

Indian Opinion

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PROGRESS OF THE STRIKE

THE following wire has been sent from Newcastle to General Botha:—"We hear you told the collieries' managers that the Indians were advised to strike for a general struggle, and that the strikers were simply deceived for selfish ends. I beg to state that such never was, and is not now, the intention. The strike has been advised purely regarding the £3 tax and the step has become necessary owing to the nonfulfilment of the promise made to the Hon. Mr. Gokhale that it would be, and as a demonstration against the statement made by the Government during the last session that the majority of Natal employers are averse to the repeal of the tax. If Government will see their way to promise to repeal it next session the strikers will be advised to return to work."

The news to hand in coal circles in Durban yesterday (says the *Mercury* of the 23rd instant) in reference to the coal strike was that there were in all nine mines affected, namely, Newcastle, Fairleigh, Ballangeich, Cambrian, Durban Navigation, Glencoe, Natal Navigation, Hatting Spruit, St. George's and Ramsay. Amongst those still working were Burnside and Elands-laagte. But it was expected that Elands-laagte might be out later on, or this morning, the reason being that Mr. Gandhi had returned to Newcastle, and was leaving there for Hatting Spruit and later for Elands-laagte. Further advice was to the effect that the places of the coolies employed at Newcastle Railway Station who had gone on strike had been filled by other Indians transferred from Ladysmith, and that these were working quiet happily.

A gentleman prominent in the coal trade in Durban, seen yesterday, pointed out that the strike was very unfortunate from the point of view of the companies. The strikers had no grievance against their employers, and for this very reason it was impossible for the employers to treat with them with a view to the termination of the strike.

A Reuter message from Johannesburg, dated the 23rd instant, published in the press, states:—"Mr. Gandhi telegraphed this afternoon from Newcastle that Indians have struck on more mines, and that many have been arrested. Mr. Gandhi added:—"We are advising the strikers to leave the mines and court arrest, and failing arrest, to march to Volksrust. We consider it improper to live on mine rations when we don't work. The movement may start instantly."

Ten Indians were sentenced at Volksrust to three months' hard labour for being prohibited immigrants.

Contradictory Reports

The position of the strike of the Indian workers on the Natal coal mines seems involved in some little mystery for the moment, (says the *Mercury* of the 24th instant). According to information received from Johannesburg, Mr. Gandhi, who is at Newcastle, has

sent a wire there stating that the Indians have struck on more mines, and that many have been arrested, and that they are advising the strikers to leave the mines and court arrest; failing that, they will march on Volksrust—a movement which may be anticipated at any minute.

Though the strike may have taken a more serious development, as this telegram intimates, the information received by the local colliery managements up to last evening does not bear this out. According to the last information they had received, a certain number of the men—although the number was small—had returned to work.

It seems that the various colliery representatives in Durban held a meeting a day or so ago, and agreed to continue to supply the strikers with rations until an intimation had been received from the Government as to what action they proposed to take. One colliery affected was not represented at the meeting, and as a consequence the strikers on this mine got no rations, and as a result there was some fear of trouble there, and there was talk of the men marching on the Transvaal border. It was, however, understood that Mr. Gandhi had asked for permission to address these men, in order to prevent any trouble arising.

The colliery owners, as a matter of precaution, applied to the Government to send additional police into the district, and also to prohibit the sale of liquor to Indians in the colliery district; but a reply has been received that the Government consider the police in the district sufficient in number to preserve order, and that the law did not allow the closing of canteens to Indians.

We understand that Mr. Gandhi has offered to come to Durban to-morrow to meet the colliery owners, but no definite arrangement regarding this has been made up to the present.

Disposition to Return to Work

Information at the coal offices in Durban yesterday (continues the *Mercury*) was that no more mines had come out. Burnside and Elands-laagte were still working when advices were despatched. Telegrams also supported the view that amongst many of the Indians on strike there was a disposition to return to work, and the idea is strengthened by the fact that 20 coolies employed at the St. George's mine resumed their duties yesterday morning. Others wanted to follow this lead, and only the fear that they would be victimised by those who did not go back prevented them from doing so. At the same time, it is thought that the tendency towards ending the strike will develop considerably during the next few days.

Coalowners' Attitude

From the telegram sent to General Botha from Indians at Newcastle, it may be inferred that "the

majority of Natal employers are averse to the repeal of the tax." The Natal Coalowners' Association wish it to be understood that they have never associated themselves with the expression of any such view.

"Natal Mercury's Comments

On the 23rd instant the *Mercury* had the following leaderette:—

The strike of Indians at the Natal collieries is the beginning of a movement which must be regarded as unquestionably serious. The duty of the Government in the circumstances seems to us perfectly plain. The sole point immediately at issue appears to be the £3 annual tax, and there is reason to believe that the trouble would be at an end if the Government would give a distinct pledge that the tax shall be repealed in the next session of Parliament. The tax cannot be said to have fulfilled the object for which it was imposed. The intention was that it should operate so as to induce Indians to return to their native land on the expiry of their indentures, or to re-indenture for service in the Colony. In spite of the tax, the number of free Indians in the Colony continued steadily to increase. The tax was understood to apply to men only, but the liability has been extended to women. Payment has never been rigidly enforced throughout Natal, and in many cases the recovery of arrears is hopeless. The law is merely a cause of irritation, and we are afraid that in some instances it has operated in a manner that can only be called oppressive. The Government, it is not denied, promised Mr. Gokhale that the tax would be repealed, and they have been urged by Natal members of Parliament to fulfil the promise. As a matter of equity and of good faith, it behoves the Government to remove the obnoxious tax from the Statute-book. By delaying to do so they have only compromised their own dignity, and they cannot too soon put themselves right with Home and local opinion by undertaking that the repeal will be effected at the earliest available opportunity.

The Durban Conference

By mutual arrangement, a conference of representative employers met Mr. Gandhi at the Chamber of Commerce on Saturday last, at which Mr. Gandhi made a statement on the strike. Subsequently the conference placed itself in telegraphic communication with the Government.

After the conference, Mr. Gandhi was asked by a *Mercury* representative whether there was any truth in the suggestion that the strike was at an end.

"No," he replied, "the strike is still continuing. I have telegrams from Dannhausor and district to say that that is so, and from Dundee and Newcastle also. The position is that the men were to be withdrawn from the collieries in order to court arrest and imprisonment in Natal, or, failing that, to cross the border to the Transvaal, and be arrested there. As this conference was coming, this movement was suspended. So the position is that they are on strike, but have not left the mines.

"The idea behind this proposed movement from the mines was that it was not a proper thing to draw rations from the mine-owners, and yet not to work. I personally felt that the strike was weak so long as the men did not actually leave the mines. What will happen now will depend on the result of the conference, and that I am unable to foreshadow. The strike, however, will continue. According to my estimate there are nearly 3,000 on strike. The effect of this is not entirely to stop work, as they have a certain amount of kafir labour, and with this kafir labour and the Europeans they are able to do some work, though the bulk of it is certainly at a standstill."

"I saw it reported," reported Mr. Gandhi, "that we might even ask the kafirs to strike. But such is not our intention at all. We do not believe in such methods. We have nothing against the employers as such, but as the employers are supposed—at least

some of them—to have opposed the repeal of this tax, this demonstration has become necessary. As soon as the Government make a promise to the effect that the tax will be repealed during the next session of Parliament the strikers will be advised to resume work."

"It is not the intention to ask them to join the general struggle at all: because, apart from the £3 tax there are other grievances also for which the passive resistance by the general body of the people will continue. The other grievances are the marriage question; the question of domiciliary rights; the harsh administration of existing laws, as the Gold Law in the Transvaal; the right of South Africa-born Indians to enter the Cape by reason of their birth; and the theoretical question of the social bar. For these things, even if the promise to repeal the £3 tax is given, passive resistance, without the strike, will continue."

"I may state also," he added, "that no intimidation of any sort was used against non-strikers, and the strike is absolutely a voluntary act, and in so far as I have been able to see, quite spontaneous. The men only needed the position to be placed before them to strike."

"For the relief of the strikers, whom we have to support, subscriptions are being collected everywhere. In Durban, 110 bags of rice, dholl, and other articles were promised, and the bulk of this is already upon rail. More collections are still going on.

"If the conference ends in a fiasco," concluded Mr. Gandhi, "we shall certainly endeavour to widen the area of the strike, but I am totally unable to say what response we shall have. Wherever indentured Indians or ex-indentured Indians are working as labourers we shall advise that they should strike."

Mr. Kallenbach, in the course of an interview at Johannesburg, pointed out that the leaders of the movement will not have the least compunction about asking all Indians on the sugar plantations, &c., to come out. These Indians, he argues, can get work on the farms anywhere, if it comes to that, because they are more intelligent than natives, and most of them are born farmers. In the first place, however, they must get Indians away from mine and plantation compounds, because, while they remained in compounds there was a danger that they might be persuaded or coerced into taking up work again.

"We want," Mr. Kallenbach proceeded, "to get them into our own tents, and we have already got quotations for a number of tents. Then, again, they can very quickly erect permanent buildings from a kind of bamboo and plaster, or with wood and iron. We can erect these quite cheaply, and have large buildings, some for men and some for women. We will have 'common' tables, and ordinary family life will not exist for the time being. This system was properly tested during the last campaign, and it can be carried on indefinitely. We will take a large number of them to a farm belonging to Mr. Budree, one of the passive resisters, who is now in gaol. He has placed his farm of 600 acres at our disposal. This will give thousands of them work at growing vegetables, and this work will start at once. Part of my own farm—Tolstoy Farm—will also be placed at the disposal of passive resisters, as also will be the Phoenix Farm. If we get so many strikers that we cannot deal with them this way they will easily get work on any of the farms. In fact, they will simply be snatched up. Passive resistance does not mean idleness; there will be no lack of funds. Merchants everywhere are giving freely, and Professor Gokhale is with us heart and soul. Indians ask only for rice, dholl, and vegetables."

Hundreds of Indians, mostly from the South African Collieries, visited Dundee on Sunday, says a *Mercury* special telegram, and a big meeting was addressed by Mr. Gandhi at the Hindu Temple. Over 400 were present at the meeting, and several hundreds were about

the precincts of the temple. Mr. Gandhi urged the Indians to keep out on strike, and, as a result of these representations, numbers who had returned to work have again come out. The Indians at the Dundee Coal Company's mine and the Burnside, some 500 in number, have come out now, and also about 300 employed at the South African Collieries.

A large and representative meeting of Indians was held at Ladysmith on Sunday to consider the present position. After an address by Mr. Polak, who had been invited to attend, and a number of speeches by prominent members of the community, the following resolution was passed by acclamation: "This public meeting of Ladysmith Indians enthusiastically supports the strike of Indian labourers until the Government gives an undertaking to repeal the £3 tax next session; and it fully supports the passive resistance movement on the points arising out of Mr. Cachalia's letter." A committee was being formed and funds are being raised for the support of the families of passive resisters.

From the Editor's Chair

INDIAN WOMEN TO THE RESCUE

The spectacle of Indian women in gaol and of others seeking arrest and imprisonment, for the sake of their cause and country is one that should stir the hearts and souls of Indians throughout South Africa and their brothers and sisters in the Motherland. When the daughters of India set so brilliant an example of fortitude and self-reliance, the end of the struggle may be said to be in sight. That the majority of these brave women are Madrassis by birth or origin redounds to the credit of what has generally been known as the benighted Presidency; but Indians who understand the signs of the times will now commence to realise that, in respect of South Africa, Madras has set an example that is an inspiration to all who value truth.

We present, as a supplement to the present issue, a photograph of some of these brave ladies.

GENERAL SMUTS' REPUDIATION

It is a matter of gratification that General Smuts has so promptly issued a repudiation of the expressions alleged by a Pretoria agency to have been used by him on the subject of Mahomedan marriage and divorce. Such language from a Minister of the Crown respecting the marital relations of a large and important section of His Majesty's subjects would have been most offensive, and we are interested to know how so astonishing a report came to be published. We wish, however, that, when contradicting the statements, General Smuts had made it plain that he realised how deeply the feelings of the Indian community have been injured by the recent Supreme Court decision invalidating Hindu and Mahomedan *de facto* monogamous marriages. The press telegram from Capetown last week shows indisputably how widely-spread is Indian dissatisfaction, at the present situation, and we sincerely hope that the Union Government will hasten to take note of the fact and grant the relief so urgently needed.

MR. GOKHALE AT WORK

REUTER once more records the activities of the Hon. Mr. Gokhale on the South African question. Though the telegram does not state the fact, Mr. Gokhale was speaking at the inauguration of the new Bombay South Africa League, of which our eminent countryman is the founder. It seems that South African Indians may never cease to be under a debt of gratitude to him, that increases rather than diminishes. Since his return to India, in spite of his impaired health, we have private information indicating that his activity on behalf of his countrymen here has been far-reaching,

and we are sure that the new organisation in Bombay will help to remove some of the many injuries from which Indians in this country suffer.

The Hon. Mr. Gokhale's Activity

A Reuter message from London states that Reuter's correspondent at Bombay telegraphs that Mr. Gokhale has made a speech on the South African Indian question in which he stated that pressure should be brought to bear on the Imperial Government. He said that the Imperial Government should retaliate by closing the Indian Public Services to South Africans, and refuse to purchase South African gold for the Indian Treasury.

Mr. Gokhale also said that he had consulted Mr. Gandhi, and hoped that India would send £2,000 a month for the next six months to South Africa, the money to be used for the relief of passive resisters. He had, he said, already received promises of substantial help.

Referring again to the question of the Imperial Government, Mr. Gokhale said that it was absurd for the Imperial Government to say they were helpless in the matter, as they had intererred and effected a compromise on a previous occasion, and could do so again.

Further Correspondence with the Government

The following further correspondence has passed between the Secretary for the Interior and Mr. Gandhi:

19th September, 1913.

Dear Mr. Gandhi.—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 10th instant in which you refer the Minister to a letter of the British Indian Association, dated the 5th June, 1912, on the subject of the Supreme Court judgment in the matter of the introduction of the plural wives of Asiatics into the Transvaal and the reply of the Chief Immigration Officer of the 10th idem in which he stated that, if any case involving hardship were brought to the notice of the Minister, it would receive consideration.

Your telegram was in reply to portion of a message from me in which I queried the statement contained on page 3 of your letter to me, dated the 24th August last, where you said: "Regarding the plurality of wives, I have not asked for a general recognition of polygamy. All I contend is that, in continuation of the practice hitherto followed, existing plural wives of domiciled residents should be allowed to enter. And this was the assurance given in the letter quoted by me in my correspondence with you."

I was somewhat at a loss to understand what assurance you were referring to; hence my enquiry. Looking now at the past correspondence on the subject I fear that the very wide interpretation you are seeking to apply to the Immigration Officer's letter of 10th August, 1912, is not one which was ever contemplated, or one which would be accepted by the Minister.

You will of course understand that the paragraph of my telegram of the 9th instant, which read: "With regard to the marriage question cannot give any assurance that a marriage law will be introduced next session on lines asked by you which would apparently alter whole basis of existing law in South Africa" referred to that portion of your request in which the question of the introduction of a law to validate Indian marriages already solemnized in South Africa was raised. The Minister has already intimated that the introduction of a Bill providing for the appointment of special Marriage Officers for denominations other than Mahomedan will be considered when an opportunity occurs; but your last letter appeared to make the issue considerably wider. If I am mistaken of

if the real point is obscured will you please advise me.
(Sd.) E. M. GORGES.

22nd September.

Dear Mr. Gorges,—I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 19th instant regarding the marriage question. I have not widened the original scope of my request. But I shall endeavour as clearly as possible to re-state the position.

It is submitted that authority should be taken from Parliament during its next session to legalise monogamous marriages already solemnised or hereafter to be solemnised by Indian priests among Indians belonging to non-Christian denominations. Legislation has become necessary only because the marriage clause in the new Act was hastily worded without considering the full position. Unless the relief now sought is granted soon, the status of Indian women married in South Africa is that of concubines and their children not lawful heirs of their parents. Such is, as I take it, the effect of the Searle judgment combined with the action of the Natal Master of the Supreme Court and the Gardiner judgment. I have asked for a promise of amelioration during the next session because I submit that the matter is one of urgency. With regard to polygamy, I have not asked for legal recognition but the admission under the powers vested in the Minister of plural wives without the Government in any way recognising their legal status. The admission is to be restricted only to plural wives already married to Indians who may be found to be unquestionably domiciled in the Union. This at once restricts the scope of the Government's generosity and enables them to know now how many such wives will have to be admitted. I have already submitted a plan as to how this can be brought about.

In my humble opinion, the letter of the 10th August, 1911, referred to in your communication, bears the interpretation I have placed upon it. The British Indian Association raised the question of polygamy and the above-mentioned letter containing the assurance was the reply. I suppose you know that plural wives have actually been admitted by the Immigration Officers and that polygamous Unions are even registered on the Transvaal registration certificates.

As doubts have arisen as to the meaning of the term "monogamous marriage," I beg to record that the meaning that the community has placed upon it is that a marriage is monogamous if a man is married to only one woman, no matter under what religion and no matter whether such religion under given circumstances sanctions polygamy or not.

I observe that paragraph 2 of your letter seems to suggest that my reply to your last wire did not though it might have covered the other points referred to therein. I purposely refrained from touching the other points as I felt that no scope was left open for me to do so. But if General Smuts is still prepared to consider the other points, I shall be certainly prepared to make a further submission. I cannot help feeling that the unfortunate rupture has taken place on points very vital to the Indian community but of little consequence to the Government or the dominant population of the Union.

Pray always consider me to be one the least desirous to obstruct the Government and most anxious to serve it in so far as I can do so consistently with my duty to my countrymen.

(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.

27th September.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant in which, in response to my letter of the 19th idem, you re-state the views of the Asiatic community with regard to the question of the legalisation of marriage between members of that community in South Africa. I have submitted your communication to the Minister, who, after full consideration of the matter, requests me to say that

it will not be possible for him to give any assurance that legislation on the lines indicated in Section 4 of my personal letter of the 19th ultimo to you will be introduced at the next session of Parliament.

With regard to the other points to which you refer again briefly in the fourth paragraph of your letter he desires me to say that he fears he can add nothing to what I have already said in reference thereto.

(Sd. E. M. GORGES.

28th September.

Dear Mr. Gorges,—I do not know that I am justified in writing this letter to you, but, as you have been personally solicitous about the non-revival of passive resistance, and as, in the course of my conversations with you, I have so often told you that I have nothing to withhold from the Government, I may as well inform you of what is now going on.

I wrote to you from Phoenix in reply to your last letter, and if you have not yet replied to my communication but intend to do so, I would suggest your sending your reply to my Johannesburg address, as I shall be here for some time at least.

The campaign has started in earnest. As you know, sixteen passive resisters, including four women, are already serving three months' imprisonment with hard labour. The resisters here were awaiting my arrival and the activity here will commence almost immediately.

I cannot help saying that the points on which the struggle has re-started are such that the Government might gracefully grant them to the community. But what I would like to impress upon the Government is the gravity of the step we are about to take. I know that it is fraught with danger. I know also that, once taken, it may be difficult to control the spread of the movement beyond the limits one may set. I know also what responsibility lies on my shoulders in advising such a momentous step, but I feel that it is not possible for me to refrain from advising a step which I consider to be necessary, to be of educational value and, in the end, to be valuable both to the Indian community and to the State. This step consists in actively, persistently and continuously asking those who are liable to pay the £3 tax to decline to do so and to suffer the penalties for non-payment, and, what is more important, in asking those who are now serving indenture and who will, therefore, be liable to pay the £3 tax on completion of their indenture to strike work until the tax is withdrawn. I feel that, in view of Lord Amphill's declaration in the House of Lords, evidently with the approval of Mr. Gokhale, as to the definite promise made by the Government and repeated to Lord Gladstone, this advice to indentured Indians would be fully justified. That the tax has weighed most heavily upon the men I know from personal experience; that the men resent it bitterly I also know from personal knowledge. But they have submitted to it more or less with quiet resignation, and I am loth to disturb their minds by any step that I might take or advise. Can I not even now, whilst in the midst of the struggle, appeal to General Smuts and ask him to reconsider his decision on the points already submitted and on the question of the £3 tax, and, whether this letter is favourably considered or not, may I anticipate the assurance that it will in no wise be taken to be a threat?

(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.

30th September.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th instant from Johannesburg, in which you inform me of your intentions in regard to the revival of passive resistance.

I have shewn the letter to General Smuts.

On the 27th instant I sent you a letter to Phoenix, as I did not know you were in the Transvaal, in reply to your previous communication of the 22nd idem from that place. I take it that by now it will have been re-addressed to you, so I am not enclosing a copy.

(Sd.) E. M. GORGES.

An Unanimous Protest

The Hamidia Hall at Vrededorp was crowded on the 19th instant, when the Hamidia Islamic Society held a meeting to protest against certain statements made by General Smuts as reported in the press of the 15th instant. Mr. Ahmed Gabru of Capetown (an ex-President of the Society) was in the Chair. He addressed the meeting as follows:—

We regret to have to call your attention to a report in the press of the 15th instant, according to which General Smuts would appear to have stated "the Government will not recognise Mahomedan marriage, which allows polygamy and in which divorce takes the form of simply telling a woman to voetsak." If this pronouncement was correct and if such language was actually used by General Smuts, a responsible Minister of a responsible Government, I think that it is time that we entered the strongest protest of which the Mahomedans of this country are capable not only against the misrepresentation of facts but also against the extremely offensive language in which the General's remarks were couched. General Smuts is, of course, entitled to his own views, but, while we are prepared for disagreement in this connection we have at least been led to expect that such disagreement should be expressed in the language of decency. General Smuts should know that he is treading on delicate ground and is trespassing beyond ordinary recognised limits, when he not only attacks the Mahomedan religion, but does so in an insulting fashion.

It is, of course, unnecessary for me to state that Mahomedan divorces are of the rarest occurrence, incomparably rarer than divorces in the community, amongst whom the Mahomedans of South Africa live. It is, of course, unnecessary for me to point out to you that the General's imputendo has no substance in fact, that Mahomedan divorce, when it does occur, is a matter of considerable ceremony, and that no husband can get rid of his wife by "simply telling the woman to voetsak." You will, I am sure, endorse my hope that the General has been misreported and that this Society, speaking, as it is doing, for the Mahomedans of South Africa, will receive an early assurance from the General either to that effect or withdrawing the offensive remark, and I am equally sure that you will desire a strong representation to be made embodying our protest.

Mr. H. O. Ally (a former President of the Society) then addressed the meeting. He said that if, as reported in the paper, General Smuts considered that the telling the wife to "voetsak" constituted Mahomedan divorce, he was vastly mistaken. Mr. Ally then proceeded to describe the formalities of a Mahomedan divorce. He said that he had been in the country since 1876 and was well-acquainted with the different Moslem communities of the sub-continent. News of a divorce spread like wild-fire in the Mahomedan community; yet he did not recall, during the whole of his long sojourn in South Africa, having heard of more than from three to four dozen divorces among the whole Moslem population of South Africa. The Koran enjoined that the wife should be protected and cherished and not treated in the manner suggested in the report. He would remind General Smuts that Mahomedan marriages were recognised in other British Colonies, and he would also remind him as he (General Smuts) seemed to consider that the Mahomedan Law was flimsy, that Mahomed had been recognised throughout the world as one of its great law-givers.

Imam Syedsahab next spoke. The following resolution was then proposed by Mr. Ebrahim Coovadia, Hon. Treasurer of the Society, seconded by Mr. H. O. Ally, supported by Mr. M. P. Fancy (Hon. Secretary of the Society), and carried unanimously:—

"This meeting of the Hamidia Islamic Society has read with pain and surprise the report of the reference

by General Smuts to Mahomedan marriages and divorce, and desires the Chairman to record its protest against General Smuts' misrepresentation of the facts and against the offensive terms in which his remarks would appear to have been couched."

Mr. Rassool Sharfudin then proposed the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. H. Maal, and carried:—

"This meeting of the Hamidia Islamic Society further resolves to forward a copy of the foregoing resolution to the Indian Government, the Imperial Government and the All-India Moslem League in India and England, and earnestly requests that representations be made to preserve the status of Mahomedan marriages and to protect Mahomedan subjects of the Crown from insults and attacks of this nature."

Messrs. A. M. Cachalia (Chairman of the British Indian Association), H. Kallenbach, Ritch and P. K. Desai also spoke; whereafter the meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Mr. Smuts's Denial

The following appears in the daily papers:—

In view of certain allegations attributed to Mr. Smuts in an interview, reported recently in a Pretoria journal on the subject of the Asiatic question, the Minister of Finance, through his private secretary, states as follows: "In the interview Mr. Smuts was reported to have spoken in contemptuous and opprobrious terms on the subject of Indian marriage and divorce. He desires most emphatically to deny and repudiate both the expressions and the sense of the words attributed to them by a correspondent of the paper referred to."

Strike Jottings

Twenty-two Railway Indians at Dannhauser struck work on the 20th instant and were sentenced at Newcastle the next day. Fourteen indentured men were sent to gaol for seven days and eight free Indians for three months.

The following are the names of the thirteen strikers from the Fairleigh Colliery who were sentenced to two months' hard labour: Messrs. Moonsamy, Chinnappen, Vulo-Govinder, Pauliah, Kassa Naidoo, Rajoo, Bhagavathee, Suboodoo, Thavasee, Mariemuthu, Moonsamy, Reddy and Applesamy.

The names of the five from the Commercial Hotel, Newcastle, also serving two months' hard labour, are Messrs. C. V. Aboo, I. T. John, Saunpaul, Rushpaul and Nagappen.

Three from the Cottage Hospital, with the same sentence, are Messrs. R. D. Moonsamy, Jimmie Benjamin and R. K. Packiree.

At a big meeting of strikers at Newcastle Mr. Polak asked whether they were aware, before they left India, that a tax of £3 would be imposed on themselves, their wives and their children, if they failed to re-indenture or leave the country. The answer was that they had no knowledge of it and that nothing was explained to them.

A meeting of 1,500 strikers was held at Dannhauser on the 22nd instant, writes our special correspondent. All were firm and in earnest and were ready to walk to the border as soon as the word to march was given.

News has come to hand that 300 miners at the St. George's Colliery, 850 at the Natal Navigation, 500 at Glencoe, 100 at Hatting Spruit and 300 at the New Shaft were out on strike on the 23rd instant. Railway men, both at Glencoe and Hatting Spruit, are also out.

Sixteen of the Newcastle Colliery strikers were on the 23rd instant sentenced to two months' hard labour and four discharged.

At a meeting of the Newcastle Passive Resistance Committee, on the 21st instant, the following resolution was passed and forwarded to the Minister of Justice:

"This meeting of the Newcastle Passive Resistance Committee indignantly protests against the insulting

language used by the Assistant Magistrate to-day towards the Indian ladies sentenced by him, when he expressed the hope that the Indian labourers who have suspended work on account of the non-repeal of the £3 tax, would later on retaliate upon these ladies; and the Committee authorises the Chairman to represent the matter to the Minister of Justice."

An ex-indentured Indian (Syed Ebrahim), working on one of the mines, having struck work, went to the mine compound to fetch water. He was immediately dragged by the compound manager to his office and severely assaulted. The marks made by the stick on his back were visible as though they had been brand-marks. The stick having been broken in the use, the poor man was kicked about. He was also fisted in the mouth, so much so that he bled profusely. Syed Ebrahim is a man of powerful build and more than a match for the compound manager, but, as a true passive resister, he bore the pain heroically. He is now being looked after by the community at Newcastle. More of this affair will be heard in due course.

The eleventh lady of the Newcastle party—who does not appear on our photograph—is Miss Minnatji.

Pars. about the Struggle

The party of ten passive resisters who failed to get arrested again in Johannesburg as hawkers have gone off on other duty. Mr. Medh is at Newcastle assisting. Mr. Desai went on picket duty at Volksrust. Mr. Manilal Gandhi and four others proceeded to the Natal border, got off the train at the next station to Volksrust and walked to Charlestown, where they changed their dress and put on dhotis and pagrees and, in that way, challenged arrest at Volksrust on the 23rd instant. The disguise was successful and they were arrested. They were sentenced to three months.

The four men from Durban and two from Newcastle, who accompanied Mr. Gandhi, were deported on the 25th instant, re-entered and were sentenced to three months' hard labour.

Of the batch of thirteen Newcastle men who went to Volksrust, three went elsewhere and ten were sentenced to three months in gaol.

Mr. Rawat, proprietor of a Bioscope in Durban, has offered to give the proceeds from a performance to be given on the 3rd November to the passive resistance funds. Tickets of admission, 3s., 2s., and 1s., can be obtained from Messrs. Jalbhoy and Sorabjee Bros.

On Saturday last, 107 bags of rice and dholl, collected in Durban, were sent off by rail to Newcastle. Twenty-five bags were on hand and collections were going on.

We omitted to mention last week that Mr. Lazarus Gabriel, a prominent Colonial-born Indian, was appointed Joint-Secretary, with Mr. O. H. A. Jhaveri, of the new Committee formed in Durban.

At a meeting of the Castle Division of the Unionist Association on the 21st instant, says Reuter, among the resolutions adopted for consideration by the Unionist Congress at Capetown next month was the following: "That, in the interests of the Empire and South Africa, the Government should invite a representative of the Indian Government to visit South Africa, with a view to mutually discussing and finding a solution of the Indian problem honourable alike to the Indian community and the Union."

Interviewed by the *Evening Chronicle* (Johannesburg) on Mr. Fischer's recent statement, Mr. Gandhi said that during the last session of Parliament, all the time the

Hon. A. Fischer said he would grant nothing, so long as there was talk of passive resistance; he continued to grant. He even withdrew his own threat of removing the slight amendment in the marriage clause, if Indians did not withdraw their demand for a better amendment. In spite of that threat, in the Senate, Mr. Fischer accepted the very amendment that was suggested by the Indians, so that he could not help saying that Mr. Fischer was not to be taken seriously.

At a meeting of the Hindustani Association, Durban held on the 17th instant, the following resolution was unanimously passed: "That the Hindustani Association, representing the Hindi-speaking people of the Indian community, supports the demands contained in Mr. Cachalia's letter, upon which passive resistance is based, and declares its confidence in Mr. Gandhi's leadership."

Mr. Polak related to a meeting at Newcastle how a Mahomedan lady told her husband to send her to Volksrust so that she might be arrested, and that, if he hadn't the money to pay the train fare, to sell her jewels for the purpose. This lady is now undergoing three months' imprisonment.

A Christian Indian in service in Durban sends a sovereign and promises to contribute ten shillings per month as long as the struggle lasts.

Lord Ampthill's letter to the *Morning Post*, a brief summary of which was cabled here at the time of its publication, has now come to hand. After giving a full review of the situation, his lordship concludes:—

It is a record on our part of bad faith and of cowardice. The only excuse that is put forward is that "we cannot interfere with the affairs of a self-governing Colony"! Can we interfere, then, with the affairs of a foreign nation? Would we allow a foreign nation to treat our subjects oppressively? Did we not in the very scene of this present wrong-doing make it a vital issue that our subjects must be given fair treatment? It is sheer nonsense to say that "we cannot interfere" to the extent of offering the firmest (and the friendliest) advice to a community in whose affairs we have just been interfering very markedly with British troops. The duty upon us is more imperative because we neglected to settle this matter, in spite of our solemn pledges, before the Transvaal became a "self-governing Colony." It is due to our national honour as well as to our Imperial pride now to find some way of remedying injustice and oppression, even in a self-governing Colony.

Lord Emmott (Under Secretary for the Colonies), whilst in Johannesburg, consented to see Mr. Hosken who, as Chairman of the European Committee, gave the present position as regards the passive resistance movement.

At a meeting of the newly-formed Natal Indian Association on Monday evening, Mr. Haji Dawad Mahomed being in the chair, a resolution was passed and a cable-gram sent to the Hon. Mr. Gokhale to the effect that the Association supports the demands contained in Mr. Cachalia's letter, associates itself with the passive resistance movement and offers warm congratulations to the strikers. A further resolution urged the Government to end an intolerable injustice by repealing the £3 tax.

There are at present about 180 resisters in the Natal gaols which are reported to be overcrowded.

It is now certain (says *India*) that an active campaign on the South African question will be opened in India, and the question brought before the Imperial Legislative Council by Mr. Gokhale.