

Indian Opinion

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THE RELEASE OF THE LEADERS

JOHANNESBURG, December 19th (*Mercury Special*).—Following upon the recommendation of the Indian Commission, Messrs. Gandhi, Polak, and Kallenbach, who had been brought to Pretoria, were released yesterday unconditionally. Upon reaching Johannesburg last night they received a remarkable welcome, each being adorned with a garland of flowers.

Speaking at a meeting at the old Gaiety Theatre, Mr. Gandhi said he was not the least thankful for having been released, for he preferred solitude and the peace of prison because it gave him opportunity and time for meditation; but having been released he should now resume the work upon which he was engaged when he was convicted. For himself he was not satisfied with the Indian Commission appointed by the Government. He was uncertain whether it would be effectual, and whether it would be in the interests of the Indian population that he and others should give evidence before it. However, it had been decided that he and Messrs. Polak and Kallenbach should proceed to Durban in the morning, and when there they would decide whether they would accept the Commission as it was at present constituted. He was not at all satisfied, and rather than have a weighted or packed Commission which would militate against the welfare of the Indian Community in South Africa, he would prefer to go back to prison and allow the Indian cause to stand upon its own merits. He would not positively say at the present time that he would not give evidence, but his inclinations were that way as the Commission was loaded against them. His prison experience just over had been a change from that he had undergone on a previous occasion. He had been treated with the utmost courtesy, and he would like publicly to record the excellent manner in which the prison officials had considered his comfort.

Mr. Polak said he was of the same mind as Mr. Gandhi regarding the prison. They would prefer to be back there, but as they had been released it was now their duty to continue their life's struggle, and to see that justice was done the Indian Community in South Africa.

Mr. Kallenbach mentioned that he had not been so fortunate as Mr. Gandhi in regard to prison treatment, and had had to adopt the Suffragettes hunger strike in order to obtain the concessions he asked for, but he got them.

Mr. William Hosken was enthusiastically greeted when he declared that recent and present events were a life-and-death struggle for Indian recognition in South Africa, but he begged the Indians to retain their self-control, and to do nothing that would bring discredit on their cause. If they retained their self-

respect they would obtain the respect of the governing powers in South Africa.

Messrs. Gandhi, Polak, and Kallenbach left this morning for Natal.

At Durban, the leaders received a remarkable ovation, over 2000 being at the Station to receive them, who formed in procession and followed their carriage through West, Grey and Victoria Streets to Mr. Rustomjee's residence in Field Street, where an enthusiastic meeting was held.

On Monday last, the pioneers of the present Passive Resistance Struggle were discharged on the expiration of their sentences of 3 months vigorous imprisonment. Messrs Parsee Rustomjee, Chhaganlal Gandhi, Ravjibhai Patel, Maganbhai Patel, Rugoo Govindoo, Govindrajoo, Ramdas Gandhi, Gokaldas, Seepujan Budrea, and Coopoo Moonlight Mudaliar had enjoyed the hospitality of the Durban Gaol. They were met at the Gaol Gates by a large number of friends, who, after garlanding Mr. Rustomjee and presenting bouquets to the other heroes, escorted them to Mr. Rustomjee's residence in Field Street, the Durban headquarters of the Passive Resistance movement.

At the same time at Maritzburg were released Mrs. Gandhi, Mrs. Chhaganlal Gandhi, Mrs. Maganlal Gandhi, Ben Jayakuvar Mehta, and Mr. Solomon Royeppen who received an enthusiastic welcome. In the course of the morning the party entrained for Durban where they were met by an enthusiastic crowd, including many ladies, who garlanded them, showering them with rose petals. They were subsequently driven to 110 Field Street where a meeting was held.

Treatment in Gaol

Mr. Gandhi has circulated for publication the following abstract from a long cablegram he has sent to the Honourable Mr. Gokhale in India:—

“Sixteen pioneer passive resisters, including Rustomjee four ladies, discharged expiration sentences. Rustomjee others who are among most respectable members community state prison treatment barbarous, cruel. Rustomjee who has experience many prisons during previous long imprisonments says present treatment Durban prison unparalleled in cruelty. Magistrate indifferent rarely visits prison receive complaints; Governor almost unapproachable before hunger strike. Warders rude, ruffianly, studiously insulting. They decline take complaints. Native warders cruel unwar. rantably thrash passive resisters with impunity. Pragji Desai, whom you know, was without cause roughly assaulted making him fall, was then dragged to cell lying in agony considerable time before receiving attention, and required eleven days hospital treatment. Phoenix-School student sixteen years roughly assaulted. Rus-

which completely annuls the intention of Parliament of admitting one wife of an Indian married by non-Christian rites. The action is more to be regretted, not only because it shows, on the part of the Government, a wish to set up a new moral code when dealing with Indians, but also because it is rightly construed as a direct attack on their religious susceptibilities."

Mr. Halin, in seconding, said: "Of all the grievances from which our people suffer, none is so important nor so far reaching as the question of admittance of our wives into the Union. We were led to understand that special provision would be introduced to allow the entrance of the only wife of an Indian, and now, through the Immigration Department, the Government had re-opened this question. It was definitely the intention of Mr. Schreiner, when he introduced the words "monogamous marriages" to meet the special case of Indians, and this was accepted by the Government. A learned judge in Natal has found a flaw in the legislation, and the late Minister of the Interior, on landing from England, suddenly discovered that Parliament never intended to allow the wife of an Indian to land, apparently because those marriages are not recognised as legal in South Africa.

I must here emphasise that we do not want our marriages to be made legal here, nor do we care as long as these marriages are recognised by ourselves and our co-religionists as legal and binding. It is, therefore, plain that the Government has trifled with our most sacred feelings and with our self-respect. We are losing not only all our trust in the Government to redress these glaring and admitted wrongs, but in the honesty and justice of the white man at large. This feeling, I am certain, is bound to have dire consequences, not only in India, but in the other dependencies of Great Britain. Therefore I second this resolution."

This was supported by Mr. Malik, and carried unanimously.

Mr. V. Naidoo moved:—

"That this meeting respectfully asks the Government to adopt the proposal of Mr. Gokhale for the appointment of a Commission of impartial men to inquire into the Indian question in South Africa."

This was seconded by Mr. R. Moodliar, supported by Mr. A. Moodliar, and carried.

THE ACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Dr. Gool, who was the first speaker to use the English language, said that he was sorry to see that the attendance was not larger, because it showed that they did not take that interest in their problems which they should. They had grievances; and they should show that they had these grievances. These grievances ought to be redressed, and he hoped that they would be. All subjective races had grievances; although they had not had grievances at first in South Africa. He must pay a tribute to the fair way in which the Press of the Cape had treated them. As to their grievances, Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Gokhale said that they had pledges from the Government that it would remove the £3 poll tax. It was difficult to know what the Government had done, but they tried to put it on the Natal members now. The words "indefensible" and "unjust" could be justly applied to that poll tax, and the action of the Government showed a want of uprightness on their part. Dealing with the marriage question, he accused the Government of bad faith and of "slimness" in evading their promises, which showed that they treated them (Indians) like children, and trifled with their most sacred feelings. They treated them as if there was no Greater India.

WHAT THEY FOUGHT FOR.

Continuing, the speaker said he wished to show that they were tending in the wrong direction in

order to arrive at a solution, not only of the Indian question, but questions that affected the coloured people of this country. All honest men abhorred the way in which the law had been read.

It had been suggested in order to solve the problem, that the Government should compensate the Indians and send them back to India. That would be a very good thing if the Government would place a £3 poll tax on Indians, and with that money send the Indians back, but if such a thing happened it would shake the foundations of the Empire.

In conclusion, the speaker declared that they were fighting to make citizenship of the Empire something "worth while." "We are fighting for that self-respect that we have already lost," he added. "When an Indian comes to this country the brand is placed upon him. We are fighting for something intangible, but something that is higher than a licence." (Cheers).

GOVERNMENT ON ITS TRIAL.

Mr. Ash (of Wellington), a European, said that they had a cause which every European should support. He was not in favour of violence and heat, which would not do them any good. He was sorry the present Government had not done justice to British subjects. General Botha and General Smuts might be clever men, but they were not doing justice to them (the Indians) when they termed them Asiatics. In that question, as in other questions, the Union Government was upon its trial, but it did not show that broad spirit which it should show in a British dominion. Why had not Generals Botha and Smuts told Mr. Gokhale that there was only one road? There was a want of faith on the part of the Government. Mr. Gandhi was a man every whit, and an honest man who would not mislead them; and he had every respect for him. He hoped that a solution of the problems would be arrived at, and that Mr. Gandhi would be released shortly. He was a great patriot, and they did not know the amount of work he had done; yet when he took up the passive resistance movement he had been treated worse than a criminal. In England such things would not take place as took place in South Africa. General Botha and the Cabinet had to learn great lessons, but the greatest was that they could not trifle with British subjects. (Cheers). Had Mr. Gandhi and the others been treated with British justice? His opinion was that they had not been treated with justice.

Mr. T. B. L. Edgemoor also spoke in favour of the release of Mr. Gandhi and in sympathy with what the previous speakers had said.

A vote of thanks to the chairman concluded the proceedings.

PORT ELIZABETH SUPPORT.

A general meeting of the Mauritian and Colonial-born Hindu Benefit Society was held at their hall, 10, Walmer Road. There was a large attendance of members. The chair was occupied by Mr. Ponnosamy Naidoo, the vice-president, in the absence of Mr. M. M. Pillay. The following resolutions were passed:—

"That the Mauritian and Colonial-born Hindu Benefit Society of Port Elizabeth hereby resolves its sympathy with the Passive Resistance movements."

"That this meeting enthusiastically supports the strike of the Indian labourer, until Government give an understanding to repeal the £3 tax and other grievances concerning the labourers."

"That this meeting authorise the Secretary to submit these resolutions to the Minister of the Interior by telegram, and copies to be forwarded to the local Press and the proper quarters."

tomjee, Manilal Gandhi, others all known to you kicked roughly handled, insulted called coolies in spite repeated protest. Many not received sandals, socks, deprived sandals on asking socks. Dirty unwashed gaol clothing issued. Protest against such dirty dangerously insanitary habit unheeded and jeered at. Gaol library books not issued prevented from taking their own. Rusty dishes rusty pannikins continuously issued. Food inferior quality, ghee adulterated. Often undercooked beans issued causing dysentery from which some ladies who are still in Durban gaol are suffering. Cockroaches, maggots, found in food yet food not replaced. By way protest against such ill-treatment many hunger struck. Fast lasted four days. Fourth day one of them, vegetarian by religion, forcibly fed with milk and eggs. Strike dissolved by gaoler promising relief which never came. During strike prisoners asked see Governor who was not seen till after twentyfour hours. They had also hunger strike in Maritzburg for three days before ration ghee was issued. Rustamjee's statement of grievances has created sensation. Discharged passive resisters show fixed determination court rearrest immediately if necessary. Preparing affidavits submission Government requesting inquiry.

The Commission

Pratoria, Dec. 18 (reuter.)—The Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the Natal Indian strike, and the consequent disturbances commenced its sittings in the Old Government Buildings at Pratoria this morning.

Sir Wm. Solomon presided, the other members of the Commission present being Mr. Ewald Esselen, K.C., and Lieut.-Col. Wylie, K.C.

The chairman stated that the inquiry would be taken with open doors. It was essential that the inquiry should be held in Natal, but there might be persons residing in parts of the Union other than Natal who wished to give evidence, and therefore the Commission was prepared to hear witnesses to-day or to-morrow, if they desired to give evidence here; otherwise, it was the present intention of the Commission to hold the first public sitting in Durban on Jan. 12, but that date was subject to alteration. Due notice would be given thereafter of the places and dates when the Commission would sit. From the character of the inquiry it was evident that the work of the Commission would be of a judicial nature. It would, in the opinion of the Commission, be to the advantage of interested parties, and of assistance to the Commission, if the former were represented by counsel. If the Union Government, the Natal Indian Association, and other associations and persons interested would so appear it would greatly facilitate the work of the Commission. The Commission thought that reasonable notice should be given the secretary of the Commission by the Indian representation of any specific charges of violence alleged to have been committed upon persons sentenced in connection with the strike and the disturbances. If the Government of India desired to appear before the Commission, it was entitled to do so. With a view to enabling the inquiry to be as thorough as possible, the Commission had recommended to the Government that, inasmuch as the strike of Indians in Natal was at an end, Messrs. Gandhi, Polak, Kallenbach, and any other strike leaders at present confined in gaol should be immediately released. If no evidence was notified for to-morrow, the Commission will next meet on Jan. 12, in Durban.

London December 22nd.—A message from Delhi states that Sir Benjamin Robertson, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces of India, proceeds to Durban immediately to give evidence before the Indian Commission on behalf of the Indian Government.

Mr. Meyler's Opinion

Mr. H. M. Meyler, M.L.A., has expressed his opinion as to the Indian Commission in the following terms:—To Sir William Solomon's appointment to the Indian Commission no one has raised the slightest objection, and it could not be improved upon. But it is all-important that the whole personnel shall be such that the Indian community have faith in it. After the well advertised official denials of statements that are undoubtedly founded on facts, they are naturally mistrustful, and unless quite satisfied that the Commission is impartial, they will publish their evidence through other and more dangerous channels. In selecting Mr. Wylie, the Government may have overlooked the fact that he has long been strongly opposed to Indian immigration, and recently expressed himself as against the repeal of the £3 licence, but, although rather surprised at his acceptance of a seat on the Commission for these reasons, I have full faith in his sense of fair play and justice. The Indian objection to him appears rather based on the fact that they do not consider a soldier the right person to use discrimination in judging the action of military forces. Regarding the appointment of Mr. Esselen, I feel compelled to raise the strongest protest. He can lay no claim to impartiality on the Indian question. Less than a fortnight ago, he expressed himself upon it to me in forcible terms, and I was astounded a few days later to see his name appear as a Commissioner. I immediately wired vigorous protests, both to Mr. Esselen and the Prime Minister. Even without the objectionable expressions about the Indian people which I quoted, and which Mr. Esselen has since denied using, he cannot get away from the fact that he showed the utmost bias on a subject on which he now proposes to sit in judgment. We have had enough cant on this Indian question, and one cannot submit without reply for ever to the dictates of an autocratic Government. For the honour of the Empire the truth about the happenings in Natal is coming out sooner or later, and the Government will save themselves a lot of trouble by providing at once the proper machinery for investigating. There should be no objection to granting the request of the Indian community for representation on the Commission through Sir James Rose-Innes or Senator Schreiner.

Meeting at Capetown

Capetown, December 21st (Reuter.)—Mr. Haggart, M.L.A., this afternoon, addressed an audience of about 50 Europeans and Indians in the Alhambra Picture Palace on the Indian problem in Natal.

Dealing with the question of indentured Indians, he said general opinion was against the system. The men were unable to pay the £3 tax, seeing that the Indian in Natal was well paid if he received £1 per month, and in the case of women he contended that the tax led in many instances to immorality. They should have free labour or none, a wages board and a minimum wage for every industry. He thought it would pay them in the long run to repatriate all the Indians, because at present they were losing three-quarters of a million on them in different ways, and having to pay special officials.

The meeting agreed to a resolution to the effect that it sympathised with the Indian leaders in Natal in their protest against the degraded and degrading conditions in which thousands of their race were compelled to live or starve, and in their demand for equitable representation on the Commission now sitting, such representation to consist of some person nominated by the Indian leaders.

A Reuter's message from London states that it is understood that Mr. Asquith in his audience of the King discussed Home Rule, and also the Indian situation in North Africa and its effect on India.

How we are Misrepresented

The London weekly newspaper, *South Africa*, of the 29th ultimo has many references to the Indian question in South Africa. In its leading notes it states that it was the late Marquess of Ripon who, as Secretary of State for India, approved of the £3 tax. In the same note it informs its readers that, since Union, boys do not pay until the age of 16, as though that was some sort of concession, and winds up by saying that every Indian who has come to Natal has done so with his eyes open, fully understanding the position. There are six pages of cablegrams (not its own) and over the first page are the following sensational headlines:—"The Coolie Curse comes Home to Roost," "Strikers resume work but the Agitators cause fresh Outbreaks," "Fatal Rioting at the Esperanza and Mount Edgecombe Estates" "Correct Attitude of the Union Government: Unwarrantable Interference from India," and this for the final: "General Smuts's Efforts to Promote Peace and Investigate Grievances." There is no need to reproduce the cablegrams to know that they reek with prejudice and ignorance. Here are two falsehoods: "The Lieutenant in charge of the police [at Mount Edgecombe] received a bad slash with a knife," and "A European civilian was knifed and left in an unconscious condition by the Indians." It refers also to General Smuts's visit to Natal "to make inquiries into the Indian troubles on the spot." Well, we all know how he refused to see anyone but the employers and General Lukin. There are several illustrations and they, like the literary matter, are meant to create a wrong impression. There are tea and sugar plantations with well-dressed men and women, looking, for all the world, as though they were enjoying a picnic. There are also snapshots of the great anti-Indian demonstration at the Point in 1897. We must congratulate *South Africa* on its very brilliant attempt to mislead the British public.

From the Editor's Chair

WHAT WILL THE ANSWER BE?

We, the Indians of South Africa, are victims of a series of depredations, made by a Government in which we had no part or lot, upon our poor measure of rights. In Natal, in the Transvaal, in the Cape, this filching policy has been steadily pursued. We have protested, we have appealed to the Raj, we have passively resisted and endured the miseries of gaol life in order to ventilate our wrongs. These have been detailed so often that it were surely superfluous to restate the catalogue, but we may at least point out that each effort at legislation has added to rather than subtracted from the list of our disabilities. Whether by design or accident or ignorance this has come about we do not pretend to say. Whichever it may have been the root cause of the mischief has been the ignoring by the Government of the views and inclinations of the Indians. It is an elementary principle of political science that Government is only possible with the acquiescence of the governed, and to-day the Indians of South Africa have set themselves the task of teaching the Government of the Union this apparently much needed lesson. We are now invited to submit certain of our grievances, and the charges arising out of the conduct of the authorities during the strike, to a Commission that has been appointed over our heads. We have shown conclusively that the personnel of the Commission cannot be acceptable to us because in the very nature of things two of its members are bound to take a jaundiced view of any Indian case that may be presented to them. But that is not the real crux of the matter. The Indians of South Africa have at last

declared, have pledged and bound themselves to the declaration, that they will decline to acquiesce in any arrangement of this or any other kind unless their views and opinions are taken into account. In future it must be a condition precedent to obedience to laws specially affecting Indians that the people specially concerned shall be consulted before such laws are enacted. Nothing less than this is the meaning of the resolutions adopted so enthusiastically at Indian meetings throughout South Africa. Its application is to be immediate. The letter addressed this week to the Government by Messrs. Gandhi, Kallenbach and Polak accurately and unequivocally states the position. The past has been one of lessons learnt by sufferings long and bitter and the time has come when we are to test the value and depth of our learning. If by New Year's Day our appeal to the Government remains unanswered or is unfavourably received the march from Durban to Pretoria commences. We know all that it entails, we are alive to the hardships, the pains and penalties it involves. But we are out for either victory or death. The Indians of this country have suffered all the degradation they can stand or are going to stand. Either they win freedom living or freedom dead.

The Hill-Head Inquiry

An inquiry was commenced at the Verulam Court, before Mr. Rossler, Acting-Magistrate, on Wednesday afternoon, into the deaths of a number of Indians at the Hill-head barracks and thereabouts on the Mount Edgecombe estates on the 27th November. Mr. G. E. Robinson attended under instructions of the Attorney-General on behalf of the Government; Mr. Dickinson (of Messrs. Stocken & Dickenson) represented the Natal Estates; and Mr. Langston represented the Natal Indian Association. Mr. J. Polkinghorne (Prosecutor of Indian Immigrants) was also present.

The first witness called was Lieut. C. B. Clark, in charge of the Mount Edgecombe district, who swore to a deposition previously made. This stated that on November 27th, at the request of Mr. Campbell, managing director of the Natal Estates, he proceeded to the Blackburn barracks, accompanied by Mr. Colin Campbell, 16 N.C.O.'s and men, and three native constables, for the purpose of arresting such Indians as refused to work. His party was met by Mr. Sykes (sub-manager), and on arrival witnesses waited at the old mill near the barracks while Mr. Campbell and Mr. Sykes went into the barracks, and returned shortly, stating that there were a number of men there armed and refusing to work. Proceeding to the barracks, witness saw about 50 of them standing on some ground covered with bricks and stones, and they were armed with sticks. Witness tried to separate those who were willing to work and those who were not, and he found that only a small number refused to work; and they, on seeing the large number who were willing to work, asked to be allowed to reconsider their decision. This they were allowed to do, and moved over to where those willing to work were standing. Witness's party then moved on to Hillhead for the same purpose, this being a mile and a half away, and on arriving witness waited at the bottom of the hill, while Mr. Campbell went into the barracks. Shortly afterwards Mr. Campbell returned, stating that there were armed Indians at the barracks, and that they had threatened him. Witness and his men went up to the barracks, and asked all the men who were willing to work to stand aside. About 30 expressed their willingness to work, and they were told to stand apart. This they did, remaining passive all the time, and thus escaping without injury. He saw 80 or 100 men standing on broken ground, strewn with bricks and stones, near the barracks, and their attitude at once conveyed to witness that there was going to be trouble. Some of the Indians were standing with their arms folded and their demeanour was distinctly insolent. Another thing

which struck witness was the fact that there were no women or children there, as these could only be seen peeping out of doors here and there. Mr. Campbell tried to get the Indians to line up, but he afterwards told witness they would not do so, and witness instructed him to ask them whether they would work or not. The first man said no; and was directed to stand in the place set apart for those who refused to work. He refused, and witness directed two native constables to arrest him, but before they could move to do so they were attacked by Indians. Witness was knocked off his horse, and struck four times—twice on the head, once on the shoulder, and once on the hand. The attack became general, and witness saw stones flying about. He had previously cautioned his men to avoid the women and children, and only to use revolvers as a last resort. As he was on the ground during the scuffle, he heard revolvers fired, and when he arose for the second time firing had ceased, and the Indians were in flight. As they were in flight, witness directed his men to follow and round them up, and this they did, the ringleaders being arrested. Some of the party were instructed to convey the prisoners to Mount Edgecombe, and he directed the remainder of his men to follow behind them, witness coming on in the same direction on foot. They had got about 200 yards along the road when he saw Mr. Campbell (who had previously ridden off to telephone for medical aid) come galloping back to tell witness that a large body of Blackburn Indians were collected on the road, armed, and were coming towards the prisoners. Witness instructed that a rescue should be prevented at all costs, also sending back to the N.C.O. in charge of Hillhead to bring along his detachment. As witness walked on, he heard some shots being fired, and a little further on he saw two Indians lying dead on the road, still grasping sticks, and through the cane he could see other coolies running away. All the four dead coolies—two at Hillhead and two on the road—had sticks in their hands.

Questioned by Mr. Robinson, Mr. Clark said that his injuries were not serious. Asked whether his helmet had saved him from the effect of a severe blow, he said that such was not the case as his helmet had been knocked off previously. All the Indians were armed with sticks. He was not able to see all that happened as he fell to the ground. He saw no cane knives. The affair did not last a minute. From the returns it was found that 84 rounds of revolver ammunition had been fired. Eleven Indians were arrested.

In reply to Mr. Langston, witness said that not a blow was struck till the first man was arrested. This was a man with spectacles, and he was arrested by the constables on his instructions; but before they could move off with him a man in white rushed out of the mob in front of the arrested man, and called out something to the others, waving his arm. The whole mob then attacked the police. The native constables released their prisoner in protecting themselves, and he was subsequently killed. Mr. Campbell went with witness as representing the Natal Estates (without whose permission witness could not have gone to the barracks), and he also acted as interpreter.

Mr. Langston asked if Mr. Campbell was armed, and witness replied that he had a small-bore automatic pistol—he believed it was a Browning. He did not see Mr. Campbell fire at all.

Mr. Clark said that he gave no instructions for the cane to be searched for further dead or wounded men. He did not know whether a doctor examined the dead bodies. The broken bricks on the ground appeared to have been carted there and not collected by the Indians.

Corpl. Stanley Victor Darling, of the C.M.R., gave similar evidence as to the row at Hillhead, expressing the opinion that the advance of the native constables to arrest the ringleaders was the signal for an attack by the Indians, who started stoning them. Four men

were unhorsed. Corpl. Sparkes was still on the ground surrounded by Indians, and so witness drew his revolver and fired two shots to clear the Indians, who eventually took flight. Witness was one of those who were directed to take the prisoners—11 in number—to Mount Edgecombe, and while they were on the way they were met by Mr. Campbell, who told them the Blackburn Indians were making for Hillhead to attack the police there. Witness's party turned round and galloped back, one of the men being ordered to remain with the prisoners. Looking round, witness saw a large body of Indians, armed; making across the fields towards the prisoners, and they at once galloped back to them. Before they (the police) reached them they had to pass down a narrow road between tall cane, and when witness and three others appeared in the open the Indians made a great uproar, and set up a savage attack upon them with sticks and stones. Indians came up from all directions, some of them being armed with cane-knives. Sergt. Konger shot one man who left the others and rushed at him. As they could not see where the stones came from, the police retired about 20 yards, the Indians following and attacking them like madmen. Shots were fired, but as they still came on, more shots were fired at the ringleaders, the Indians then taking to flight. Afterwards, the prisoners were safely conveyed to Mount Edgecombe.

Mr. Robinson: Were any of the Indians armed?

Witness: I didn't hear any reports from their side, but Corpl. Bridger had a wound in his foot which I believe was made by a very small bullet. It could not possibly have been caused by a Webley revolver, such as the police were using, but seemed to me to be like the bullet from a sporting rifle.

Witness was examined at some length by Mr. Langston, who elicited that the Blackburn Indians had neither attacked the party at Hillhead, nor had they attempted to rescue the prisoners when witness and his party saw them. When first sighted they were coming through the cane and witness thought they could have got to the prisoners if they wanted to—though he could not say if they had actually seen the prisoners—but as soon as the police came in sight the Indians made for them. Up to that time the Blackburn Indians had not attacked Hillhead or the prisoners. They were going in the direction of Hillhead.

Witness was further questioned by Mr. Langston as to whether Mr. Colin Campbell was armed, and whether he fired a shot at Blackburn.—Witness replied that Mr. Campbell did not fire, for he was carrying a stick in his hand. Witness could not see Mr. Campbell the whole of the time.

At this stage the inquiry was adjourned.

On resuming the inquiry on Thursday, Wm. Paul, Assistant Manager Natal Estates, was examined as to a plan of the surroundings which he had prepared. Sergt. Conquer, Corp. Sparkes, J. A. W. Stidunthy, S.A.M.R., Sergt. K. A. Newman also gave evidence similar to that of Lieut. Clark. William Campbell, Managing Director Natal Estates, gave an account of the events which led up to the disturbance. He also said that there was no *post mortem* examination of the dead bodies. The compounder (Frank Campbell) reported to him that the men had died from bullet wounds. He could not say whose the bodies were buried. He did not report the deaths of the Magistrate but he informed the Protector of the names. He had the cane thoroughly searched for more bodies but found none.

Colin Campbell read a statement denying the charge of shooting by him: He never touched the man in spectacles named Selvan who was killed. He asked the man to work but he refused. He was not aware that his indenture had expired. One man threw a cane knife which glanced off his shoulder. The Indians, he said, so pressed him that he was obliged to make a stand, otherwise he would have been killed. He fired shots, but he did not hit anyone.

On Friday, J. M. Johnstone, overseer on the Black-

burn estate gave evidence. He said that when he went into the barracks at Hillhead before the police, the Indians were playing games and wrestling under a fig tree. [Other witnesses have stated that heaps of stones had been collected and preparations made for a fight.—Ed. L.O.] The man Selvan was shot in the neck. He did not see the fight. He could not say where the Indians were buried, but the Indian constable probably knew. Dr. Fisher deputy District Surgeon put in a detailed report of his attention to the injured Indians and Europeans. He went the next day and examined the five dead bodies. The man Selvan had been dead about 26 hours, and there was a bullet wound on the left side of the neck, the large vessels having been severed. The bullet travelled in a downward direction, near the collar bone. The second man, Subraya Gounden, had a bullet wound on the level of the last rib, passing through the spinal column. Gouruvada had only been dead about an hour, and was lying on his side, with a bullet wound above the loin and piercing the bowel. At Blackburn, witness saw the body of a man named Pachapan, who had a bullet wound in the front of the left ear, penetrating the skull. He was aged about 35, and the body was lying in a hut when the witness saw it. The fifth was Kogavan, who had a bullet wound at the outer end of the left eyebrow, fracturing the skull.

Witness was asked if he had extracted any bullets from the wounded Indians, and in reply he produced seven or eight from his pocket all neatly done up in separate envelopes and labelled. These were opened and inspected, all of them but one being obviously Webley bullets, the other being smaller, and appearing to have had a nickel casing.

The doctor stated in regard to each of the dead Indians that owing to the excited state of the people, it was not thought advisable to dissect any of the bodies. He thought in each case the bullets would probably still be in the bodies.

Mr. Langston, in cross-examination, asked witness what positions the injured men would probably have been in at the time they received their wounds. Gounden would probably have been shot from the back, Gouruvada and Pachapan were probably shot from a sideways position, and Kogavan was probably half-turned towards the man who shot him. The doctor also went through the list of injured and gave his opinion as to the probable positions from which they were shot. Of the 14 cases, he mentioned eight who were facing their opponents, five who were probably shot from behind, and one from a sideways position. In the case of Selvan, the bullet took a downward course, and the Indian was probably facing his opponent, who was on a higher level.

Sergeant Withers, 1st Regiment, S.A.M.R., corroborated as to the incidents in Hillhead barracks.

Mr. Dickenson asked witness if he could say who shot the two men, and he replied that he would think Sergt. Conquer shot the one at the end of the cane, and Sergt. Sparkes the other in the middle of the cane. Mr. Campbell was with the party when they were going towards Blackburn, but he believed Mr. Campbell galloped right through the cane when the police retired.

Cross-examined by Mr. Langston, he said he did not see Mr. Campbell use a revolver at all. He only had a stick with him (as far as witness could see) at Hillhead.

Asked to examine the bullets from the wounded Indians, witness said he was sure they were Webley bullets except the small nickel plated one, which looked like a missile from a saloon rifle.

In reply to the Magistrate, witness said Mr. Colin Campbell was never at the spot where the two Indians were shot.

The next witness was a native named Janusi, an estate watchman on the Natal Estates, who made a statement to the effect that he was at Blackburn barracks when Mr. Colin Campbell came there and asked the Indians if they would work, and they agreed to do so if rations were issued. At Hillhead there were

ten native estate constables and three Government constables, as well as the European police.

The witness was cross-examined by the Magistrate as to where Mr. Campbell was during the fight at Blackburn; and he stated that the Indians endeavoured to surround him, but were not successful. Asked how far Mr. Campbell was from where the bodies were found, the witness indicated the bank of the corner of the street, a distance of about 50 yards.

"Had you seen any of the bodies before Mr. Campbell fired the shots?" asked the Magistrate.

The witness replied that he had previously seen the bodies, Mr. Campbell's horse was backing through the short cane at the time.

Mr. Langston at this point stated that he had four Indians here from Hillhead, but the points he wished them to elucidate had been cleared up. Still, he wished it made clear that the Government officials were desirous of giving any Indians who desired an opportunity of speaking, and he asked the Magistrate to tell them this.

When they were told this, three others decided to give evidence, and the four did not wish to do so.

Touching this point as to whether Indian evidence was necessary, Sergt. Hattrell pointed out that he had in his possession depositions from Indians making certain serious allegations. He submitted that it would be as well to have those cleared up.

The Magistrate stated that he did not consider the evidence up to this point sufficient to give a finding, and if there were no more evidence he would call further witnesses himself. "I have taken the statements of three Indians," the Magistrate said; "they were taken at the Hospital, and make serious allegations against Mr. Colin Campbell."

Mr. Langston: "I shall call these."

The Magistrate: "It will assist us if we get to the bottom of this. I don't want to go beyond the scope of the inquiry, but I want to take the statements of these Indians, as one of them makes the allegation that Mr. Campbell shot at him. There can be no finding until we get to the bottom of this. I also want to go out and examine the locality."

Mr. Robinson: "So far as the evidence has gone as to the death of three Indians, there can be no possible doubt."

The Magistrate: "I express no opinion at this stage. What is more particular is this; there was a man who says he was shot by Mr. Colin Campbell. If these Indians persist in their statement it may be necessary to have the bodies exhumed. So far as the evidence is shaping at present, it seems that it may be necessary to exhume the bodies."

Mr. William Campbell said they were greatly desirous of having these statements cleared up, because they felt it deeply that such allegations had been made.

The first of these Hillhead Indians then made his deposition. His name was Parsaraman, and he said that on Nov. 27 Mr. Colin Campbell came to Hillhead and ordered them to roll call. They did not go, and Mr. Campbell asked if he was going to work or not. He replied: "The whole of Natal has struck, and when they go back to work, we will start, too." Mr. Campbell then beckoned the man to come forward and hold the horse. As he was on the point of catching hold of the horse, Mr. Campbell hit him with a stick, and on receiving the blow the man fell down; and Mr. Campbell ordered two native constables to handcuff him. The witness named two estate native constables, who, he said, handcuffed Selvan, and dragged him a short distance, and then one of them stabbed him with an assegai. As soon as he was stabbed, the women began to scream, and when they started to scream, witness heard revolver shots. He was "scared out of his wits" by these, and ran into the cane.

In reply to questions, witness said he did not know who shot the man Gounden.

"Did anyone resist the troopers?" Asked Mr. Dickenson.

Witness: "No, I did not see anyone resist the troopers."

"Did you actually see the assegai enter the man's body?"

Witness: "Yes" (and he pointed to the root of his neck as the place where the assegai entered).

The witness stated that Selvan had been handcuffed by the natives, and was squatting down, and one of the natives known to the Indians as Doultt was holding him by the right arm. The other native, known as "M. imortha," put one hand on Selvan's head, and putting the assegai against his neck, thrust it into him. He fell back on the ground. He could not see how far the assegai went in. Four or five of the estate constables had assegais, but the Government constables had none.

Mr. Dickenson: "Did Selvan have a stick?"—"No; before he was called up he was standing with his arms folded."

Witness added that he did not notice any Indians with sticks; they might have picked up sticks afterwards, but they had none when he ran into the cane. He denied that the women were all in the houses, but said they were scattered all over the place.

The second Indian gave the name of Kistnasamy, who said "the master" came to call the roll, but they did not respond. Selvan said, "all the Natal Indians are on strike, and when they return we shall." Mr. Colin Campbell called the Indian to "come here," and when he went up Mr. Campbell struck him with a stick. He also called out to the native constables to handcuff Selvan. Doultt, and Marimootha, native estate constables did so, and dragged him away. They dragged him a little way and then one of the natives stabbed him with an assegai. The blade of the assegai was about 6in. long and 1 1/2in. wide. When Selvan was stabbed the women screamed out, "They are killing him." Witness was frightened, and ran into the cane, and while there he heard revolver shots. Witness did not hear Mr. Campbell tell Selvan to hold his horse, but he only called him to where he was.

Cross-examined witness stated that Selvan was standing up, handcuffed, at the time he was stabbed, and he then fell down. Every native, he said, had an assegai. He could not say how many native police there were there. He could only say there were more native police than there were men in the Court (the number then present being 16), and that there were more Indians than police.

The son of the deceased Indian Selvan was then called. He was a free Indian immigrant and was recently indentured to the Natal Estates of Mount Edgecombe, and resided at the barracks at Hillhead, but his contract of indenture had expired. He was the eldest son of Selvan, otherwise called Salvum. He was at the Hillhead barracks on Nov. 27, 1913, neither his father nor he having struck work, both their contracts having expired. They were allowed to remain at the barracks for the time being as they contemplated re-indenture. On the morning of the 27th ult., he was at his hut with his mother and younger brother, his father being outside. He saw Mr. "Carlin," the master's son, ride up, and heard him call the Indians to come to "roll call." His father replied, "I will not come till the trouble is over." Then "Mr. Carlin," called to his father to come and hold his horse, and, as Selvan came up to hold the horse, "Mr. Carlin" struck him on the head with a stick, and Selvan fell and tried to run away. "Mr. Carlin" then told the native estate constable, Marimuthu, to handcuff him, which was done, and then Marimuthu stabbed Selvan with an assegai. Witness ran screaming to his father, and when he got near him he heard the sound of firing and received three bullet wounds—one in the left hand, one on the right arm, and one on the left leg below the knee. Selvan died where he fell. One of the troopers bandaged witness's wounds.

Cross examined: Witness saw no stones thrown, though he was in the position to see.

Mr. Dickenson: No attack had been made on the police before the revolvers were fired?

Witness: No, not where I was. I did not see sticks or stones or anything else thrown.

The witness also said he did not see any soldier knocked off his horse, nor did he see any Indians armed with sticks.

"So there was no provocation for the police to fire the revolver shots?" asked Mr. Dickenson.

Witness: No.

Asked to describe the stabbing, witness said Doultt held his father by the left arm while Marimuthu stood "afar" and stabbed him with the assegai, Marimuthu did not lay a hand on his father, who was standing up at the time. The blade entered by the windpipe and came out at the back of the neck.

Two native estate policemen were then brought into the Court, and the witness identified one of them as the boy the Indians called Marimuthu, and the other as being called Doultt. The native names of these men were Siketi and Ndawoluti, respectively. The assegai was not thrown, but the native still held it in his hand.

Hearing was again adjourned till Monday.

At the Branch Court, Greenwood Park, on Monday last before Mr. Mc Donald, Assistant Magistrate Inanda Division, H.A. Fox of the Greenwood Park Brick Co. was charged with an assault upon an indentured Indian named Kotia and with "shooting at him with an unloaded revolver," thereby inflicting a wound on the head. Mr. Wells, who appeared for the accused, took exception to the summons on the ground that it was absurd to say that a man was shot with an unloaded revolver. The Magistrate upheld the exceptions and said that, of course, a fresh summons would be issued charging Fox with pointing a revolver and threatening to shoot.

Five indentured Indians, employed at Harrison Bros., Avoca, were charged with being absent without passes. They stated that they asked the overseer, on Saturday morning, for permission to go to Durban to see Mr. Gandhi arrive. As the permission was not granted, they went without passes and were arrested on their return, at Umhlanga. The overseer said that he was quite sure that they did not ask for a pass. The Magistrate said they had no right to go, and passed sentences of a fine of ten shillings or seven days' imprisonment.

News in Brief

A very successful Bazaar was held at St. Anthony's Hall, Durban, in aid of St. Anthony's Indian Boys' Orphanage and Industrial School.

On Sunday last a mass meeting was held at Newcastle, when resolutions were passed similar in terms to those passed by the Durban meeting.

We learn that 17 men belonging to Charley Brothers Estate have been sentenced to one month's rigorous imprisonment.

On the 18th instant Mrs. R. Moonsamy, Miss V. Moonsamy, Mrs. Bismith, Mrs. Shwapsad and Mrs. Kabuthar and 31 other Passive Resisters crossed the Volksrust Border from Natal, and were deported, returned and were sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour.

On the 22nd Mrs. V. S. Pillay, Mrs. Peter Moonlight Mudaliar, Mrs. Govindsamy Naidoo and 13 other Passive Resisters were similarly sentenced at Volksrust.

The above are the ladies who two months since left Johannesburg for Natal in order to go among the indentured Indians and explain the position to them. They visited the different centres and addressed meetings. While in Durban recently several of these ladies courted arrest by hawking licenceless. Five were arrested while so doing by a native warder, but, to their great disappointment, were discharged on reaching the Gaol. They have now at last obtained their hearts' desire.

A Determined Stand.

After attending a huge and extremely enthusiastic meeting at the Gaiety Theatre, Johannesburg, at which the Transvaal Indians resolved unanimously against evidence being tendered to the Government Commission as constituted. Messrs. M. K. Gandhi, H. S. L. Polak, and H. Kallenbach left Johannesburg for Durban by the kaffir mail on Friday morning last. The journey down was marked by a reception at every station of importance from the leaders of the various local associations, and in every instance the views of the Transvaal British Indian Association in regard to the Commission were enthusiastically endorsed. The arrival of the released prisoners at Durban station was signalled by the cheering of an enormous concourse which had gathered there to welcome them. They were chaired as well as cheered, and borne to a carriage which was in waiting. They were then garlanded according to Indian custom, and a huge procession marched through the principal Durban streets, ending up at the headquarters of the Natal Indian Association, where the crowd insisted upon each of the ex-convicts shortly addressing them. Mr. Gandhi intimated to the audience that they were on the eve of a most momentous decision, and that he proposed to take a vote of their considered views at a mass meeting to be held on the morrow. He indicated that the question that they would be called upon to decide was whether they could in honour tender evidence to a Commission which had been constituted without any reference to Indian wishes or opinion, and also whether the personnel of that Commission could be regarded as fair and impartial. Amid cheers and great enthusiasm the meeting dispersed.

Interview with the "Natal Mercury."

Interviewed by a "Mercury" representative, Mr. Gandhi said that at the meeting which followed his arrival with Mr. Kallenbach and Mr. Polak thanks were expressed for the reception accorded them. His release, he added, was a surprise, and only when he was out of the prison did he learn that his release was due to a recommendation of the members of the Commission. "We feel that our release throws a great responsibility upon our shoulders," he said, "and on learning how the Commission is constituted I feel that the fundamental fraud is that the Indian community was not consulted as to the nomination of the members. The spirit of the whole passive resistance struggle since 1907 has been that in matters affecting the community the Government should consult its opinion and sentiments. This the Government, apparently, have not done regarding the Commission, and thereto there is objection to its nomination of itself. With reference to Mr. Esselen and Col. Wylie, Mr. Gandhi said he had the pleasantest recollections of both gentlemen, and had not the slightest doubt that they would discharge their duties on the Commission conscientiously, but he could not credit them with the superhuman qualities of divesting themselves of their anti-Asiatic views, which they were known to so profoundly hold. Now that they had been nominated members of the Commission, he would not object to their appointment, but it was the Indian community, he added, whose influence they might have on

"Unless the Government accede to this reasonable request," said Mr. Gandhi, "it is not possible for us to accept this Commission or assist its deliberations. Unless the submission be accepted, we have decided not to give any evidence before them, and we shall resume activities in order to seek re-arrest and re-imprisonment."

A Great Demonstration.

Natal Indians' Expressed Determination.

Early on Sunday morning bodies of Indians were seen proceeding from all parts of the town to the football ground to attend the mass meeting arranged under the auspices of the Natal Indian Association. The crowd must eventually have numbered fully 6,000 to 7,000, and the proceedings were marked by an intense enthusiasm. Every class of the Indian community appeared to be represented in great numbers. Mr. Abdul Kadir, sometime President of the Natal Indian Congress, presided. Among the Europeans present were the Rev. A. A. Bailie, Superintendent of the St. Aidan's Missions in Natal, Mrs. H. S. L. Polak, Miss S. Schlessin, hon. secretary of the Transvaal Indian Women's Association, and Mr. G. Isaac, who recently returned to South Africa from Europe to assist the Indian cause. The chairman rose to open the proceedings amid great acclamation.

CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

The Chairman said they were there to consider matters of the most vital importance, not only to the local community, but to the Indians of the whole of South Africa. He said they would recall the issues that led to the present passive resistance campaign that culminated in what was known as the Natal strike. It might be well to recapitulate these, briefly they were:—(1) The recognition of Indian marriages, which are de facto monogamous, but which are celebrated under religious sanctions that permit polygamy; (2) the non-interference by the Immigration Law of 1913, with the existing rights in the respective Provinces of the Union, e.g. the right reserved by the late Cape Immigration Act of South African-born Indians to enter and reside in the Cape Province; (3) the removal of the gratuitous and offensive declaration required from Indians who might wish and be entitled under the Union Immigration Act, to enter the Free State; (4) the repeal of the Natal £3 licence legislation. They would recall that a definite promise was made in 1911 by the Government that the above grievances, except the last, would be remedied, and he alleged that a definite promise was given to the Hon. Mr. Gokhale in respect of the repeal of the £3 tax legislation. They waited for the convenience of the Government in the hope that the pledges given would be redeemed. Some of them were excusably sceptical about this redemption. Some of them felt that experience should teach, and they remembered other experiences of broken promises. Still they waited, feeling that the Government should at least be given a chance, and waited until some months were rudely dashed to the ground by the late Mr. Fischer, when he announced that even the £3 tax was not to be repealed. Nothing was then left for them save to resume the passive resistance campaign. Once again the pilgrimage of self-suffering was undertaken

that count more effectively and in order to enable those unfortunate brethren to understand their position in connection with the payment of the tax. The result was an extraordinary response of indentured Indians, their great sufferings and the historic march from Natal to the Transvaal led by Mr. Gandhi. The huge column proceeded to within 40 miles of Johannesburg, maintaining the peace and injuring not a single soul, doing not a pennyworth of injury to property, calm and stoically recording their protest against the betrayal of their countrymen. Then the leaders were seized, and as a result of that ill-timed and ill-concerted action of the Government there spread throughout Natal a strike unprecedented in the history of the Province. They knelt and wept over the tragic incidents of that strike. He asked them to bow their heads in memory of the martyrs who had been shot and had otherwise met their deaths for daring to stand up for the good name, honour, and the liberty of India's sons in South Africa. It was not for him to anticipate the judgment of the future, but he could not pass over that aspect of the case without entering a most earnest protest against the forceful methods employed by the authorities which had produced such tragic results, and he hoped and trusted that a proper investigation would be made into the question of the grievances, and the deplorable circumstances connected with the strike. They must not shirk, any such imputation. He had alleged that in the attempt to suppress the strike, brutal and barbarous coercive methods such as flogging and locking were resorted to, and in the course of the endeavour to deal with the strike their rifles. South Africa, whether the shooting was necessary for the Government to establish a tribunal to investigate their allegations, and to examine the acts of the military, and they must, therefore, express their thanks upon a public inquiry, but they have to enter in their names and

EMPHATIC PROTEST

against the manner of the appointment and composition of the Commission. The Government had missed the underlying spirit of the struggle, which was to establish their right to be consulted with reference to matters vitally affecting them, and he was sure nothing could be conceived as of more vital importance than those matters which would be subjects of investigation by the Commission; and yet at no stage did the Government deign to consult and consider their sentiments regarding the scope of the composition of the Commission. It seemed that the scope embraced an investigation of the whole of the grievances which were the cause of passive resistance. If so, it was satisfactory; if it were not so, in his opinion it was necessary to widen the scope. The composition had been determined by the whole community to be equitable, and he was happy to be able to state that in this they were supported by public opinion in the Motherland, the British Isles, but also by such national bodies as Church Councils in the Provinces. Mr. Meyer, who fearlessly championed their cause, he considers to be just, had entered a strong protest against the appointment of Mr. Esselen and Col. Wylie, both of whom were undoubtedly most respectable and estimable gentlemen, but both were liable to the same human weakness as the best in the land.

known to be an extremely intimate character and is hardly likely, therefore, that the Government's Indian policy, which, in effect, to be the subject of examination by the Commission, will be outside of his knowledge or approval. Mr. Esselen has not hesitated to proclaim his extreme anti-Asian views on more than one occasion.

This is what Colonel Wylie said deliberately in 1896 at the time of the now historic demonstration in which he took a leading part: "Asiatic evil," he said, "was a widespread almost bubonic plague throughout the colony. The free Indian was like a canker eating into their very heart." And, again, referring to a naval man's remark that he would give a month's pay for one shot at the ships by which Mr. Gandhi and a number of independent Indians had arrived at Durban from India, Mr. Wylie is reported to have appealed to mob law by asking whether every man was prepared to put down a month's pay in this matter. Mr. Wylie led 700 railwaymen demonstrators to the Point in order to prevent the lawful landing of their compatriots. Three months later Mr. Wylie, not satisfied with the Government Bill, which apparently was not drastic enough for him, drafted a Restriction Bill to prohibit the immigration into Natal by land or sea of Asiatics except as indentured labourers. Finally, they would object to Mr. Wylie on the ground of his close professional relations with the principal employers of Indian labour, whose attitude towards their employees will be also one of the subjects of examination by the Commissioners, and even recently he had expressed his opinion that the £3 tax could not be repealed. They did not expect these two Commissioners to bring to the fore a political inquiry and

secretly compelled to believe that the Government intended to make the Commission a partisan character, and that these gentlemen had been appointed to represent special interests. They expected that the Government had thereby imposed the necessity of demanding a decision on their own behalf. He considered that they were in duty bound to ask for an additional appointment of two eminent gentlemen of high repute whom they might have chosen though they did not have an opposite character to that attributed to Mr. Esselen and Mr. Wylie. He submitted, therefore, the names of the Hon. Sir James Rose-Innes and the Hon. Mr. W. P. Schreiner, K.C. They commanded universal respect, and the Indian community felt sure that their appointment would ensure at least to a certain extent the safe-guarding, wherever it might be necessary, of their interests, and if the Government were pleased to approve of these nominations, they would have removed the first and fundamental objection, namely, the grievous omission to consult the Indians in this matter. If they were to take part in tendering evidence before the Commission it followed, as a matter of course, that all passive resistance should be suspended. Pending the finding of the Commission they would have to ask the indentured brethren to resume a fulfilment of their contracts, not under coercion, if they were now doing, but with a free will. They would have to ask the archdeacon among the free community, who one day after seeking to join the ranks of under incarceration, to restrain his activity. It would, therefore, be recognised by the Government as necessary for them, to release imprisoned passive resisters. If those two suggestions were accepted by the Government, they would be their duty, to the best of their ability, to assist the Commission in its work; but if, unfortunately, the Government could not see its way to accept them in this matter, the alternative must be considered. It was nothing less than a

people, of wholesale imprisonment, of a separation of husbands from wives, fathers from children, and of all the terrible incident of a long and serious struggle with which they had now become so painfully familiar. They saw there three of those who led the recent strike, who went to gaol. They had already declared their intention of courting immediate re-arrest if the purpose for which the Government had released them was not achieved, namely, if, through their rejection of their submission, the Government made it impossible for them to tender evidence of the most material character which they, and they alone, would give. The time had passed for tinkering with the Indian question in South Africa. They had reached a stage, a frame of mind now, when the Indian status must be clearly defined. "We decline longer to be treated as a pack of children, a race of savages, or a class of helots," proceeded the speaker. "We demand the breadth of treatment due to men entitled to be free, entitled to the treatment of civilised free men, entitled to the treatment of people worthy to be citizens of an important Empire. We have a right to ask for something more than the grudging doing out of trivial concessions. We have passed the stage when the Government can say, and should say, of us, 'How little will they be satisfied with; how small a sop can we put them off with?' We do not ask to encroach upon the political preserves so jealously guarded by the Europeans, but we do claim as a right, not as a favour, the elementary rights of civilised British citizens. With a view to secure your formal approval of the sentiments expressed by me, certain resolutions will be submitted to you for your acceptance, which I hope this great meeting will carry unanimously."

MR. GANDHI'S SPEECH.

Mr. Gandhi was received with cheers on rising. He mentioned that he would have preferred to speak first in one of the Indian tongues, but in the presence of Messrs. Polak and Kaffenbach, his fellow-convicts, feelings of gratitude compelled him to speak first in the tongue they knew. They would notice he had changed his dress from that he had formerly adopted for the last 20 years, and he had decided on the change when he heard of the shooting of their fellow-countrymen. No matter whether the shooting was found to be justified or not, the fact was that they were shot, and those bullets shot him (Mr. Gandhi) through the heart also. He felt how glorious it would have been if one of those bullets had struck him, also, because might he not be a murderer himself, by having participated in that event by having advised Indians to strike? His conscience cleared him from this guilt of murder, but he felt he should adopt mourning for those Indians as a humble example to his fellow-countrymen. He felt that he should go into mourning at least for a period, which should be co-extensive with the end of that struggle, and that he should accept some mourning not only inwardly, but outwardly as well, as a humble example to his fellow-countrymen, so that he could tell them that it was necessary for them to show by their conduct and outward appearance that they were in mourning. He was not prepared himself to accept the European mourning dress for this purpose, and, with some modification in deference to the feelings of his European friends, he had adopted the dress similar to that of an indentured Indian. He asked his fellow-countrymen to adopt some sign of mourning to show to the world that they were mourning, and further to adopt some inward observance also. And perhaps, he might tell them what his inward mourning was—to restrict himself to one meal a day. They had been released, he continued, not on any condition, but they knew that they were released on the recommendation of a Commission appointed by the Government, in order that every facility might be given not only to them, but to the Indian community, to

a Commission, but he thought the Commission was open to the gravest objection from the Indian standpoint; and he was there to tender his humble advice to them that it was

IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCEPT

the Commission in a form in which the Indians had no voice. They were fighting for so many grievances, and the underlying spirit of the struggle was to obtain full recognition on the part of the Government of the right of consultation in anything which appertained to Indian interests. Unless the Government was prepared to condescend to that extent, unless they were prepared to ascertain and respect the Indian sentiments, it was not possible for Indians, as loyal but manly citizens of the Empire, to render obedience to their commissions or laws which they might have passed over their heads. This was one of the serious fundamental objections. The other objection was that it was a partisan Commission, therefore the Indians wanted their own partisans on it. This they might not get, but they at least wanted impartial men, who had not expressed opinions hostile to their interests, but gentlemen who would be able to bring to the deliberations of the Commission an open, just, and impartial mind. (Applause.) He considered that Mr. Esselen and Mr. Wylie, honourable gentlemen as they were, could not possibly bring open minds to bear on the inquiry, for the simple reason that they had their own human limitations and could not divest themselves of their anti-Asiatic views which they had expressed times without number. If the Government appointed the Indian's nominees, and thus honoured their sentiments, and granted, a release for the prisoners now in gaol, he thought it would be possible for them to assist the Government, and therefore the Empire, and bring, perhaps, this crisis to an end without further suffering. But it might be that they might have to undergo further suffering. It might be that their sins were so great that they might have to do still further penance. "Therefore I hope you will hold yourselves in readiness," he proceeded, "to respond to the call the Government may make by declining our just and reasonable requests, and then to again force the pace by again undergoing still greater purifying suffering, until at last the Government may order the military to riddle us also with their bullets. My friends, are you prepared for this? (Voices: "Yes.") Are you prepared to share the fate of those of our countrymen whom the cold stone is resting upon to-day? Are you prepared to do this? (Cries of "Yes.") Then if the Government does not grant our request this is the proposition I wish to place before you this morning: That all of us, on

THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW YEAR

should be ready again to suffer battle, again to suffer imprisonment and march out. (Applause.) That is the only process of purification and will be a substantial mourning both inwardly and outwardly which will bear justification before our God. That is the advice we give to our free and indentured countrymen—to strike, and even though this may mean death to them, I am sure it will be justified." But if they accepted the quiet life, he went on, not only would the wrath of God descend upon them, but they would incur the disgrace of the whole of that portion of the European world forming the British Empire. (Applause.) He hoped that every man, woman, and grown-up child would hold themselves in readiness to do this. He hoped they would not consider self, that they would not consider their salaries, trades, or even families, our own bodies in the struggle which was to his mind a struggle for human liberty, and therefore a struggle for the religion to which they might respectively belong. It was essentially a religious struggle—(hear, hear!) any struggle involving assertion of their conscience must be a religious struggle. He therefore hoped that they would hold themselves in readiness to

who might ask them to refrain from the battle. The struggle was one involving quite a clear issue, and an incredibly simple one. "Do not listen to anyone," he concluded, "but obey your own consciences and go forward without thinking. Now is the time for thinking, and having made up your minds stick to it, even unto death." (Applause.)

OTHER SPEECHES.

Mr. Kallenbach also addressed the gathering, remarking that he considered this more a human than an Indian question. (Applause.) Those events which led to the deaths of their compatriots must have been events where the people were greatly aggravated. As they were in prison, it was impossible for many of them to have been present at those incidents; otherwise it would have been their duty to be there. "I tell you that the first man who should be shot in this battle is Mr. Gandhi, when it comes to shooting again," added the speaker; "and then men like Mr. Polak, Thumbi Naidoo, Christopher, and others who have first taken this matter in hand, and I should be amongst the next. If your leaders are not there when shooting goes on, they are not fit to give you their advice." Had he, continued the speaker, the right to be released while hundreds of women were in prison? They felt they had no right to be released while the others were in prison, and demanded that all the other passive resisters should be released. (Applause.)

Mr. Polak said he went to gaol with joy and thankfulness, and felt it a shame and a humiliation to be free while his brethren and sisters were in prison. His wife had welcomed him back, but the law had declared that no Indian marriages were lawful, and that the children of such marriages were illegitimate. Was not that a shame and humiliation? He also criticised the composition of the Commission, and said that the Indian community was pledged to uphold the vital principle of consultation.

Mr. Ritch said that charges had been flung haphazard, not only at the Indians, but at those Europeans who had assisted them in this battle. It was the intention of the Indians to resist any further encroachments on the rights yet remaining to Indians in this country. They demanded to be recognised as civilised citizens of the Empire. The Indians were brought here to create Natal's prosperity by their sweat and blood and energy, and it was the responsibility of every ruling race to allow all of its subjects to rise in the social and educational scale to the best that was in them. He desired particularly to emphasise the fact that he was jealous not only of the rights of his Indian brothers, but also of that honour which was still regarded as precious by the large proportion of the European population. Europeans were not all slave-owners, but the population here had grown up here with this system in their midst. The atmosphere was poisoned with it, and it was a thing which Natal would have to out-grow. (Applause.)

The Rev. A. A. Bailie (superintendent of the Indian Mission, Natal) also spoke. He expressed his objection to the principle of indenturing Indians "en masse." Continuing, he said that he hoped the Indians would realise their hearts' desire in a really true and fair-minded Commission being appointed—(Hear, hear)—which would go into the question of every single grievance, and, if necessary, appoint a further committee to go into the social and moral welfare of the Indian people in Natal, so that the disgrace might no longer lie upon the Europeans as it did to-day. (Applause.) He hoped the Europeans would try to do what was just by the Indians. (Applause.)

THE RESOLUTIONS.

The following resolutions were afterwards carried:—

(1) "This mass meeting of British Indians of Natal, held under the auspices

been consulted as to the choice of members of the Commission, and it does not include any members representing the community, who are to be vitally affected by the Commission."

(2) "This meeting respectfully requests the Government to add to the members Hon. Mr. W. P. Schreiner and Sir James Rose-Innes, or such other eminent members of the European community in South Africa whose names would be acceptable to the South Indian community."

(3) "This mass meeting, in the view of the Government's accepting the view that the personnel of the Commission should be added to for the purpose of securing adequate representation of the interests involved in its inquiry, requests the immediate discharge of passive resistance prisoners from gaol, and, on its part, the Indian community undertakes to suspend passive resistance until the publication of the findings of the Commission. In the event, however, of the Government's refusal to comply with its requests, the community will be obliged to prosecute the struggle with renewed vigour and determination."

THE RESISTERS' PLAN

Another March into the T

There seem to be many (says the "Natal Mercury") who are anxious for the return of the recently-imprisoned Indian leaders, Messrs. Gandhi, Kallenbach, and the local Indian community is concerting a fresh resolution to renew the policy of passive resistance unless the Government concedes the request for special representation on the Commission of the release of the Indians now imprisoned in connection with the resistance episodes. The position is explained at length in the article produced in this issue which was by the three leaders to the Minister of the Interior last night.

It is a symptom of the position understood that the Indian National Congress, which meets at Karachi on the 27th, and 28th inst., will make the African situation a prominent feature of its discussions. There need not be any speculation now all the speculations which are current among the Indians on the occasion of the National Congress. It is at all events believed that the Government's refusal to accede to the demands formulated at the meeting, and set specifically out in the letter, active proceedings of the resisters will be postponed until after the Karachi Congress has opened. It is, in short, the design of the resisters to declare their attitude before the Government meets next Friday. There is a general opinion in general Indian circles that requests to the Government will be met with any affirmative response, and plans are already being formed for the campaign. This, it is believed, will be varied from the course adopted three months ago. The Government will probably be for the start with as large a contingent as can muster from Durban early in the morning of New Year's Day, and through Natal towards the T gathering accretions as the proceedings. Then, if the march is not with—though, as the leaders observe in their letter, "the other course left open for us is re-imprisonment"—the intention is to conduct a concourse of passive resistance amounting to some thousands supposed will be collected during

do not propose to their nomination; balance the effect have on the find we submit that it to appoint gentle standing, known bias, on the Commission venture to suggest Sir James Rose-Innes and Schreiner.

Immediately on moment's delay, we feeling of the Indian our agreeable surprise community had all would undoubtedly advice to it, that strong protests to Volksrust border been arrested and. In their statement stand, they inform illustrate that their was to lodge a request, the partisan character, given to the Commission further that two resisters had already for the same purpose

Our position, then clear. A mass meeting by the Natal Indian invited to attend, that we had to do with that the protest of the resisters. It is the hope as the place of the gentlemen and those proposed by the resisters. The nomination, that, before we to the Commission community to offer a course which is in the

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known to be an extremely intimate character and is hardly likely, therefore, that the Government's Indian policy, which, in effect, to be the subject of examination by the Commission, will be outside of his knowledge or approval. Mr. Esselen has not hesitated to proclaim his extreme anti-Asiatic views on more than one occasion.

This is what Hon. Mr. Wylie said deliberately in 1896 at the time of the now historic demonstration in which he took a leading part: "The Asiatic evil," he said, "was a widespread almost bubonic plague throughout the colony. The free Indian was like a canker eating into their very heart." And, again, referring to a naval man's remark that he would give a month's pay for one shot at the ships by which Mr. Gandhi and a number of independent Indians had arrived at Durban from India, Mr. Wylie is reported to have appealed to mob law by asking whether every man was prepared to shoot down a month's pay in this matter. Mr. Wylie led 700 railwaymen demonstrators to the Point in order to prevent the lawful landing of their compatriots. Three months later Mr. Wylie, not satisfied with the Government Bill, which apparently was not drastic enough for him, drafted a Restriction Bill to prohibit the immigration into Natal by land or sea of Asiatics except as indentured labour. Finally, they would object to Mr. Wylie on the ground of his close professional relations with the principal employers of Indian labour, whose attitude towards their employees will be also one of the subjects of examination by the Commissioners. He even recently he had expressed his opinion that the £3 tax should not be repealed. They did not expect these two Commissioners to bring to the public mind.

Mr. Wylie was not only complicitly compelled to attend the Commission, but the Government intended to make the Commission a partisan character, and that these gentlemen had been appointed to represent special interests. It was regretted that the Government had thereby imposed the necessity of demanding a representation on their own behalf. He considered that they were in duty bound to ask for an additional appointment of two eminent gentlemen of high repute whom they might have chosen, though they did not have an opposite character to that attributed to Mr. Esselen and Mr. Wylie. He submitted, therefore, the names of the Hon. Sir James Rose-Innes and the Hon. Mr. W. P. Schreiner, K.C. They commanded universal respect, and the Indian community felt sure that their appointment would ensure at least to a certain extent the safe-guarding wherever it might be necessary, of their interests, and if the Government were pleased to approve of these nominations, they would have removed the first and fundamental objection, namely, the grievous omission to consult the Indians in this matter. If they were to take part in tendering evidence before the Commission it followed, as a matter of course, that all passive resistance should be suspended. Pending the finding of the Commission they would have to ask the Government to resume a fulfilment of their contracts, not under coercion, but as they were now doing, but with a free will. They would have to ask the Government among the free community, who were after day seeking to join the ranks under incarceration, to resign their activity. It would, therefore, be recognised by the Government as necessary to release the prisoners. If those two suggestions were accepted by the Government, it would be their duty, to the best of their ability, to assist the Commission in its task; but if, unfortunately, the Government could not see its way to accept these suggestions in this matter, the alternative would be considered. It was nothing less than a

people, of wholesale imprisonment, of a separation of husbands from wives, fathers from children, and of all the terrible incident of a long and serious struggle with which they had now become so painfully familiar. They saw there three of those who led the recent strike, who went to gaol. They had already declared their intention of courting immediate re-arrest if the purpose for which the Government had released them was not achieved, namely, if, through their rejection of their submission, the Government made it impossible for them to tender evidence of the most material character which they, and they alone, would give. The time had passed for tinkering with the Indian question in South Africa. They had reached a stage, a frame of mind now, when the Indian status must be clearly defined. "We decline longer to be treated as a pack of children, a race of savages, or a class of helots," proceeded the speaker. "We demand the breadth of treatment due to men entitled to be free, entitled to the treatment of civilised free men, entitled to the treatment of people worthy to be citizens of an important Empire. We have a right to ask for something more than the grudging doling out of trivial concessions. We have passed the stage when the Government can say, and should say, of us, 'How little will they be satisfied with; how small a sop can we put them off with?' We do not ask to encroach upon the political preserves so jealously guarded by the Europeans, but we do claim as a right, not as a favour, the elementary rights of civilised British citizens. With a view to secure your formal approval of the sentiments expressed by me, certain resolutions will be submitted to you for your acceptance, which I hope this great meeting will carry unanimously."

MR. GANDHI'S SPEECH.

Mr. Gandhi was received with cheers on rising. He mentioned that he would have preferred to speak first in one of the Indian tongues, but in the presence of Messrs. Polak and Kallenbach, his fellow-convicts, feelings of gratitude compelled him to speak first in the tongue they knew. They would notice he had changed his dress from that he had formerly adopted for the last 20 years, and he had decided on the change when he heard of the shooting of their fellow-countrymen. No matter whether the shooting was found to be justified or not, the fact was that they were shot, and those bullets shot him (Mr. Gandhi) through the heart also. He felt how glorious it would have been if one of those bullets had struck him also, because might he not be a murderer himself, by having participated in that event by having advised Indians to strike? His conscience cleared him from this guilt of murder, but he felt he should adopt mourning for those Indians as a humble example to his fellow-countrymen. He felt that he should go into mourning at least for a period, which should be co-extensive with the end of that struggle, and that he should accept some mourning not only inwardly, but outwardly as well, as a humble example to his fellow-countrymen, so that he could tell them that it was necessary for them to show by their conduct and outward appearance that they were in mourning. He was not prepared himself to accept the European mourning dress for this purpose, and, with some modification in deference to the feelings of his European friends, he had adopted the dress similar to that of an indentured Indian. He asked his fellow-countrymen to adopt some sign of mourning to show to the world that they were mourning, and further to adopt some inward observance also. And perhaps he might tell them what his inward mourning was—to restrict himself to one meal a day. They had been released, he continued, not on any condition, but they knew that they were released on the recommendation of a Commission appointed by the Government, in order that every facility might be given not only to them, but to the Indian community, to bring before the Commission any evidence

a Commission, but he thought the Commission was open to the gravest objection from the Indian standpoint; and he was there to tender his humble advice to them that it was

IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCEPT

the Commission in a form in which the Indians had no voice. They were fighting for so many grievances, and the underlying spirit of the struggle was to obtain full recognition on the part of the Government of the right of consultation in anything which appertained to Indian interests. Unless the Government was prepared to condescend to that extent, unless they were prepared to ascertain and respect the Indian sentiments, it was not possible for Indians, as loyal but manly citizens of the Empire, to render obedience to their commissions or laws which they might have passed over their heads. This was one of the serious fundamental objections. The other objection was that it was a partisan Commission, therefore the Indians wanted their own partisans on it. This they might not get, but they at least wanted impartial men, who had not expressed opinions hostile to their interests, but gentlemen who would be able to bring to the deliberations of the Commission an open, just, and impartial mind. (Applause.) He considered that Mr. Esselen and Mr. Wylie, honourable gentlemen as they were, could not possibly bring open minds to bear on the inquiry, for the simple reason that they had their own human limitations and could not divest themselves of their anti-Asiatic views which they had expressed times without number. If the Government appointed the Indian's nominees, and thus honoured their sentiments, and granted a release for the prisoners now in gaol, he thought it would be possible for them to assist the Government, and therefore the Empire, and bring, perhaps, this crisis to an end without further suffering. But it might be that they might have to undergo further suffering. It might be that their sins were so great that they might have to do still further penance. "Therefore I hope you will hold yourselves in readiness," he proceeded, "to respond to the call the Government may make by declining our just and reasonable requests, and then to again force the pace by again undergoing still greater purifying suffering, until at last the Government may order the military to riddle us also with their bullets. My friends, are you prepared for this? (Voices: "Yes.") Are you prepared to share the fate of those of our countrymen whom the cold stone is resting upon to-day? Are you prepared to do this? (Cries of "Yes.") Then if the Government does not grant our request this is the proposition I wish to place before you this morning: That all of us, on

THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW YEAR

should be ready again to suffer battle, again to suffer imprisonment and march out. (Applause.) That is the only process of purification and will be a substantial mourning both inwardly and outwardly which will bear justification before our God. That is the advice we give to our free and indentured countrymen—to strike, and even though this may mean death to them, I am sure it will be justified." But if they accepted the quiet life, he went on, not only would the wrath of God descend upon them, but they would incur the disgrace of the whole of that portion of the European world forming the British Empire. (Applause.) He hoped that every man, woman, and grown-up child would hold themselves in readiness to do this. He hoped they would not consider their salaries, trades, or even families, our own bodies in the struggle which was to his mind a struggle for human liberty, and therefore a struggle for the religion to which they might respectively belong. It was essentially a religious struggle—(hear, hear!) any struggle involving assertion of their conscience must be a religious struggle. He therefore hoped that they would hold themselves in readiness to

do not propose to raise any objection to their nomination; it, in order to counter-balance the effect that their bias may have on the findings of the Commission, we submit that it is absolutely necessary to appoint gentlemen of South African standing, known to possess no anti-Asiatic bias, on the Commission, and, as such, we venture to suggest the names of the Hon. Sir James Rose-Innes and the Hon. W. P. Schreiner.

Immediately on our release, without a moment's delay, we began to ascertain the feeling of the Indian community, and, to our agreeable surprise, we found that the community had already anticipated what would undoubtedly have been our humble advice to it, that it had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission. We were informed that the community had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission. We were informed that the community had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission. We were informed that the community had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission.

Our position, therefore, is clear. A mass meeting was held by the Natal Indian Association, and we were invited to attend. It was our duty to do so, and we did so. We were informed that the community had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission. We were informed that the community had already sent strong protests to the Government against the proposed appointments, and had committed the same to the Commission.

The nomination is accepted, and we beg to state that, before we can tender our evidence to the Commission, the community to offer the evidence which is in its possession.

necessary to release the passive resisters who are presently undergoing imprisonment whether in the ordinary gaols or in mining compounds which have been turned into gaols. We hope that the Government will recognise the force of this prayer, for it would ill become us to remain free whilst those who have courted imprisonment partly through our advice are still under incarceration, and it would be hardly possible for us to advise other passive resisters to refrain, pending the inquiry by the Commission, from courting imprisonment whilst their brethren and sisters are suffering the hardships of a gaol life.

If the additional appointments suggested above are made, and if our request as to the release of the passive resistance prisoners is accepted, we would advise the community to suspend passive resistance pending the Commission's finding. Further, if we are enabled by the Government's accepting our suggestions to tender evidence before the Commission, we and other members of the community will have to have full and free permission to enter the different estates and collieries where Indians are employed, in order to collect evidence, and for the purpose of advising the people to continue to work under their contracts pending the investigation.

We take it that the Commission has sufficient powers to investigate all the grievances that have caused the revival of passive resistance as set forth in Mr. Gokhale's letter, and to make its recommendations to the Government.

Finally, we beg to place on record the advice that we have tendered to the community, that, whilst the finding of the Commission—enlarged in the manner suggested—will finally settle the dispute as to the allegations of ill-treatment of workers and others and the acts of the military, its recommendations on the grievances whose redress is being sought will not be accepted by the community in derogation of its demands. If, unfortunately, the Government does not see its way to accept our prayer, there will be no course left open to us but to seek re-imprisonment. We, as passive resisters, can never rest

still, having been discharged before the termination of our terms of imprisonment.

We beg to reiterate the declaration we have often made that, as passive resisters, we countenance no violence, even by way of retaliation, on the part of those who take part in the movement, whether as strikers or otherwise. We have repeatedly given effective advice, which has been acted upon, to the effect that passive resisters must submit to personal violence in the course of their passive resistance, even though such violence may entail death. It becomes necessary for us to re-declare the above view, as, after our incarceration, we observe that it has been alleged that on some estates strikers used violence.

The last two undersigned, as Europeans, desire to assure the Government that, in throwing in their lot with their fellow-South African Indian subjects, they have but rendered service to the State and to their fellow-Europeans. They have done so after very careful investigation, and their intimate experience of Indians of every grade has enabled them to see that the grievances of which the Indian community is seeking redress are grievances which are keenly felt by it, and for whose redress it has patiently waited for an unduly long time. It is because we firmly believe that to delay in granting the demands of the Indian community endangers the reputation of the Europeans of South Africa as members of a civilised race worthy of self-government, that we have so fully identified ourselves with their cause, and we ask the Government during this season, which for it means, or ought to mean, peace for all living in South Africa, to give the community an earnest of its desire to redress its legitimate grievances by accepting this prayer.

We have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servants,

(Sgd.) M. K. GANDHI.
H. S. L. POLAK.
H. KALLENBACH.

P.S.—May we request an early reply, as our dispositions are to be made by New Year's Day, in the event of an unfavourable reply.