

# Indian Opinion

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## THE LATEST BLUE-BOOK

LONDON, December 3rd, (Reuter.)—A Blue book dealing with the Indian question in South Africa from the 3rd of July to the 29th of November has been issued. It does not include the correspondence with the Indian Government, but gives the despatches of Mr. Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to South Africa, which contain frequent references to representations by the Indian Government showing the latter's solicitude for the Indians and its anxiety regarding the situation as it developed.

The Government of India on the 3rd of July drew the attention of the Marquess of Crewe, Secretary of State for India, to the probable effect of the amendment of the clause in the Immigration Bill with reference to the admission of the wives of Indians by the insertion of the word "monogamous" before the word "marriage," and asked whether it was to be regarded as overriding the undertaking given by Mr. Fischer that, notwithstanding the judgment in the Essop case, the Government would admit one wife per man, even though married by the custom recognising polygamous marriages.

Mr. Harcourt retransmitted this message to Viscount Gladstone on the 14th of August, adding that, while he relied on Mr. Fischer's assurance, he would be glad to receive a further assurance, that the amendment did not affect it.

### Union Government's Reservation

Lord Gladstone, on the 22nd of September, telegraphed that the Union Government was fully prepared to carry out Mr. Fischer's promise, but that this assurance was subject to the reservation that, if the threats to start a passive resistance movement again were carried out, the Government would reconsider its policy of making any concessions whatever outside the provisions of existing laws.

Mr. Harcourt, on the 19th of October, telegraphed that he earnestly hoped the ill-advised action of a small number of Indians would not induce the Union Government to abandon its liberal policy with reference to the entrance of Indians' wives.

The Colonial Office, replying to the South African British Indian Committee on the 22nd of November, said the exclusion of the woman Kulumbibi was not a breach of Mr. Fischer's undertaking. She was excluded on the ground that her husband was previously married to another woman in Natal.

In another despatch Mr. Harcourt assured the Indians that they could rely on the Minister's pledge to the letter.

The subsequent despatches mainly consisted of reports on the progress of the passive resistance movement, and of protest meetings by Indians and a long correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Gorges, Secretary for the Interior, in a final effort to secure a satisfactory settlement.

### Feeling in India

On the 18th of November, Lord Crewe sent Mr. Harcourt copies of unofficial telegrams received by the India Office from India, which were not printed. He added that he viewed with the gravest concern the impression produced in India by the allegations that Indians in Natal had been treated with great severity and asked for an authoritative statement.

Lord Gladstone replied detailing the arrests, sentences, etc.

Replying to an inquiry by Mr. Harcourt with reference to some of the heavier sentences, Lord Gladstone, on the 26th of November, said it appeared the Magistrate at Newcastle sentenced a hundred and twenty-seven unindentured Indians to £5 fine or six months' imprisonment for offences for which the maximum penalty was three months' hard labour. Lord Gladstone added that steps were being taken to remit the excess of the sentences.

### Mr. Harcourt and the Moslem League

The London Moslem League wrote to Mr. Harcourt on the 24th of November drawing his attention to the gravity of the situation and appealing to him to urge on the Union Government the necessity for immediate remedial measures and to direct independent investigations into the grievances.

Mr. Harcourt replied on the 28th of November that the League did not appear to be fully and accurately informed as to the situation and as to the open defiance of the law by Indians in South Africa, which seriously embarrassed him in the continuance of his representations to and consultation with the Government of the Union.

### Immigration Appeal Boards

At the sitting of the Unionist Conference on the 29th ultimo, Mr. Alexander, M.L.A., (of Capetown) moved: "That the policy of the Government in appointing immigration officers of the Board of Appeal established under Act 22 of 1913, is to be strongly condemned." Mr. Alexander said that to appoint the principal immigration officers to be members of the Appeal Boards would be a vicious principle. The answer given was that the immigration officer who restricted the individual was not the same as the one who sat as judge, but it was not the decision of an officer that came into question. It was the decision of the Department. Was it at all feasible that a Department that gave a decision was going to have its decision upset by any member of that department? It was a travesty of justice. When the Appeal Boards were approved by Parliament they were to be Appeal Boards in fact as well as in name. But

what happened? One man decided a case, and the Appeal Board should be absolutely impartial, and the Principal Immigration Officer should not sit in judgment on his own department, but should act as counsel for his department. It was an unheard of thing in any part of the world that a man should be public prosecutor and judge at the same time. He was not objecting personally to the Principal Immigration Officers at Pretoria, Durban, or Capetown. It was to the principle that he objected.

Mr. E. Nathan, M.L.A., seconded and said they had been thoroughly humbugged by the Government in the matter. The Unionist members would bring it forward in the next session.

The President said he was surprised to find that such a state of things was in existence.

The motion was agreed to.

## Deputation to Lord Crewe

London, December 1st, (Reuter.)—A deputation from the All India and South Africa League was received to-day by Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for India.

Sir M. M. Bhowndree, in introducing the deputation, said that Lord Hardinge's speech had pacified to some extent the intense indignation of the people of India.

The deputation contended that it was the Imperial Government's duty to mediate at this critical time. They asked for the release of the passive resisters and strikers, the removal of the racial bar, the abolition of the £3 poll-tax, the institution of a thorough inquiry into the responsibility resting on both parties, and the adoption of such measures by the Crown as will secure to British Indians throughout the Empire the rights of citizenship guaranteed them by the solemn pledges of the Crown.

Lord Crewe replied that he need not assure them that events in South Africa were the subject of the Imperial Government's deep concern. India had been deeply stirred by reports reaching there. Though every statement need not be adopted as proved facts, yet it was evident that ground existed for serious disquiet, and also that there was material for a close inquiry into the occurrences and the cause that had led to them.

Lord Crewe emphasised that, as he had been both Secretary of State for the Colonies and for India, he had been deeply immersed in this question. He had discussed it with General Botha, Mr. Smuts, and the late Mr. Fischer, and also with Messrs. Gandhi, Polak, and Gokhale. He had warmly encouraged Mr. Gokhale's visit to South Africa, hoping that it would lead to a settlement, and he recognised in Mr. Gandhi a man of high ideals. At the same time, the Ministers of the Union of South Africa were honestly anxious to deal out fair treatment to the Indians, and see that the laws were humanely administered. He was bound, however, to add that the leaders there had been often hampered by the existence in South Africa of public opinion less enlightened than their own, and a degree of racial prejudice from which they themselves were largely free.

Proceeding, Lord Crewe said that the Government of the Union of South Africa contended that, though the laws were restrictive, owing to the demand of South African opinion, yet they had been so easily operated that no practical grievance existed. Though he was certain that the Ministers desired that the administration of the laws should not be unduly burdensome to individuals, he asked: Could it be said that this wish was always carried out? The laws were administered by a number of different officials, and surely it was dangerous to depend, as seemed to be done, on a rational, sympathetic administration of the law to protect individuals from the operation of severe enactments under such circumstances as existed in South African communities.

Some minor officials might be stupid and red-taped,

and others might be so racially prejudiced that they did not wish to administer the laws leniently.

Lord Crewe then referred to the question of polygamy, and said that it was not claimed that South Africa ought to legalise such marriages, but polygamous communities demanded reasonable consideration. The Indians recognised that they could not enjoy unrestricted inter-Provincial movement. He declared that it was regrettable that there was obscurity and great difference of opinion on the questions of the £3 tax and domicile when these were last before the Union Government. The £3 tax did not bring in a large revenue, and it did not seem to serve any useful purpose. Many South Africans opposed it, yet it was the main source of trouble.

The greatest indignation in India had been due to stories of flogging. These statements demanded an inquiry, and he was glad to see Mr. Smuts had gone to Natal to make an inquiry in person. He need not say that the Imperial Government would accept, and everyone ought to accept, statements made by a responsible Minister like Mr. Smuts. It was altogether wrong, and purposeless for anyone to adopt a tone of menace to South Africa. He believed that if South Africa agreed that the solidarity of the Empire was to be sustained by a form of inquiry which was not solely official, no sentiment of national or personal amour propre ought to stand in the way of such investigation. Such investigation ought to be directed not only to the circumstances of the last few days, but into the substances of the complaints causing restlessness of Indians in South Africa.

Lord Crewe concluded by saying that, not only the India Office, but the whole Government were unremitting in their attention to the subject. The Colonial Office were also anxious to see complete justice done to the Indian subjects of the King in South Africa.

Lord Crewe, replying to questions, said that, in stating his conviction that some inquiry not merely official was desirable, he was expressing his own view, but he had no reason to suppose that that view was opposed to that of his colleagues.

## The £3 Licence

London, December 2nd, (Reuter.)—Lord Crewe, in the course of his reply to the deputation of the All-India and South Africa League, which waited upon him yesterday, said that there was regrettable obscurity regarding what really occurred when the matter of the £3 tax was last before the Union Parliament. The question was asked as to whether the Government was willing to drop the tax, but it was maintained in consequence of the views of the Natal members. Was the abolition of the tax actually foretold, or were promises made to that effect? Again, the difference of opinion seemed to be great. It would be a great misfortune if the circumstances were such that Indians considered that they were played with in such an important matter. At the conclusion of Lord Crewe's speech, Sir M. M. Bhowndree, the leader of the deputation, demurred to South Africa restricting Indian immigration to that Dominion. Indians claimed the right of entry to every part of the British Empire.

Lord Crewe replied that he did not quarrel with the Indians' claim to enter every part of the British Empire, but pointed out that local communities held strong views against Indians' free access to the areas in which they lived. He thought that the South African Government was not likely to agree to the participation of South African Indians in the proposed inquiry.

The Bengali Press (says Reuter) ignores Lord Crewe's speech, and is devoting itself solely to collecting funds for the South African Indians. Meetings for this purpose are being held even in the most remote districts, and all classes, moderate and extreme alike, are subscribing.

### From the Editor's Chair

#### THE VICEROY'S SPEECH

When a man in the position of Lord Hardinge boldly takes up a stand in sympathy with the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa and ventures to suggest that the categorical denial of the Union Ministers is not sufficient to satisfy India and the world at large that the allegations of ill-treatment are false and unfounded, we need not be surprised at the storm raised by newspaper and other critics. But all this pother does not disprove the statements made and in the meantime the Government do nothing to satisfy either those who claim that ill-treatment has taken place or those who so emphatically deny the charges. Either the allegations are wicked falsehoods and, in that case, those who are responsible should be punished for making them, or they are true and, in that case, the Union Government are only making matters worse for themselves by remaining inactive. We do not see any great crime in the Viceroy's request for a strong, impartial committee. Surely every one must know that the denials come from country magistrates who have shown that they are prejudiced and have actually threatened passive registers in open court. Lord Gladstone has to rely upon the reports of these gentlemen, and does not, on his own account or on behalf of the Imperial Government, make his own investigations. It is for the Government to prove in a straightforward and open manner that the allegations are false, and that the Viceroy was not justified in doubting the words of those in authority here. The Indian community of South Africa cannot be too grateful to Lord Hardinge for the brave stand he has ventured to take up, knowing full well that his attitude would be resented and that he would be subjected to adverse criticism.

#### THE LATEST BLUE-BOOK

FROM the cabled summary of the despatches on the Indian question, we learn that on July 3rd last the Indian Government drew Lord Crewe's attention to the probable effect of the amendment of the clause of the Immigrants' Regulation Bill with reference to the admission of Indians' wives by the insertion of the word "monogamous" before marriage, and asked whether that was to be regarded as overriding the undertaking given by Mr. Fischer that, notwithstanding the judgment in the Essop case, the Government would admit one wife per man even though he were married according to rites which recognised polygamy. Mr. Harcourt sent this along to Lord Gladstone asking for an assurance that the amendment did not affect it. Lord Gladstone replied that the Union Government was fully prepared to carry out Mr. Fischer's promise, but this assurance was subject to the reservation, that, if the threats to again start a passive resistance campaign were carried out, the Government would reconsider its policy of making any concessions whatever, outside the existing laws. Put in a nutshell, it means this: The Indian community finds itself deprived of a right. After respectfully and repeatedly appealing to the Government without avail, it reminds the Government that the passive resistance movement is only suspended pending the carrying out of the provisional settlement of 1911, and that, if the Government do not restore the right, it will be compelled to resort to passive resistance, that method being the only one at the disposal of unrepresented people. This is taken as a threat, and anything that has the appearance of a threat, is to the Government like a red rag to a bull. The Government then says in effect: We have stolen your right, and, if you use strong language, we shall not only permanently deprive you of that right, but we shall also refuse to allow you, even as an act of grace, to bring your wife

into this country." Such a threat as this, we contend, is unworthy of responsible ministers and, so long as this spirit prevails, all hopes of a settlement are vain. The statement regarding the Kulsunbibi case is false. These are the words of the Judge-President obtained in the report of the judgment: "From the facts stated it appeared that at the time of the marriage being contracted the male contracting party had no wife living, and since the ceremony he had gone through no form of marriage with any other woman." We have nothing further to say regarding this matter except that, if the official despatches which are being forwarded to London are not more reliable than this one obtaining the statement that Kulsunbibi was not the only wife of her husband, no one need wonder if doubts are cast upon their reliability in other matters.

#### ANOTHER FALLACY

We have often seen it stated that the Government of India is to blame for the present crisis in South Africa. The argument is a strange one. Mr. Fawcett, M.P., has embodied this idea in a letter to the press in London and says that "the Government of India is responsible for the non-repatriation of the South African Indians and, consequently, for the present trouble." What this is meant to convey is that the Indian Government upset some existing arrangement under which Indians had been compelled to return to India on completion of their indentures. This is a false insinuation. The facts regarding the £3 tax legislation are that the Natal Government, failing to persuade the Government of India by means of a special deputation to allow indentures to terminate in India, managed to throw sufficient dust into the eyes of the Government of India to blind them to the fact that, by consenting to this licence, what little remnant of freedom remained to the Indian labourers was being destroyed. Because the Natal Government failed in its purpose of forcing back to India these labourers, who had spent their very life's blood for the benefit of the Colony, the blame is laid at the door of India. Undoubtedly, India was to blame, not for refusing to agree to indentured labourers being forcibly driven back to India, but for calmly accepting this iniquitous tax on liberty. Mr Fawcett's contention that South Africa is the victim of India's determination to twist Indian labourers on the Colony is the biggest piece of hypocrisy we have ever met with.

#### Strike Jottings

Capt. Clark Kennedy, staff officer to General Lukin, reported on the 9th ultimo that at Tongaat on the previous night a number of Indians from the neighbouring district tried to get into Tongaat, and, when requested by the police to go back refused to do so. The necessary force to compel them to return had to be tried, and there was a slight disturbance. The facts regarding the above incident, which we have been able to gather are that a party of thirty men, eight women and seven children were coming along the road carrying their bundles of clothing, slung on sticks over their shoulders when they were met by the police who demanded that they should put down their sticks. They objected as they needed them for a very necessary purpose. The police, it is alleged, proceeded to take away the sticks and used such force that a large number of the people sustained serious injuries, in the shape of broken heads, etc. Three men were so badly injured that they had to be detained in the Verulam hospital. The people were brought before the Magistrate who granted them permission to go to the Protector. Mr. West was at Verulam at the time and he arranged for them to be sent by train to Durban. The Protector has taken down their statements and recorded the injuries. Mr. Michel has also been allowed to take the affidavits of four or five of the men who were seriously wounded.

It seems that Mr. Naik of Maritzburg, whose arrest we recorded last week was so arrested whilst speaking at a meeting in the Temple grounds.

Mr. Ritch, speaking at the mass meeting at Johannesburg, on the 30th ultimo, said he knew it was true that men had been flogged. He had seen the men's bodies; he had seen brutal marks on those bodies, and he had heard the admission of people on the mine that they had flogged those people. He saw the body of a man on a certain mine—he did not say he had been flogged to death—but he had been beaten, and before the beating he had been ill. The wife of that man was prevented from seeing the body of her husband.

The Natal Indian Association on the 1st instant, addressed the following letter to General Lukin:—

"Will you kindly permit two of our representatives to visit the estates to which the men who have lost their lives belonged in order that we may ascertain the circumstances of the dependents of the deceased with a view to a consideration of their position?"

"Will you also please permit us to go with the Police when arrests of strikers are to be effected so that we may assist in the arrest taking place without there being a conflict between the Police and the strikers?"

The following is a copy of a letter from Capt. Clarke Kennedy to the Indian Association:—

"With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, I am directed by General Lukin to inform you that he has received through the Chief Magistrate of Durban reliable information that, on the last occasion permission was granted to members of your Association to visit the sugar estates on the Coast, the privilege was utilised to induce Indians to remain on strike. In view of the foregoing, General Lukin is not prepared at the present juncture to grant the requests contained in your letter under reply.

Representatives of the Natal Indian Association had a long interview with General Lukin yesterday morning in regard to the question of supplying rations to starving strikers. Mr. West and Mr. C. K. T. Naidoo represented the Association and Capt. Clarke-Kennedy was present at the interview. General Lukin first of all emphatically refused to allow any member of the Association to go on to the estates without the permission of the employers. He would not even allow a representative to be present on condition that he spoke in English and confined his remarks to the details of numbers and quantities. General Lukin said that he had information that when the Association members had distributed rations on the estates, they had abused the privilege and urged the people to remain on strike. This was denied. It was pointed out that everything would be done in the presence of the police and that one of the police interpreters could say what was necessary to the Indians, so that there could be no possible chance of preaching to the people or influencing them in any way. Still General Lukin remained obdurate. The question was then raised as to the necessity for appointing someone amongst the strikers who would inform the police of the numbers needing food. It was eventually conceded to General Lukin that the police should be instructed to inform the Natal Indian Association of those estates where the employers were refusing food to strikers and state the approximate numbers. The Association could then forward rations to the estates and the police would take charge of the food and ask the strikers to appoint one of their number to represent them and to see that all received the rations. But this man would not be allowed to come into contact with the Association or leave the property. In the case of those who might refuse to accept the rations supplied by their employers the police would not inform the Association and if rations were sent independently the police would not assist in the distribution.

This means, of course, that the Association is at the mercy of the police and there is absolutely no guarantee that starving strikers will be fed.

## Official Story of the Blackburn Affair

Capt. Clarke Kennedy, General Lukin's staff officer, reports that, at the request of the manager of the Natal Estates, a detachment of S.A.M.R., composed of one officer and 12 riflemen, together with a few native constables, under the command of Lieut. Clarke, left the mill at Mount Edgecombe at 8.30, accompanied by Mr. C. Campbell. They proceeded to Blackburn barracks to arrest Indians who refused to work. After a short interview, the Indians agreed to turn out. The patrol then went on to Hill Head for the same purpose. Mr. Campbell went into the barracks, Lieut. Clarke remaining with the patrol 200 yards away. Mr. Campbell returned, and stated that the coolies were defiant, and, with the exception of a few, would not listen to him. The coolies who listened to Mr. Campbell were directed by Clarke to stand on one side, and they did so. Clarke then took his detachment to where the malcontents were standing, and at Mr. Campbell's request asked the first man whether he would work. The man said no, and was told to move to a place which had been set apart for those who refused to work; but he refused. The order was then given by Clarke to the native constables to remove the man by force.

The remainder of the coolies, numbering 100, then surrounded the party and advanced threateningly with sticks and stones. Clarke ordered the men to move forward; the coolies twice closed with them, and there was a hand-to-hand fight. Clarke had previously told his men that they were not to fire except as a last resource. The coolies were very determined, and, having injured some of the Riflemen, revolvers were drawn and used. Eventually the mob dispersed, and those identified as having begun activities were arrested. Eleven were taken prisoners and sent on towards Mount Edgecombe under escort. *En route*, a determined attack was made on the escort by 250 Indians, who had come from Blackbourn barracks with the apparent intention of assisting the Hill Head coolies. They were armed with cane knives, sticks and stones, and a sharp fight ensued. The Indians were eventually driven back to barracks. The casualties, so far as is known up to the present, are:—Europeans severely wounded, Cpls. Bridges and Sparkes, Gnr. Unwin; Indians, (as far as at present reported; four killed and 29 wounded, some of them dangerously. It is possible that there were further fatalities among the Indians not yet reported. Two N.C.O.'s were conveyed to Addington Hospital by motor-car. There were minor casualties among the Riflemen. One Indian woman who was among the rioters was shot in the ankle, and one horse was killed and another wounded.

Mr. L. R. Gopaul, the Chairman of the Pinetown Indian Association, has telegraphed to the Minister of the Interior, protesting against the action of the police at Pinetown.

It is stated that about 40 strikers assembled near the Imperial Hotel, Pinetown. The attention of the police was drawn to their presence by the station-master, and the police ordered the Indians to put down their sticks. Those who understood the order, which was given in English, did so.

The police are said to have been exasperated by the non-compliance with the order on the part of some of the men, and to have assaulted a number of them with sticks and sjamboks.

Reuter states that at Mount Edgecombe on the 27th ultimo at least six Indians were killed and a number wounded.

On the 27th ultimo, 18 of the Strikers remaining at Charlestown were sentenced to 7 days' imprisonment with hard labour or a fine of 10s. for being without their passes. They all elected to go to gaol.

Mr. W. H. Griffin, M.L.A., of Maritzburg has suggested to the manager of one of the sugar estates that the services of young coloured people from the Cape should be utilized as strike-breakers. The *Times of Natal* thinks it is an admirable idea. There is one

important consideration that has been left out and that is that the coloured people are themselves smarting under disabilities and are not likely to come to the aid of the Natal employers.

Captain Clarke Kennedy, Staff Officer to General Lukin, reported on the 5th instant that the position in regard to the strike in the district is unchanged. General Lukin and Captain Clarke-Kennedy toured the South Coast from Durban to Umzinto, and found everything quiet. The report from the North Coast, too, is that everything is quiet. A considerable number of Indians on the North Coast are not yet working. Asked to make a statement regarding the assertion that rations issued by the Indian Association to coolies on strike had been stopped by authority, Captain Clarke-Kennedy said: "On estates where rations have not been issued by employers the Natal Indian Association have been allowed to forward food to strikers, but members of that Association have not been allowed to go on to estates except with the permission of the proprietor or manager."

### The Esperanza Affray

The preliminary examination of 14 Indians charged with public violence at the Beneva Estate, Esperanza, was commenced on Wednesday, says the *Advertiser* of Saturday, before Mr. C. McKenzie, Assistant Magistrate, Umzinto. It will be remembered, continues the paper, that on November 25th the violence of the Indians at the estate was so great that the police, in self-defence, had to fire upon the rioters, with the result that two were killed, and a number of others wounded. Fourteen Indians were subsequently arrested and charged with public violence, and the preliminary examination is now being held. It may be mentioned that Mr. C. P. Robinson, M.L.A., had been instructed by the Government to hold an independent inquiry into the causes that led up to the shooting, and the depositions in that inquiry are practically the same as those now published.

Sergt.-Major Rorke, Sergt. Davidson, Mr. E. W. Hawksworth, the employer, Mr. James Johnston Little, compounder at the Beneva Estate, and others gave evidence to show that the Indians were violent, but it would appear that not a single Indian witness was allowed to give evidence. The papers, we understand, have been sent to the Attorney-General for inquiry. In regard to the statement concerning Mr. Robinson's appointment, we are able to state that this gentleman has no knowledge of the matter and he has certainly not been instructed to hold an inquiry.

The Durban Town Council has made the following recommendations to the Government:—(a) That Government, whenever it may be considered necessary, be asked to proclaim all Corporation Indian compounds or barracks within the borough as prisons for the time being; (b) that the Chief Constable be empowered to arrest any strikers who refuse to resume duty; (c) that the Corporation agree to ration such Indians strictly in accordance with the Government Prison Code; (d) that the Chief Constable be authorised to enrol such additional special constables as may be necessary to secure the maintenance of law and order in the borough; (e) that the question of providing men to replace strikers in certain of the departments be left with the Deputy-Mayor and Borough Engineer to arrange.

The Rev. Councillor Hadson, at a council meeting, objected to the recommendations, saying that they embodied a policy of unrighteousness. It was wrong to tell people who were on strike: "You can go on strike, but we will arrest you and compel you to work." This seemed to him to be a temporary condition of slavery. Then again, in view of the discussion going on in regard to this subject, it was unfortunate that the Council should take up such an attitude.

### Democrats and the Strike

The Social-Democratic Party in Durban has passed the following resolution: "This meeting of the Durban S.D.P. express their entire sympathy with the Indian

workers in their present struggle for the repeal of the obnoxious and useless £3 Tax, and endorse their action of withholding their labour as the only means left them to that end. Further we strongly protest against the arbitrary and cowardly methods adopted by the Government in compelling Indian prisoners to work out their sentences on their employers' property."

Mr. L. H. Greene, a prominent Socialist of Maritzburg, addressing the Indian Mass Meeting there on the 30th ultimo, declared that the contract under which Indians were brought out to this country was null and void. A contract made with starving men was null and void. Unless the contract was understood by both parties, it was null and void. He declared that the indentured Indians who came to this country did not understand the terms of the contract they entered into. He attacked the Police Magistrate, Mr. Hime, and said that certain proceedings in the Police Court, when the Resisters were brought up, resembled a Punch and Judy show. He said Mr. Hime told these Resisters that they understood exactly the terms of the contract before they left India, and they knew the laws of the country they were coming to. Not one white man in a hundred knew the laws of this country before coming to it, let alone indentured Indians.

Miss Colenso, who passed through Germiston accompanying Solomon, the newly-appointed chief of the Zulus, who is proceeding to Middelburg, was seen by a *Leader* representative.

She expressed the opinion that the Indian strikers had managed the affairs in Maritzburg in a most clever fashion, and thought they acted most justly in not interfering with the sanitary service, the hospital, and the lunatic asylum. That showed that at the head of affairs there was someone with tact and judgment. She thought the £3 tax was cruel and unjust.

She always thought, and had some reason to believe, that this tax temporarily caused immorality among the Indian women; for they must get the £3. She had known cases of that kind—not many, certainly, and perhaps not enough for her to express a decided opinion.

In an editorial on the £3 tax, the *Cape Argus* says: "All this trouble about the £3 tax might have been avoided if it had not been for the fact that Natal sugar planters felt that they could not dispense with the Indians, and induced the Government to bring pressure to bear upon the Indians to compel them to re-indenture. All possibility of fresh supplies having been cut off by the Indian Government, the Natal sugar planters determined, by hook or by crook, to hang on to what they had got, and, being good sound Nationalists and in all probability liberal contributors to the party warchest, their back-stairs representations, after Mr. Gokhale had left the country, succeeded in converting Mr. Smuts to the view that the £3 tax should be allowed to stand."

### Hunger Strike in Durban Gaol

On the 3rd instant, the Natal Indian Association was informed that 50 or 60 passive resistance prisoners transferred from Maritzburg gaol to Durban gaol had been on a "hunger strike" since Sunday. The grievances of the passive resisters, many being strict vegetarians, are that the sandals and socks, which they were previously allowed to wear, have been taken away from them; that they are provided with only one old blanket and dirty clothes, that the ghee given them as part of their food is uneatable, and that their food is cooked by natives, whereas they wish it to be cooked by Indians.

Telegrams regarding the matter were sent on Tuesday and Wednesday to the Minister of Justice by the Natal Indian Association, the Surat Hindu Association, and the Zoroastrian Anjuman.

A reply came on Thursday that those who fasted did so of their own accord and that the Chief Magistrate would inquire into the matter. Mr. West interviewed the Gaol Superintendent who denied that there was a hunger strike. But when Mr. West asked for an



assurance that no one was fasting and that there was no cause for alarm, this was refused. The Superintendent said that he was not there to give information and that I could refer to the Minister. Further information has been received by the Natal Indian Association that in at least one instance the authorities resorted to forcible feeding, and that the hunger strikers were compelled to give in because they feared that meat or other objectionable food might be thrust down their throats. Miss Schlesin and Mr. West were refused admission as visitors on Saturday last, on the ground that they were not relatives. As this was entirely a new departure they interviewed the Superintendent and asked to see his authority for the refusal but he insolently declined to give reasons or show the regulation under which he had the power to refuse admission, on the ground stated.

### News in Brief

The following cablegram was received from Allahabad on the 8th instant:—"India full of admiration for her heroic children there, particularly ladies. Whole country behind them."

On the 19th ultimo, Mr. David Morgan gave a benefit performance at his Bioscope Hall, at Vrededorp for the Passive Resistance Funds and realised £20.

Twenty-five men, including Messrs. Frank and Willy Morgan, crossed the Transvaal border from Charles-town on the 2nd instant, and were sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

We have reliable information that prominent planters on the North Coast employ ex-indentured Indians without entering into a contract of re-indenture. These Indians are liable to be imprisoned for non-payment of the £3 tax but the planters are not called upon to pay the penalty for employing them. These planters are deliberately breaking the law and it is known to the authorities.

Mr. D. Lazarus was brought before the Court at Newcastle on the 29th ultimo charged with harbouring indentured immigrants. We are informed that when the prosecution had closed, without hearing the defence, the Magistrate discharged Mr. Lazarus.

On the 19th ultimo Mr. Jambadas Gandhi crossed the Transvaal border from Kimberley with Messrs. Ramswami Padiachy, Pakiri Naidoo, Rabim Jhina, and N. A. Thali of that town. The party were given three days notice to leave, and were deported on the 23rd ultimo. They returned on the 25th ultimo reinforced by six further passive resisters Messrs. Narotam Poona, Morar Govind, Ebrahim Kadir, and A. Sami from Windsorton, and Jhinabhai Desai and Bhana B. Patel from Kimberley. The cases of the first party were remanded to the 1st instant, when all received a sentence of three months' hard labour. The second party was deported on the 30th ultimo, returned on the 1st instant and on the 2nd received similar sentences.

It is stated by prominent Indians that the £3 tax is being paid by free Indians now employed on the railway by instalments of 5s. per month deducted from their wages by the authorities.—*Times of Natal*.

With reference to the new tax on Asiatics proposed to be introduced by the Portuguese Government in Lourenco Marques, we understand that the Indian community is petitioning the Imperial Government as also the Lisbon Government.

The Volksrust European Vigilance Committee has despatched the following cable message to *The Times*, London:—"Europeans in South Africa are alarmed and surprised at the misinformed views expressed in the Lon-

on papers on the Indian crisis, which inflames public opinion here and strains our loyalty also. This Committee suggests that the papers should endeavour to study the question from the European point of view, and take into consideration the feelings of Europeans and also the fact that Indians are strangling European traders and wage-earners here, of which we can give specific instances. The stories of flogging and brutality are fabrications, and part of the game to intimidate the Union Government. We protest against the suggestions to send further agitators here."

Mr. L. H. Greene is to be indicted at the bar of the City Parliament for certain crimes and misdemeanours. He is charged with traitorous conduct, and conspiring with other rebels to disturb the peace of the Province by addressing a meeting of Indians at the Hindu Temple, Maritzburg, and the making of speeches of a seditious character at other places. The trial will take place at an ordinary meeting of the Parliamentary Debating Society shortly, says the *Times of Natal*.

Our friends in England, who have been receiving the last two issues of "Indian Opinion" a week late, will, we hope, kindly forgive us. On both occasions, the motor-car which we had specially engaged broke down on the way and, consequently, we missed the mail at Durban. In view of our well-known bias against machinery, these break-downs appear almost to be a judgment upon us for our attempting to avail ourselves of such modern atrocities as motor-cars.

The Indians of Salisbury have contributed £14:13 to the Passive Resistance Fund, and the Mauritian and Colonial-born Hindu Benefit Society, £20.

London, Dec. 4th, (Reuter).—A message from Bombay states that meetings have been held at Poona and elsewhere to express gratitude for the Viceroy's speech, and also to collect funds on behalf of the South African Passive Resisters.

Out of five applications for retail licences by Indians in the Durban suburbs, four were refused by the Licensing Officer and one was held over for consideration.

The *Sunday Times*, in an article headed "The Indian Madness," says:—"India is seething with indignation, say the cables. No doubt the falsehoods which are being circulated there would make any people seethe with indignation. The anti-British party in India is only too glad to seize any stick with which to belabour English rule. The native journals do not wait facts; they want blood-thirsty stories, and there is no difficulty in inventing them, but let it be clearly understood in India and in England that this is a South African trouble, and that South Africa is not inclined to abandon its right to deal with it merely because a certain number of lies have gained temporary credence. The first duty of the Union Government is to restore order in Natal. We feel that it will do this with quite as much humanity as would be displayed by the Indian Government in suppressing a similar trouble in India. The Government cannot be turned from its duty by sensationalism in a land in which the art of bringing false charges has been brought to a state of perfection. South African statesmen have no wish to hamper British rule in India, but their first responsibility is to their own people. If, when peace has been restored, the Union Government decides to appoint a judicial commission to inquire into the painful events in Natal, no one in South Africa will object. Let the facts be investigated by all means. No man here fears such investigation. We are convinced that an inquiry would only show that the authorities in Natal dealt with a difficult and dangerous situation with as much patience and leniency as they could possibly display. The blame rests not upon the police, but upon those who roused the horde of ignorant men to a state of vague irritation and discontent."