

Indian Opinion

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

VOL. 1. NO. 23 GEORGETOWN, B.G. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1944 ONE PENNY.

INDIAN OPINION: Items of news interests and Literary contributions must be addressed to P.O. BOX 43, Georgetown, B.G. Features and other items appearing in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board. The editorial column reflects the policy of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Copies—one penny.

LOCAL

Annual Subscription—(Posted) \$1.50

FOREIGN

Annual Subscription—(Posted) \$2.00

— EDITORIAL —

The Rice Industry

In continuation of our leading article of last week we have to point out that there appears to be no doubt that the Rice Marketing Board is carrying out the policy of the Board to strangle and keep down the Industry so that the Sugar Industry could expand.

During the last fifteen years while the Rice Marketing Board had been and is still dominated by persons who are directly and indirectly interested in the Sugar Industry the production of sugar has increased from 127,764 tons in 1930 to 191,767 tons in 1942. Last year the production was 132,868 tons with 33,554 tons sugar actually destroyed during the process of manufacture as it was not possible for the sugar producers to bag and store this additional quantity in the Colony. It may not be out of place to mention that at the end of March, 1944, there was an accumulated quantity of 70,214 tons of sugar in the Colony that could not have been shipped to Canada or to the United Kingdom.

In other words while the production of sugar increased from 128,000 tons in 1930 to 192,000 in 1942, the production of rice decreased from 47,480 tons in 1930 to 43,180 tons in 1943. The sugar producers are planning to increase production to 250,000 tons in 1945, and it is understood that every effort is being made to get the Imperial Authorities to arrange for ships to remove as soon as possible

all manufactured sugar from the Colony.

On the other hand, the consumers of rice in the Caribbean area cannot get rice and as the exports from British Guiana was only 17,180 tons last year, a quantity not sufficient for Trinidad—is it not madness, not to take active steps to produce as much as is possible to supply the entire Caribbean area during the next few years? These markets were able to purchase 60,000 tons during the last five years. British Guiana was only able to export an average of 15,000 tons yearly!

There is method in the madness of the Rice Marketing Board and its Executive Officers. Those interested and actively engaged in the Industry have no voice whatever and it is madness again, we assert for the Government to continue to inform representative Indians, from time to time that Indians will be given every opportunity to assist in the Administration of the Colony, when in truth and in fact Indians are given no opportunity to assist in the Rice Industry—an Industry that was built and is owned to this day by them.

The only Indian on the Rice Marketing Board is not actively engaged in the Industry or in matters Indian. In fact he disposed of his obsolete rice machinery about four years ago to the Board and may be his nomination was on account of his having no more direct interest in the Industry. This is the Democracy that the British Guiana Government is practising!

The Secretary and Manager of the Rice Marketing Board stated that it may be possible to increase the production of rice by 17,000 tons to supply certain markets. We wonder why the Secretary and Manager of the Rice Marketing Board deliberately left out certain markets that were dependent to a large extent on Demerara Rice as for instance, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cayenne, French West Indies, Cuba, New York, Canada, the United Kingdom and other smaller markets that have always purchased rice and padi when stocks were available.

We are confident that a properly constituted Rice Marketing Board will be able to market 75,000 tons of rice annually as from 1945, provided the dominating Sugar Industry and the

Government Schools A Necessity

British Guiana continues to be one of the unique parts of the world where the wishes of the majority of the people is completely disregarded.

An outstanding case is the question of Schools, for the past half of a century the inhabitants have been crying out for schools to be Government owned and controlled but to this day no such step has been taken.

Several experts have advised that the schools should be Government controlled but the churches have always been able to swing the pendulum their way.

Now, education to a people is a necessity. Government has used its war emergency powers to enforce trifles such as the B. G. Rice Marketing Board, why does not Government use the same war emergency measure to take over the schools? Is it because on the one hand it has the East Indians who can be squeezed to pulp and on the other hand it has strong and powerful bodies to contend with?

Together At Last

For six years Mohamed Ali Jinnah, head of India's Moslem League, has dodged Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Jinnah has declined to discuss man to man, the League's lack of relations with the All-India National Congress. Last July Gandhi accepted the Moslem League's *Pakistan* principle—autonomy for all Indian areas with a Moslem majority—and again proposed a meeting with Jinnah. Jinnah said yes but fell sick. Gandhi bided his time.

Last week he walked 300 yards up the hill to Jinnah's modern bungalow in Bombay. The two men greeted each other, then disappeared inside.

Three hours later Gandhi came out again: the unity talk had been postponed until the following Monday. Sunday is the 21st day of Ramadan, the Moslem holy month, and Jinnah must spend it in silence.

Government are prepared to allow the Rice Industry to extend and not to be strangled.

We propose to deal with the Comments by the Bureau of Publicity and Information—"All about Rice" in our next issue.

Ten Resolutions Passed At B. G. E. I Association Annual Conference

Representative Indians From All Over Colony Present

Conference Cables Resolution Requesting Introduction Of Universal Adult Suffrage Worthwhile

LOYALTY TO THE THRONE

That this Conference of the Members of the British Guiana East Indian Association assembled at the Pavilion of the B.G. East Indian Cricket Club on the occasion of its Annual Conference, requests His Excellency The Officer Administering the Government to transmit to their Majesties the King Emperor George VI and Queen Elizabeth an expression of their unswerving loyalty to the British Throne and also their earnest hope and desire for an early victory of the Allies in the present World Conflict.

Mover: Mr. Sugrim Singh
Seconded: Mr. Azeem Khan;
Unanimously carried.

BRITISH GUIANA CONSTITUTION AND SELF GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS the present Social and Economic conditions of British Guiana are in a very deplorable and chaotic state, due to gross mismanagement of

the Colony by successive administration during the past century;

AND WHEREAS the present changed system of Government offers little or no hope for the improvement of conditions of the majority of the people of the Colony;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference of Indians respectfully requests His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to change the Constitution of the Colony by granting Self-Government as soon as practicable after the war;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be handed to The Officer Administering the Government with the respectful request that it be transmitted by Air-Mail to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Mover: Hon. C. R. Jacob
Seconded: Mr. J. Ramlogan.
Unanimously carried.

REPATRIATION

WHEREAS there are large numbers of Indians in the Colony who are entitled to return passages to India;

AND WHEREAS Government has failed in its obligation in the past to provide adequate and regular opportunities, prior to the present war, for the return to India of those persons desirous of doing so;

AND WHEREAS there exists a growing dissatisfaction among a large section of those who are entitled to be provided conveyance for repatriation;

BE IT RESOLVED That this Conference of Indians respectfully requests Government to make arrangements as soon as war conditions permit for ships to arrive in the Colony at regular intervals for the repatriation of Indians, desirous of returning to their Motherland under the Immigration Ordinance, Chapter 208.

Mover Hon. C. R. Jacob
Seconded Mr. Azeem Khan
Unanimously carried

YOUTH MOVEMENT

WHEREAS the Indian Youths especially of the rural areas are in dire need of proper social and cultural guidance;

AND WHEREAS Government has

appointed a Youth Council to coordinate and assist the entire Youth Movement of the Colony;

AND WHEREAS Government appears to have deliberately left out Indians from the Youth Council in spite of there being in existence several Indian Youth Organizations;

AND WHEREAS Indians regard this action as an unfair treatment to their Youth especially of the rural areas where little or no social amenities are available to them.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference respectfully requests Government to take immediate steps to appoint Indians on the Youth Council.

Mover Mr. Jenarine Singh
Seconded Mr. Sugrim Singh
Unanimously carried

LAND SETTLEMENT

WHEREAS there exists large numbers of unemployed and landless persons throughout the colony, who are most anxious to settle permanently on the land;

AND WHEREAS large tracts of suitable and arable lands are readily available all over the Colony where land settlement schemes could be properly inaugurated;

AND WHEREAS Government has failed up to the present moment in spite of repeated demands for over 25 years to settle a single individual under a proper land settlement scheme in order to relieve unemployment and underemployment, and to increase the production of all kinds of food for local consumption and for export;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference of Indians respectfully requests Government to take immediate step to settle those persons who are desirous of being settled on suitable irrigated and drained lands in Demerara or Berbice.

Mover: Mr. Sugrim Singh
Seconded: Mr. Jenarine Singh
Unanimously carried.

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Moribund Legislative Council of British Guiana

DISSOLUTION HIGHLY DESIRABLE

BY LIBERTY

Time and again it has been stressed that the present Members of the Legislative Council have ceased to represent their respective constituencies four years ago.

Time and again it has been pointed out that a dissolution of the present Legislative Council is highly desirable.

Time and again it has been mentioned that the only method to have the people's representative in the Legislative Council is by means of Universal Adult Suffrage.

Time and again it has been stressed that war is no reason for postponing election.

America with a population of one hundred and fifty millions is having elections for the Presidency in the midst of war and yet B.G with just over three hundred thousand has an election now overdue by four years.

It seems all the pleadings of the people are to no avail. No wonder British Guiana marches backwards instead of forwards.

Malnutrition and East Indians on Sugar Estates

BY POLITICO

For the past few years, sugar estates have been imposing higher and higher adjustment fees and other conditions on cattle that East Indians keep on the estates. Due to this, the labourers have had to do away with their cows, and as a result on almost all sugar estates there is a great shortage of cow's milk.

The management seems to have lost their mental balance by taking such a step as they have increased malnutrition among the workers on whose energy output their profits depend.

The East Indian by tradition and to certain extent by religion is not a lover of fish and flesh, his main source of nitrogen lies in peas and milk. Due to war conditions peas is not abundant and the price of milk due to the scarcity is so high as to be beyond the reach of the average working East Indian.

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Letters to the Editor

COMPENSATION FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The Editor "Indian Opinion"

Dear Sir, Some time ago your paper pointed out the necessity for Legislation to be introduced to provide compensation to the Agricultural workers of the Sugar Estates.

I am interested on the subject to a great extent as every now and again accidents occur and the poor victims are laid up for considerable periods and undergo untold hardships.

I wonder whether profits earned by sugar under conditions of such shame is not regrettable. I feel certain that God cannot and will not continue to allow humanity to suffer under such intolerable conditions of want when labourers fall victim to accidents.

Retribution is bound to set in, sooner or later.

Thanking you for space.

I am SUFFERER.



TWO DEATHS BY ACCIDENT HAMID ALI AND RAMSOONDAR

The Editor "Indian Opinion"

Sir, Some time ago in the month of May of the current year I read in your paper that Hamid Ali from Pln. Providence and Ramsoondar of Pln. Versailles died as a result of accident received while working. I remember the case of Hamid Ali as being especially very lamentable as I understand he was the only support of an old mother.

I want to know what form of compensation have the respective estates given to the relatives of these two men. In the case of skilled workers I know they get around \$1200. Is there any difference in the lives of two working men?

Yours LABOURER

Editor's Note:—An enquiry is being made into the matter and you shall be duly informed.

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RICE PRODUCERS, THE R. M. BOARD AND GOVERNMENT

The Editor "Indian Opinion"

Dear Sir, I wish to point out, that we are satisfied, that you are following a definitely straight course in the question of the Rice Industry. The Government is using the War Emergency to do all manner of things. I wonder why it has not introduced a cooperative Rice Marketing Board instead of an autocratic body in which those interested in the rice industry are excluded.

The whole Government and its working machinery seems a jigsaw puzzle to me, I cannot make heads or tails of it. The Secretary of States says the people in the Colonies must from now on have a greater say in their own affairs. Certainly the scandalous composition of the Rice Marketing Board does not lead us to believe what is being told us.

Yours RICE GROWERS

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Ten Resolutions Passed Etc

Continued from page 2

RUMSHOPS

WHEREAS rum drinking with its trail of evils, moral deprivations, disorderly behaviour etc., is on an increase in the entire Colony;

AND WHEREAS rum drinking is causing the breaking up of homes and malnutrition; by the family's earnings being spent in this direction, especially in the Sugar Estates and adjoining villages;

AND WHEREAS rum drinking would not be as prevalent if the rumshops were not readily available;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference respectfully requests Government to eliminate all rumshops within Sugar Estates by not granting the renewal of existing licences after the end of 1944 and not to grant any new licences within the boundaries of all Sugar Plantations.

Mover: Mr. Jagan Singh
Seconder: Mr. A. A. Rangela
Unanimously carried.

UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE

WHEREAS certain members of the West India Royal Commission 1938-1939, recommended that Universal Adult Suffrage be introduced forthwith in British Guiana;

AND WHEREAS the Secretary of State for the Colonies has granted recently Universal Adult Suffrage to Jamaica and Trinidad;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference respectfully requests His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to grant the immediate introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be handed to the Officer Administering the Government with the respectful request that it be transmitted by Cable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies at our expense.

Mover: Dr. M. B. Khan
Seconder: Mr. D. P. Debidin
Unanimously carried.

EDUCATION

WHEREAS Mr. Hammond, Educational Advisor to Sir Frank Stockdale has submitted an exhaustive report on Education in British Guiana, in which he has recommended:—

(a) The speedy introduction of Government Schools in the place of Denominational Schools, facilitated by a Grant of \$1200 00 annually under this Act for eight years together with the support of our Government.

(b) The increase of the output of Trained Teachers to 100 annually to meet the present shortage of Teachers;

AND WHEREAS by the present Denominational System of Education as observed by Mr. Hammond himself Hindus and Muslims are debarred from the teaching profession having little chance of becoming Head-Teachers, referred by Mr. Hammond as "unjustifiable discrimination";

AND WHEREAS this Conference of East Indians views with alarm and grave concern the present paucity of Indian Teachers.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference accepts entirely the findings and Recommendations of Mr Hammond in his Report and respectfully requests Government to give effect to these Recommendations without delay.

Mover: Mr. Sugrim Singh
Seconder: Dr. M. B. Khan.
Unanimously carried.

PUBLIC BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

WHEREAS large numbers of Boards and Committees that advise Government in the Administration of the affairs of the Colony are not functioning efficiently; the personnel in most cases not being responsible to an Electorate, or to the people of the Colony;

AND WHEREAS there is a definite paucity of Indians on these Public Boards and Committees where matters of Indian Interest do not receive adequate attention and consideration;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference of Indians respectfully requests Government to review the personnel of all Boards and Committees and to appoint an adequate number of Indian Representatives, on these Boards and Committees, without further delay.

Mover Mr Akbar Khan
Seconder Mr. D. P. Debidin
Unanimously carried.

INDIANS ON THE CIVIL SERVICE

WHEREAS the number of Indians employed in the Civil Service is extremely small and well below ten percent of the total number of employees;

AND WHEREAS there are many fully qualified and eligible Indians of both sexes who are desirous of joining the Civil Service;

AND WHEREAS there appears to exist certain definite artificial barriers which keep out Indians from the Civil Service;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference respectfully urges upon Government to give due consideration to all applications from Indians desirous of entering the Civil Service.

Mover Mr. J. Ramlogan
Seconder Mr. Sugrim Singh
Unanimously carried

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INDIAN OPINION: Published at 61 Hadfield Street, Georgetown, Demerara, by JOSEPH N. BUTLER, for the British Guiana East Indian Association of Lot A Croal Street, Georgetown, Demerara.