the unconstitutional South African Indian Congress, in giving assurance, or a Gentleman's word to the Union Government that the Indian employers would voluntarily dismiss their European female employees. As far as I am able to gauge and correctly read, the general feeling of the Indian masses, and particularly the Indian employees in this matter, it is practically certain that the assurance, being without their approval and mandate and, therefore, not binding, would not be given effect to, to the extent Messrs. Nana and Kajee have led the Union Government to expect.

Then there is the question of the Indian residents of Nigel. They had been clamouring for assistance in regard to their being forcibly ejected from the premises presently occupied by them, and removed to the newly allocated Location, and their earnest appeal in this connection has so far fallen on deaf

ears, as far as the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Agent General are concerned, because it has been made known that the Town Clerk of Nigel would serve notices of ejection to the Indian residents at the end of April, in which case the resident Indians at Nigel would be between the Devil and the Deep Sea as far as their future is concerned.

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Furthermore, the Agent-General, in advising the so-called South African Indian Congress to accept the segregation principle, and to ask for exempted areas under the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act, has not acted in the best of our interests. As a result of such acceptance the Johannesburg Municipality is now contemplating the erection of a separate Central Hall for non-Europeans, so that in future, Indians may not place their feet in the Holy precincts of the present City Hall, even on the auspicious occasions of welcoming the Agent-General for India in South Africa, and of giving sumptuous banquets to Cabinet Ministers and other dignitaries known as friends and sympathisers of the poor Indians in South Africa. Everyone can see from the Press that the white population of Johannesburg and suburbs is making the Indian community a kind of Shuttlecock, for, as soon as any particular area is mentioned for Indian occupation, then are immediate hue and cry and protests against it

as if the Indians were a plague to be avoided at any costs.

There are many things which could be said against the actions of the Agency, but, in conclusion, I need not say more but just draw the attention of the Agent-General to the need of taking the Indian masses of South Africa into his confidence in any action to be taken for, or on their account, or on their behalf, on the basis of a mutual co-operative principle rather than following the present practice of consulting the few chosen ones of the Indian people.

OLD CONGRESSMAN.

Last Sunday's Meeting

SIR,—Will you be kind enough to allow me a space in your paper, which is being read all over the Union with great interest, regarding what Indians should really do to enhance their status in this country. Sir, I have attended hundreds of meetings but the one called by the Colonial Born and Settlers Indian Association, at the Victoria Picture Palace, last Sunday, was the worst I have experienced. Mr. Manilal Gandhi was not allowed to speak and was subjected to very abusive language by an insatiable crowd. I really wonder if these men knew what they were doing. Mr. Gandhi stood gallantly to respond to the angry crowd and I should really like to appreciate his behaviour. He is one of the few men who are struggling hard for the advancement of our people in this country. Unless we co-operate and try to understand each other and to behave ourselves, we can never hope to make any progress towards our desired goal.—Yours etc.,

BILLY PETERS.

The Sporting World

Coronation Sports

Coronation Sports On May 12

THE stage has been set for Wednesday, May 12, when a huge crowd both of athletes and of enthusiastic spectators, is expected at the Currie's Fountain grounds. There are over 23 events. Variety is their chief characteristic. Athletes—all necessarily *bona fide* residents of Durban—will have no cause to grumble. There are over £50 worth of fine trophies to be won outright. There are a large number of entries. In the sprint events, heats, no doubt, will have to be run. There are 20 entries for the "decorated-car-lorry" event to which are attached cash prizes of £10, £5 and £3. In the five-a-side soccer division there are over 25 entries and the early rounds of the tourney were run off on Thursday, May 6. Only the finals will be staged on May 12. Over 60 entries have been received for the tennis (singles and doubles) competitions. May 12 will, no doubt, be a grand gala day and the enthusiasm already astir among sportsmen itself speaks commendably of the organising committee in charge of the day's programme. The day's programme starts at 9.30 a.m. when all competitors are requested to be present to take part in the procession. Competitors must also appear in costumes. Entrance to the grounds will be FREE.

Children's Day On May 13

Thursday, May 13, will be reserved solely for the children's festivities; these also will be staged at Currie's Fountain. Over 14,000 school children will assemble under their school banners at 9.30 a.m. Trams will convey distant school children free of charge to the Warwick Avenue and Old Dutch Road intersection. Weather permitting, May 13 should prove a real gala day for school children. A lunch-packet and a coronation mug will be supplied to each school-boy (girl) at the Durban Municipality's expense. The programme for the day is a varied one, including athletic and 5-a-side events. Entrance will be entirely free and it is hoped parents will turn out as usual—providing, of course, their own lunches. Such will also be available on the grounds at a nominal fee.

Soccer.

Last Saturday's Matches

Ideal sunshiny weather greeted footballers last Saturday at Currie's Fountain. In the first match on the main ground the youthful Stella went down to Avondale (3-0). Pirates failed to put in an appearance, Sydenham consequently obtaining a W.O. Daffodils easily beat Shamrocks by 4-1, while Stars beat the Collegians by 9-0.

By "Rambler"

Juvenile Section

Two important matches were contested on Saturday last in the Juvenile division. In the early match the Flamingoes were narrowly beaten by Avondales (2-1). The later match on the No. 4 ground was a mere ding-dong affair. Stella scored first against Sastri College A. The College team rallied well and, after equalising, forged ahead to a slight lead. Tempers ran high in this match and two players were ordered off the field. Play then continued with less animosity and after a scramble in the College goal area the Stella managed to equalise three minutes before the final whistle (3-3).

South Coast Results

The following are the results of last Saturday's matches played at Clairwood: Springbok 6, Clairwood 0; Schools 1, Bluff Rangers 0; United 2, Rossburgh 1.

At Sea View

The following are the results of last Saturday's matches played at Sea View: Seniors: Bellair 5, Coedmore 0; Juniors: Malvern 0, Shaves 0.

Durban Senior League Log

Following is the Durban Senior League Log:—

	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Avondales	3	3	—	—	6
Daffodils	3	2	—	1	5
Stars	3	2	1	—	4
Sydenham	3	2	1	—	4
Stella	3	1	1	1	3
Shamrocks	3	1	2	—	2
Collegians	3	—	3	—	0
Pirates	3	—	3	—	0

Fixtures

The following are the fixtures for Saturday, May 8:—

Seniors: Collegians vs. Pirates; Stella vs. Stars; Sydenham vs. Shamrocks; Avondale vs. Daffodils.

Juveniles: Flamingoes vs. Stella; Sastri College B. vs. Avondale; Sastri College A. bye.

Parkhill Fraternity Club

The members of the Parkhill Fraternity Club will engage in a debate with the Durban Youth Movement on Sunday May 9. The debate will be held at the Greenwood Park School Hall. All members of the Youth Movement are requested to be present. The debate, which will take place in the afternoon, will be preceded by tennis and indoor games.

Local And General

Durban Indian Youth Movement

THE Durban Indian Branch of the S. A. Youth Movement held its 3rd annual general meeting at the Carlisle Street School Hall, on Wednesday, April 28. There was a fair attendance of members and games preceded the meeting. The resigning president, Mr. G. Singh, spoke of the apathy shown by a large number of members and emphasised the urgency of varying the policy of the Movement to changed circumstances and to general tendencies which were influencing all public bodies at the moment. The resigning secretary's (Mr. G. S. Naidoo) report was also read and adopted unanimously. The financial report which will be passed at the forthcoming special general meeting, reflected a credit balance. The elections were as follows:—Patrons: Messrs. O. Hampson (National Chairman of the S. A. Youth Movement) and P. Choonilal (of Durban), President: Mr. R. J. Mistry B.A., Vice-President: Messrs. E. H. Ismail and G. Singh, Secretary: Mr. M. P. Naidoo, Assistant Secretary: Mr. N. Ramgullam, Treasurer: Mr. Michael W. Daniels, Auditor: Mr. V. Sirkari Naidoo, B.A.

Farewell Reception At Clairwood Junior Boys' School

On Friday April 30, about 40 teachers from the Clairwood Senior Boys', Junior Boys' and Girls' School assembled at the Junior School hall where a grand tea-party was given by the staff of the Junior Boys' School in honour of the three members of their staff, Messrs. G. Baijnath, who has been promoted as headmaster of the Newlands Indian School; Mr. Soobrayaloo, who retires owing to ill-health and Mr. C. D. Pather, who has been transferred to the Spearman Road Indian School. M. N. Gangaa, the headmaster of the Junior School, who presided, spoke very eloquently and feelingly in appreciative terms of the services rendered by the departing teachers and wished them greater success in their new spheres. He then presented them each with an ash tray stand combination on behalf of his staff and himself. The other speakers were:—Messrs. R. G. Pillay, K. Reddy and M. Kumarasamy of the Junior School staff; Messrs. H. S. Done, headmaster, J. Powys, E. V. Naidoo, S. K. Moodley, M. Y. Pather and O. Ganesh of the Senior School staff; Mrs. E. Thomas (headmistress) and Mrs. A. Samuels of the Girls' School staff, who added their quota to the sentiments already expressed. All the speakers wished Messrs. Baijnath and Pather every success in their new appointments, and hoped that Mr. Soobrayaloo will soon recover. The three departing teachers suitably responded.

ARMS BUDGET OF THE WORLD

The Living Age for February observes editorially:

It is no longer news that the world is spending more for armaments today than it was in 1914: we all got used to that fact some time back. Yet few of us realize how much more is being spent for guns and airplanes and warships now, and most of us would be surprised and shocked to know the truth. Francis Williams, financial editor of the British Labour Party's newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, has gathered some figures on the subject which make anything but soothing reading. He finds that, between them, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia spent roughly \$2,200,000,000 for arms in 1914: their combined arms bill today he estimates at well over \$11,000,000,000. The largest increase has, of course, been Germany's, rising from approximately \$470,000,000 in 1914 to nearly \$4,700,000,000 in 1936:

1,000 per cent. Next comes Russia, with an expenditure of about \$2,950,000,000 in 1936 as against \$450,000,000 in 1914. The third largest arms bill for last year went to the United States: over \$1,000,000,000, to be compared with \$250,000,000 in the year of the outbreak of the World War. France spent \$350,000,000 in 1914, and plans to spend over \$900,000,000 in 1937. Britain's current outgo for armaments is \$800,000,000; in 1914 it was \$380,000,000. Italy has increased her arms budget from \$180,000,000 to \$750,000,000, and Japan's has jumped from \$95,000,000 to \$300,000,000. Mr. Williams warns that the difficulties of conversion make both the Russian and the German figures appear somewhat larger than, in terms of domestic purchasing power, they actually are, and, because Japan's standards of living are so low, the Japanese figures appear abnormally low. But, on the other hand, says Mr. Williams:

By comparing the amounts spent on arms in the various countries with their populations, it can be seen how enormously over-armed Germany is and how the Russian figure, though large, is dwarfed when it is realized that she has a much longer frontier to defend.

Germany has 11.8 per cent of the total population of these seven Powers, but 41 per cent of their combined arms bill is spent by her. Russia, with 29.8 per cent of the population, spends 26 per cent of the total arms bill.

The United States with 22.5 per cent of the population spends 8.8 per cent of the arms bill; Japan has 12.3 per cent of population and spends 2.6 per cent of the arms bill; Britain has 8.3 per cent of the population and spends 7 per cent of the arms bill; France has 7.4 per cent of the population and spends 8.1 per cent of the arms bill; Italy has 7.8 per cent of the population and spends 6.6 per cent of the arms bill.

South African News In Brief

A Chip Of The Old Block

MR. GOPAL KRISHNA NAIDOO, the son of the late Mr. P. K. Naidoo, has just passed the London Matric in the Second Division. Young Mr. Naidoo, is intelligent and has all the good qualities and the patriotism of his late father. His ambition is to go to India to further his studies. We congratulate young Mr. Naidoo and wish him every success in his laudable undertakings.

Preparations At Maritzburg

The sub-committee of the Maritzburg Indian Social Service Committee, Messrs. K. Soobramoney, V. K. Pillay and B. R. Naidoo, have drawn up a Coronation programme for the Indian community. This programme will start at 9 a.m. at the Indian sports ground, Maritzburg, with athletic events for men and women. A physical culture display will be given by the members of the Ram-Krishna physical culture club and a first-aid demonstration by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade (women's division). A radio will be installed at the grounds to broadcast the Coronation service, and musical items will be rendered by the Pentrich Indian Young Men's Association's Orchestra. The sub-committee are also distributing Coronation cheer to poor and needy Indians at the H.Y.M.A. annexe. On Tuesday, May 11, at 10 a.m., the Mayor of Maritzburg, Mr. F. J. Lewis, will start the distribution. The sports will be officially opened by Dr. M. R. Peters, the vice-chairman of the Maritzburg Indian Social Service Committee. The prizes will be distributed in the afternoon by the Mayoress of Maritzburg.

No Coronation Celebrations For Sterkstroom

To the regret of many of its residents Sterkstroom, one of the Malanite Nationalists' strongholds, will have no Coronation celebrations. There will be no distribution of medals, or refreshments to the school children; no decorations of the town, bonfires or sports, as an expression of loyalty to King George VI., such as other towns have planned.

Natal Indian Eisteddfod

Some outstanding talent was revealed at the concert of the prize winners in the first Natal Indian Eisteddfod, which was held in the Durban City Hall on Tuesday night. The concert was attended by the Mayor, Mr. Fleming Johnston, and the Mayoress, Mrs. George Cyrus, who presented the trophies to the winners in the various sections. In a very long programme the outstanding item was the trumpet solo of J. W. Jeevanathan, a young player who showed a keen understanding of Western music as well as technical skill of the highest order. The tone throughout the playing of "The Lost Chord" was beautifully round and true and there was a nice discrimination in the volume control. The phrasing, too, was excellent. Jeevanathan should undoubtedly be heard by a wider audience. Several concert items from different Indian schools in Natal showed keen dramatic sense and careful preparation, and among the most successful of them was "Indian Village Life" by the pupils of St. Paul's School, Maritzburg. The vernacular items, though strange to Eu-

ropean ears, were very interesting in their rhythms and the use made of half-tones. Mr. C. R. Warriner, the President of the Indian Society for the Advancement of Music and Art, thanked the Mayoress for presenting the prizes and all those who had helped to make the Eisteddfod a success, either by their help in adjudicating or in presenting trophies. A total of 750 entries had been received, he said. Mrs. Cyrus and the women adjudicators were presented with bouquets.

Indian First Aid Cadet Corps

Twenty-seven Indian Cadets of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Clairwood Indian Ambulance Division, were presented with the Cadet First Aid Certificates on Sunday, May 2, at Dr. Drummond's consulting rooms, Rossburgh. This is the first Indian Cadet Division formed in South Africa and all members are drawn from the Clairwood Indian Boys' Senior School, where classes were inaugurated a year ago through the instrumentality of Messrs. C. R. Ashe and S. K. Moodley.

Du Plessis Case Not Yet Before Minister

It is learned in Pretoria that the case of A. S. du Plessis, who was recently sentenced to death on five charges of murder has not yet been referred to the Minister of Justice for submission to the Governor-General-in-Council. It is learned that the Du Plessis case will still take some time to complete, as a further police report has been called for. There is also a rumour that petition is being prepared asking for the reprieve of Du Plessis.

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