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Indian Deputation to Lord Crewe.

WE HAVE great pleasure in reproducing a special verbatim report of the proceedings at the deputation to Lord Crewe on behalf of South African Indians. We are indebted to our London contemporary, "India," for this report:—

The Marquis of Crewe, Secretary of State for India, received at the India Office on Monday, Dec. 1, a deputation from the All-Indian South African League, who conveyed to him the views of the League on the position of Indians in South Africa. The deputation consisted of Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree, K.C.I.E., Mr. B. Dube, Mr. J. M. Parikk, Mr. C. A. Latif, Mr. S. A. Bhasia, Dr. Jivraj N. Mehta, Mr. N. M. Muzumdar, Major N. P. Sinha, I.M.S. (retired), Mr. M. M. Gandevia, Mr. A. S. M. Anik, and Mr. Shapurji Sorabji. Contrary to the announcement made in advance by "The Times," Mr. Ameer Ali was not present.

SIR M. M. BHOWNAGREE'S SPEECH.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree expressed on behalf of the people of India, resident in this country, and, indeed, in the name of all India, their best thanks to the Secretary of State for consenting to receive this deputation at this critical juncture. The grave situation which had arisen in South Africa, virtually affecting the position and privileges of the people of India as citizens of the British Empire, had made it necessary that they should be in possession of the views of the Imperial Government, and especially of the Minister responsible for the protection of their rights, as regards the solution of the difficulty. There was very little time left us to make the necessary preparation for a fully representative deputation, owing to which and with a view to meet Lord Crewe's convenience, the numbers present were not large. Owing also to their official position, some of their prominent men could not join it. But it could be easily conceived that there was not a person of Indian birth in England or elsewhere who was not in absolute unanimity with the deputation and its object. Sir Shapurjee Broacha, an influential representative of the financial and commercial classes in India, who had consented to attend, was unavoidably absent, but he had authorised the statement that he fully sympathised with and supported the deputation.

Lord Crewe was in full possession of the facts to which they had to draw attention. As to the prevailing feeling, he might say excitement, aroused among the people of India by recent events in South Africa, there was the powerful testimony of Lord Hardinge, who, in his utterances within the last few days, had given it accurate expression. These had served to pacify to some extent the intense indignation with which the people viewed the trend of thing in South Africa, and the Viceroy had thereby rendered to his King and country a great service. Like the rest of their countrymen, the deputation fully associated themselves with him in the demand he had made for a searching inquiry into the grievances and those dismal events which have resulted therefrom. They sincerely trusted that before they took leave, his Lordship would assure the people of India of his support of his Excellency in the attitude he had taken up.

A LONG AND SQUALID STORY.

The tale of the sufferings and indignities to which British Indians had been subjected in South Africa for years past was long and squalid. It was bad enough in the time of the Boers, it had been ten times worse since. Old laws to their detriment had been strengthened, new ones have been enacted, and all of them enforced with a rigour unknown before the establishment of British domination there. The effect of all this had been to harass the Indian settlers

there, and to lower the whole of the King-Emperor's Indian subjects in the eyes of the world, as a low order of human beings unfit to enjoy the ordinary privileges of citizenship in any part of the globe, for this brand of unfitness is being put upon them in other British Colonies and in foreign countries. How the all-protecting and merciful aegis of the British Crown, under which they were content and proud to live, could suffer three hundred millions of its subjects to be thus degraded in the sight of nations, naturally passed their comprehension.

THE BAR SINISTER.

That there was no justification for such treatment was evident from the fact that responsible Ministers of the Crown of both parties had repeatedly admitted the injustice and harshness of the laws directed against them, and had given repeated promises and pledges for redress. Their pledges had remained unfulfilled. Even such partial settlement of the most intolerable burdens such as the poll tax, and the unnecessarily drastic provisions of the Immigration Bill, which was last year dangled before their eyes, had so far been evaded. That settlement was understood to afford a temporary relief from some of the most irksome burdens which were making the very existence of the sufferers impossible, but were a long way off from any appreciable solution of their numerous wrongs; for so long as the people of India were laid under any disabilities on account of race or colour in any portion of the British Dominions, so long must they feel sorely grieved. That bar sinister must be removed at all costs.

It can hardly be contested that most, if not all, of the hard measures levelled against them were due to race prejudice and sought their extirpation from the Colonies. An attempt had been made to justify them on economic grounds. It was alleged that they had been entering South Africa in overwhelming numbers. That fiction had been over and over again dispelled. Then it was said that where a Colony had been built up by the British at great sacrifices, it was unfair that people of other nationalities should seek to compete with the Colonists. But British Colonies were full of foreigners who had had free access without let or hindrance, whereas British subjects were denied admission, because the colour of their skin was dark.

After years of patient suffering, and finding that even the little relief they had been led to expect from the more immediately pressing burdens was being finally withheld, some of them protested in the last few days against their situation, by passive resistance, and certain numbers of the indentured labourers went on strike. They knew the penalty of the technical offence they were committing, and willingly took their punishment. But the rigour, and, in many instances, the brutality with which their punishment had been, and was being, carried out, was the main ground of their and our complaint. The horrible tale of their maltreatment in various shapes came from quarters on whose veracity full reliance could be placed. It had been refuted by the local authorities, but past experience of the attitude of the officials there towards British Indians justified them in giving credence to the complaints. It had been alleged that the Indians first resorted to acts of violence. But even the almost one-sided reports that had appeared in public journals went to show that indentured Indians were sent back to the mines and fields to work under the lash of the sjambok, freely wielded by their employers, and it was only when thus driven to desperation that they adopted measures in self-preservation. The tale of so many deaths of Indians by the free use of firearms on the part of the local police, on the one hand, and, on the other, a few scratches or wounds

suffered by the latter in the scuffles, proved conclusively that the reports of violence by Indians were exaggerated.

THE NEED FOR INDEPENDENT INQUIRY.

At all events, there was a strong case made out for an independent inquiry on this point. Whatever the result of such investigation might be, it would be found that the wholesale exercise, as they believed, for the first time in the history of the British Empire, of the provision of law which authorised the conversion of compounds into gaols, could not have failed to result in a form of torture which the framers of the law could have scarcely contemplated. It was denied that the sjambok and other weapons had been freely used to compel men to do the very work which in their last desperation they had refused to perform. This travesty of law might be possible in a savage country, but it was a method of vindictive barbarism which ought to be impossible in any square foot of soil over which the British flag flies.

And all this had been done in the sacred name of law. But the laws of South Africa specially devised for the extermination of Indian settlers and immigrants were not such laws as a free nation would enact for the preservation of life, property, and order. The very legality of such laws was the culmination of injustice. It was to the enactment of laws of this kind that the people of India strongly objected, and sought the intervention of the Imperial Government to procure their repeal or modification. To their repeated appeals and entreaties towards that end, that Government had in recent years replied that it was helpless to intervene because South Africa was a self-governing Colony, although it had often admitted the injustice of the laws, and the oppression freely exercised under their operation. Under this plea the people of India were denied that protection which they had a right to demand from their Government, let alone a British Colony which derived its power from the British, and depended for its very existence on her naval and military protection. If in a foreign country any British subject was subjected to injustice, the Imperial Government was bound to interfere and secure redress, how, then, could it be argued that in the case of one of its own Colonies, which persistently maltreated the loyal and helpless subjects of a far more important part of its dominions, the Crown was powerless to intervene?

When self-government was conferred on South Africa, it was well known that even when the authorities there had limited and controlled powers of administration, they had adopted every means to oppress and disgrace the British Indian settlers. In fact, by repeated solemn pledges the Imperial Government at that very time was under obligation to ameliorate their condition. It could not be contended that, in transferring the administration to the Colony, Government deliberately avoided the obligation, leaving their Indian subjects to be trampled upon. In the discussions in Parliament a distinct assurance was given that the Crown's veto was reserved and would be freely exercised in regard to any measures which were unjust or oppressive towards its Indian subjects. That clearly showed that the self-government conferred was limited, with the authority of the Crown reserved. That was the view held both in India and here, and as recently as last Friday "The Times," which could not be accused of want of indulgence towards the South African administration, expounded this view in the following words:

"In these questions of broad Imperial concern its (i.e., the Imperial Government's) position is peculiar and its responsibility great. Small as its powers may be, it is the only Government which can weigh contending opinions and hold the balance between conflicting interests. Any measure, therefore, which may involve such interests should have its earnest attention in every clause; for though its power is in practice only advisory and diplomatic, it will seldom, if it uses its influence wisely, use it without effect. There is no question, we fear, that in this matter the Imperial Government did not employ the requisite care. It did not see that, before the Royal Assent was given to the Immigration Law, its provisions had been adequately examined; nor, having neglected this first duty, did it make any adequate effort to avert the danger of which it was frequently warned. It has now to repair the evil thus permitted to grow, and it can do so only in one way—by pressing, as soon as order is restored, for a full investigation into the grievances of the Natal Indians both before and during the strike. Lord Hardinge's insistence upon this necessity was in no respect too strong. It will not, we are sure, be resisted by General Botha's Government or by South African opinion in general, if proper steps are taken to show that it is real."

THE DEMANDS OF THE DEPUTATION.

The deputation would contend that it was the Imperial Government's duty to mediate at this critical moment. On it, and it alone, rested the responsibility for safeguarding the interests of India throughout the Empire, and God forbid it should renounce or fail in this solemn obligation. From a Capetown telegram in that morning's "Times" it appeared that at the Unionist Congress the president, Sir Thomas Smartt, had asked his party to do nothing which would make it more difficult for the local Government to listen to representations which would, no doubt, be made by the Imperial Government on a matter which concerned not only South Africa, but the whole Empire. The suggestion

was accepted, and unmistakable evidence was given thereby that responsible men on the spot looked to the Imperial Government to mediate. The Imperial Government was the final arbiter on these grave differences between the two sections of British subjects, and to that end it was respectfully submitted that the following immediate measures should be adopted:—

1. The release of the passive resisters and strikers now in prison.
2. The amendment of the Immigration Act to remove the racial bar, the refusal of domiciliary and existing rights, and the repeal of legislation which offends against the religious and marital status of the people of India.
3. The abolition of the poll-tax.
4. The institution of a thorough inquiry into the responsibility resting on both parties, the Indian and Colonial, for recent events, by a tribunal with adequate Indian representation.
5. The adoption ultimately of such measures by the Crown as shall secure to British Indians throughout the Empire, the rights of citizenship, which have been guaranteed to them by the solemn pledges of the Crown.

These were claims which the people of India had a clear right to submit to the Crown as its loyal subjects, and the deputation trusted that they would have the serious and immediate consideration of its responsible Ministers.

MR. B. DUBE.

Mr. Bhugwandin Dube said the deputation respectfully claimed that the rights of citizenship of his Majesty's Indian subjects in the Colonies of the British Empire had been assured to them over and over again. He would like to call attention to the pronouncements of a few leading British statesmen on the subject. The late Marquis of Salisbury, in the course of a dispatch to the Government of India in 1875, wrote:—

"Above all things we must confidently expect as an indispensable condition of the proposed arrangements that the Colonial laws and their administration will be such that Indian settlers who have completed their terms of service to which they agreed as the return for the expense of bringing them to the Colonies will be in all respects free men with privileges no whit inferior to those of any other class of her Majesty's subjects resident in the Colonies."

Again, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who is held in high esteem by members of all parties in the Empire, in an address to the Premiers of the Self-governing Colonies in 1897, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, said:—

"We ask you also to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which makes no distinction in favour of or against race or colour; and to exclude, by reason of their colour or by reason of their race, all her Majesty's Indian subjects or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful, I am quite certain, to her Majesty to have to sanction it. The United Kingdom owns as its brightest and greatest dependency that enormous Empire of India, with 300,000,000 of subjects who are as loyal to the Crown as you are yourselves, and among them there are hundreds and thousands of men who are every whit as civilised as we are ourselves, who are, if that is anything, better born, in the sense that they have older traditions and older families, who are men of wealth, men of cultivation, men of distinguished valour, men who have brought whole armies and placed them at the service of the Queen, and have in times of great difficulty and trouble saved the Empire by their loyalty. I say, you, who have seen all this, cannot be willing to put upon those men a slight which I think is absolutely unnecessary for your purpose, and which would be calculated to provoke ill-feeling, discontent, irritation, and would be most unpalatable to the feelings of her Majesty the Queen and of all her people."

THE INDIAN CASE.

The Indian case was put clearly in recent times by Colonel Seely, now Secretary of State for War. Speaking from his place in the House of Commons, as Under-Secretary for the Colonies, on July 31, 1908, he said:—

"If persons are admitted (into British Colonies) they must be given civil rights. 'Free' or 'Not at all' seems to me the sound principle for the British Empire . . . if any one is admitted under the British flag he must be a potential citizen, and must, sooner or later, be given equal rights with all other men. It was a strong thing to ask that any subject of the King should be deprived of his living and sent about his business through no fault of his own."

There could be no question that to their fellow-countrymen in South Africa and in the British Colonies belonged the ordinary rights of a British citizen by virtue of their birth under the constitution of the British Empire. But these rights had been unjustly denied to them by the Governors of the British Colonies. The Indian people would have been false to their ancient and noble civilisation, unworthy descendants of the Imperial races of India, unfit to value and to share in the great and glorious traditions of liberty and justice of the British Empire, if they had not resented—and

resented boldly—the infringement of their birthrights. They did not ignore the difficulties which faced his Majesty's Government on this subject. It was because their leader in South Africa, Mr. M. K. Gandhi, fully realised them that there was no demand at present for full potential rights of citizenship. They all believed and trust that sooner or later—sooner rather than later—the present unbrotherly feelings and opinions and treatment of their European fellow-subjects in the British Colonies would change in favour of the Indians, and that their rights would be obtained without having to make any demand for them. But the Union Government, instead of lessening the rigour of the laws and regulations humiliating to the Indians, has materially increased and intensified it. By the Immigration Act of 1913 the right of residence in Natal of their countrymen who had been indentured after 1895, and their children born in Natal, was taken away. In spite of the payment of the £3 tax they could never acquire the right of domicile no matter how long they lived there. That change would materially affect thousands of persons. Again, the statutory right of South African-born Indians to enter the Cape had also been taken away. Under Section 4 of the Cape Colony Act No. 30 of 1906 every person born in South Africa could not be a prohibited immigrant in the Cape Province, but now it was not so. The racial bar in the legislation of the Union Government was still retained. The £3 tax, which was now meant to coerce the workers into the slavish system of labour, still remained, in spite of what was in substance the promise of the Ministers of the Union Government to repeal it.

Without any fear of contradiction, he might say that, except for a few Ministers in South Africa and a few capitalists who were blinded by self-interest, all persons in the British Empire were now agreed that the monstrous tax ought to be abolished without delay.

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

There were several minor grievances which could be mentioned in detail here, but to make matters worse—to add insult to injury—the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Natal had ruled that the sole wife of an Indian who was entitled to reside within the Union could not join her husband and live with him simply because she was married according to the rites of the Moslem faith, which permitted polygamy. The result was that the wife of a Moslem or a Hindu was not a wife, but merely a concubine, and her children were illegitimate! Such a law could not possibly be a good and sound one. To say the least of it, it was outrageous. It reflected a slur upon the good name of their women and was an indirect attack upon their religion. It had produced an unprecedented storm of indignation in every family in India. It had induced over 200 of their gentlewomen, including Mrs. Gandhi, to prefer to go to gaol under sentences of imprisonment with hard labour rather than bear the stigma cast upon them. They had never claimed the legal recognition of plural wives, although the percentage of such marriages was only one. What they claimed was nothing more than what any civilised system of jurisprudence would allow to them. He hoped that their appeal for an immediate amendment of this law would not be in vain. No one deplores it more than Mr. Gandhi and his comrades that they should have been compelled to resume, that no alternative should have been left to them but to resume, the passive resistance struggle. The passive resisters sincerely wished to offend no one, to injure no one. They had been religiously scrupulous to avoid that. They only sought justice and fairness, the reasonableness of which was admitted by all thinking and responsible persons, by subjecting only themselves to conspicuous acts of personal suffering. Their countrymen in South Africa had always been too anxious and willing to settle the question peacefully, but no lasting settlement or peace could be acceptable to the sons and daughters of India which was not peace with honour. He appealed to the members of his Majesty's Government to give them an assurance that the pressing grievances and hardships of their countrymen and women would be redressed at an early date, and that Laws and Regulations of the Union Government would be administered in the spirit of justice and fairness. If this could be done, the passive resistance movement would be discontinued. He trusted that their moderate appeal to the conscience of the British people would not remain unanswered any longer.

LORD CREWE'S REPLY.

The Marquis of Crewe said:—I have listened with close attention to the observations made by the two speakers on behalf of this representative deputation. I need not assure you that the events of which you have spoken—events which cover a long period, events which prove a condition of general discontent among the subjects of His Majesty in South Africa, and which have now culminated in resistance to the law, in tumult, and in actual loss of life—these events are a subject of deep concern to all His Majesty's Government; and, of course, in particular, to myself, who, as Secretary of State for India, am finally responsible to Parliament and to the Empire for the well-being of India and Indians everywhere. As we all know, India has been deeply stirred by the reports which have reached her, and

though we need not adopt as proved facts every statement which has appeared in the Press, yet it is evident that grounds exist for most serious disquiet, and there also exists material for close inquiry both into the occurrences themselves and to the causes which have led up to them. As it happens, I have enjoyed opportunities of studying this question which, I think, may be regarded as unique. As Secretary of State for the Colonies for some years, and since then as Secretary of State for India, I have been deeply interested in this question. I have discussed the question personally and at length with the South African Ministers specially responsible—with General Botha, with General Smuts, and with the late Mr. Fischer. I have also discussed it at length with representatives of Indian opinion, with Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Polak, and last, but not least, with Mr. Gokhale, whose passage to South Africa I have only encouraged in the hope that it might lead to a permanent settlement there. I need not dilate on the character of the Indian spokesmen further than to say that I have always recognised in Mr. Gokhale a man of high ideals and of a single-minded devotion to the interests of his fellow-countrymen in South Africa. I should like to say this to this deputation as to South African Ministers, I believe that they are honestly anxious themselves to deal out fair terms to the Indian population in South Africa, and to see that the laws are humanely administered, but I am bound to say that they are often hampered by the existence in South Africa of a public opinion which is less enlightened than their own, and by a degree of racial prejudice from which as individuals they are themselves largely free.

THE MAIN CLAIM.

I think we shall be able to see directly the bearing of this particular fact on the position of affairs in South Africa. In the first place it is generally conceded that South Africa can claim to restrict the immigration into its dominion, that is to say, that if there had been no Indians there at all now, South Africa might have declined to admit any. But from this concession two reflections arise. In the first place, Africa invited the Indians there, and she has profited greatly in two ways, first, by the skilful labour of the indentured labourers in Natal; and, secondly, by the amount of pioneering trading which in the early development of the colonies was done by Indians. Further, we have to bear in mind that a special claim is established by these facts for considerate treatment of the Indians, a claim which I am afraid we cannot regard as having been generally recognised in South Africa as a whole. The main claim all through has been that there should be no racial discrimination against Indians or Asiatics as such, and objection is taken either to differentiation by the actual enactment of the law or by administrative order, or—and this may be noted—by published official statements of any kind. Note the bearing of this fundamental contention on the argument which has been mainly relied on by South Africa through the whole of this controversy and difficulty. The argument is that although the laws are in terms restrictive because South African opinion insisted on having them so, yet their operation has been so easily conducted that no practical grievances exist. That is the argument which has been used. On that it has first to be remarked that besides practical grievances there are such things as moral grievances which cannot be left altogether out of sight. Even taking the best of practical grievances, and regarding that as the reasonable subject of complaint, though I am quite certain the South African Ministers themselves have desired that the administration of the law should not be unduly burdensome to individuals, can it be said that this wish has always been carried out? The laws are necessarily administered by a number of different officials, of all grades—some of these officials may be stupid, and bound up with red tape and the literal interpretation of the law. Others, again, may be so affected by racial prejudice that they do not wish that the burden of the law may be lightly borne. So that, surely, it is a dangerous thing to depend, as South Africa seems to have done, on rational and sympathetic administration of the law to protect individuals from the operations of severe enactments in such circumstances as actually exist in the South African Union.

FAMILIAR AND SPECIAL INSTANCES.

Now, take some of the quite familiar and special instances which have been touched upon in the two speeches which we have heard. Now, it is not claimed by the Indian population in Africa that South Africa ought to legalise polygamy, but, on the other hand, the communities that practise polygamy surely demand reasonable consideration. And can it be fairly said that in individual cases this consideration has always been accorded?

Well, then, it is apparently recognised by Indians in South Africa—and this, again, we have heard mentioned in Mr. Dubé's speech—that they cannot enjoy unrestricted movement from Province to Province. Again we ask if the regulations which restrict that movement have been modified as far as possible, and has care been taken to avoid the withdrawal of powers which have existed in the past for poor members of the Indian community? Then we come to the most noticeable instances of any, and to the cause of the recent events of which we have been reading. What has been the history of the £3 tax in Natal, and the various questions of domicile which have been attached to that tax? Well, there is a regrettable obscurity as to what really occurred when the matter was last before the Union Parliament. Was it the fact that the Union Government were willing to drop the tax, but that it was maintained in deference to the views of the Natal members? That, I understand, is disputed. How far was the abolition of the tax even actually foretold or promised? There, again, there seems to be a difference of opinion as to what actually occurred? I can only say that it must be a great misfortune if the Indians in South Africa consider themselves to have been in any way played with in a matter of such weight and importance as this. This impost does not bring in a large revenue; it does not, so far as we can see, seem to serve any useful purpose, and a large body of public opinion in South Africa seems to regard it in the manner which I have just indicated, and yet it has become the main source of these recent difficulties. Rioting and loss of life have followed from it, and what is perhaps in some ways even more serious still, the prospect of long feud and the embitterment of relations for the future.

THE NEED FOR INVESTIGATION ADMITTED.

A number of persons have been punished for breeches of the law, some with sentences of considerable severity, but what has doubtless roused more public feeling in India was the repeated allegations of personal ill-treatment by flogging and in other ways. Now, these statements which have been circulated demand inquiry, and I am glad to see that General Smuts has gone to Natal to make inquiry in person. I need not say that His Majesty's Government will accept, and in my view everybody ought to accept, categorical statements regarding the conduct of their officers made by responsible Ministers such as General Smuts and his colleagues, but it appears to me that it is to the charges of illegal, or what one may describe as extra legal violence, that particular inquiry ought to be made. It is altogether wrong and purposeless for anybody to adopt a tone of menace towards South Africa. But I believe that the Government there will agree that if South African repute and the solidarity of the Empire were to be sustained by instituting a form of inquiry which was not solely official, no sentiment either of national or of personal *amour propre* ought to stand in the way of such an investigation. And I add that such an investigation to be fruitful ought to be directed not only into the particular circumstances of the last few days, but into the substance of the complaints which are the cause of the restless state of the Indian population of South Africa. I can assure you, in conclusion, that not only we at this Office, but His Majesty's Government as a whole, will continue to give unremitting attention to this weighty subject, and it is due, I think, to my colleague, Mr. Harcourt, and to his staff at the Colonial Office to state my conviction that though he and they may participate less than we do in the actual Indian point of view, yet they are none the less anxious that complete justice should be done to these Indian immigrants into South Africa whom circumstances have placed under the special care of their department. That, I think, is all I have to say to you this afternoon. I need only assure you once more that I fully recognise both the important character of your deputation and the supreme importance of the subject upon which you have come to speak.

THE RIGHT OF ENTRY.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownagjee thanked Lord Crewe for his statement, and for its sympathetic tone. In order that there might be no misapprehension on the subject he would repeat the impression that he had gathered from his lordship's speech. He understood that there was to be an inquiry, not only into recent events, but into the general question of the grievances from which those events arose, and that the interests of India in the course of such an inquiry would be duly represented by an adequate Indian representation. There was one remark in his lordship's speech to which he desired to draw attention. He had said that it was simply because Indians had gone in large numbers before all these questions arose originally, and because

they had been the means of building up some of the prosperity of some of the South African Colonies—that it was only on that account that their residence there could be tolerated, but that if they had not gone there when they did it was competent for South Africa to prohibit the entire immigration. He (Sir Mancherjee) respectfully submitted that to that view the Indian population would certainly demur, because as citizens of the British Empire, as loyal subjects of the Crown, they claimed the right of entry into all parts of his Majesty's dominions. If the deputation did not make that clear they would be accused by the people of India generally of not having represented their view, and a strong view it was that they entertained on the subject. They further understood, and were pleased to learn, that at all events an inquiry in which Indian interests would be duly represented, was promised. If he had read recent telegrams a right it would seem that General Smuts had ceased to inquire and was simply refusing now to interfere at all. With respect to the high standing of men like General Botha, General Smuts, and their colleagues, he submitted that if any laws affecting the Indians were objectionable, it was natural that subordinates should use the greatest freedom in the operation of those laws. Therefore, any such inquiry would be only *assisted*; at least it would not be a judicial inquiry. He entreated Lord Crewe to use his great influence with his colleagues of the Imperial Government, and to support the demand which Lord Hardinge had made that an impartial inquiry which should have the confidence of the world at large should be instituted both with regard to recent events and to the whole field of grievances from which these events had arisen.

A FURTHER STATEMENT BY LORD CREWE.

Lord Crewe in reply said: I must deal at once and shortly with the two points which have been maintained. In the first place, with regard to the general access of the subjects of His Majesty to all parts of the Empire, what I said with regard to the part played by the Indians of South Africa in building up the industries and activities of South Africa in the past was simply observed with the purpose of emphasising the claim which they thereby possessed upon the British and Dutch inhabitants of the Union. I had certainly no desire to engage in any argument on the abstract question of the access of all the King's subjects to any part of the Empire. Certainly I for one should never quarrel with any Indian who claimed that right or who considered that he or she ought to be freely admitted to all parts of the Empire. But as you gentlemen who are well instructed both in history and politics are aware, various communities within the Empire hold strong views which tend to modify that right of free access. On the second and more important question of an inquiry into South African events, and of the form which it ought to take, I ought to state that I have not yet had the opportunity of discussing this question with my colleagues in the Government. In stating my conviction that some form of inquiry not purely official would be desirable in order to satisfy public opinion, I was expressing my own view, although I have no reason to suppose that it is not generally held. The object, of course, of any inquiry is to get at the actual facts; it is more for that purpose that an inquiry is held than in order to satisfy the rights or claims of any particular person or set of persons, and if you ask me without prejudice as to whether I think that the Government of South Africa would agree to the holding of an inquiry before a tribunal partly composed of Indian residents in South Africa, I must frankly tell you I do not believe they would.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownagjee: Might it be suggested that there should be Indians on the inquiry nominated by the Indian Government through the Imperial Government?

Lord Crewe: As I said, the object is that all the facts should be brought out in a manner which satisfies the public both here and in India and elsewhere that they really have been brought out. If that is done, the actual machinery is surely of less importance than the fact that the truth is clearly brought out. That was the only point on which I had to make a small correction. I thank you very much for the kind words you have said with regard to my reception of the deputation.

The members of the deputation then withdrew.



Minister's Reply to the Leaders

The following is the reply of Mr. Smuts to Messrs. Gandhi, Kallenbach, and Polak's, letter of December 21st:—

"Department of the Interior, Pretoria, December 24th.
Gentlemen,—Your letter, which is dated the 21st instant and immediately communicated by you to the Press, has only to-day reached the Department of the Interior, and has been seen by the Minister. I am instructed to reply at once that the Minister is unable to accept the conditions on which you propose to give evidence before the Commission appointed by the Government, and to suspend passive resistance pending the Commission's finding, particularly the condition which involves the appointment of additional members to the Commission in the interests of the Indian community. The Commission was intended to be impartial and judicial in character, and in constituting it the Government consulted neither the Indian community nor the coal-owners and Sugar Planters' Association of Natal, nor could the Government for a moment, following the course you propose, give colour to the unwarranted reflections you make on two of the Commissioners appointed. The course you propose to pursue is noted and deeply regretted, not the least so in the interests of the Indian community which cannot but be profoundly affected by the lawless character of your procedure, and the gratuitous infliction of grace sufferings on the innocent, both white and Indian, and the consequent exasperation of public opinion throughout the Union.

(Signed) H. B. SHAWZ,
Acting Secretary for the Interior."

From the Editor's Chair

THE OUTLOOK

WHEN the Indian situation changes hourly and when most delicate negotiations are said to be going on, the most prudent course for responsible journalists would be, not, as Lord Curzon once put it, to have an intelligent anticipation of events, but to observe the strictest silence. We are glad, however, to be able to say that the so-called ultimatum, as the joint letter of Messrs. Kallenbach, Polak and Gandhi has been described, is now being gradually considered on its merits. The press statement issued by Mr. Gandhi soon after the sending of the joint letter, went a long way towards easing the situation. The postponement of the contemplated march is at once an indication that something is brewing and of the spirit of conciliation that has, we say, without fear of challenge, been a most marked feature in the struggle which has now assumed world-wide importance. Time thus gained is being utilised for informing public opinion and for marshalling our resources. There is nothing like being prepared for the worst and hoping for the best.

It has been suggested, in some quarters, that those who are guiding the struggle are recklessly misleading poor Indians to their destruction. It is a preposterous charge. The fact that thousands of Indians have undergone untold suffering shows that they were not going along a course they did not know. It is contrary to experience to find men, women and children undergoing suffering at the bidding of reckless advisers. As the special correspondent of the *London Daily Mail* has put it, these people must have been fired by what might almost be described as a religious spirit, and so it is. The struggle is a religious one. The poorest Indian realises that his and his country's honour are at stake. India's co-operation points in the same direction. Let us hope, then, that the Union Government will not light heartedly and indifferently

treat the question but that they will realise its importance and deal with the problem in a wise, just and statesmanlike manner.

THE COMMISSION

We publish elsewhere in this issue an advertisement received from the Government in regard to the Commission. But, though we publish this advertisement as we have published all advertisements dealing with public matters, we in no way associate ourselves with it at the present time. So far as we are concerned, the Commission is non-existent unless and until it is granted in accordance with the requests of the Indian community.

The Commission

Sir William Solomon is, of course, an ideal chairman (says the *East London Dispatch*), but why Mr. Esselen and why Colonel Wylie? It would have been far wiser to have chosen a less ardent supporter of the Government than Mr. Esselen is, and it would have been better to have had no Natalian on the Commission at all. The Government has bungled the business badly. In the first place it should have done as it once intended, and remitted the tax instead of listening to a few Natal supporters and waiting to see what would happen. Then, when, as a consequence of the troubles which followed on inaction, it was driven to appoint a Commission, the personnel should have been so chosen as to leave no openings for further agitation.

Letter from Mr. Gandhi

Writing on the 23rd instant to the *Natal Mercury*, Mr. Gandhi says:—

I venture to suggest that, in your editorial this morning on the resolutions passed at the mass meeting on Sunday, and upon the letter addressed to the Government by my colleagues and myself, you have taken up an attitude that is hardly calculated to serve the Empire. You see the mote in our eye, but you miss the beam in that of the Government. I do not admit that the tone adopted by the speakers at the mass meeting was aggressive or offensive unless the mere assertion of rights be so considered. In my humble opinion, the Government not only refuse to do justice, to which you consider we are entitled, but the manner of denying it is also offensive and contemptuous in the highest degree. Take the inspired telegram published this morning. According to it, the Commission has been appointed, not to conciliate us—we are beneath notice—but to conciliate the Imperial and Indian Governments. We are accused of being tools in the hands of the India extremists, and of nursing a fictitious agitation. Do you think that, if you were in our place, you would, under any circumstances whatever, take advantage of a seemingly relieving measure? I submit that if we have a grain of self-respect left in us, it is impossible for us, after learning the view of the Government—if the telegram does represent it—to recede an inch from the position which we have taken up. Peace for us is unattainable until we dislodge the Government from the attitude of contemptuous disregard of our sentiments.

In asking us to revise our prayer, you are asking us to surrender a principal, namely, that of the right to be consulted in matters vitally affecting us, the very thing for which we have been fighting, and now dying; whereas the Government, if they granted our prayer, would be only giving what we are entitled to, and what would justify them in the estimation of the civilised world.

You say that by its present attitude the Indian community is alienating the sympathy of its South African friends. This warning has been given to the community on many an occasion, and yet the truth of its cause has each time succeeded, not only in retaining, but in increasing it. It may be that we might, this time, have relied once too often upon its retention.

If so, I should be very sorry. I value that sympathy, but I value the cause more, and if, in prosecuting it, we must forfeit the former, we must be content for the time being, and believe in the ultimate triumph of truth, which is on our side.

Rand Newspaper's Views

The *Rand Daily Mail* says, in reference to the latest Indian demands: "Although we are perfectly satisfied that the Indian Commission appointed by the Government will bring up a thoroughly impartial report upon the trouble in Natal, we are not inclined to oppose Mr. Gandhi's request to add to it Sir James Rose Innes and the Hon Mr. W. P. Schreiner. It is possible that if the Government gave way upon this point it would be said that the concession was a sign of weakness. Our own inclination would be to regard it as evidence of confidence in the Government's case, for the Ministry would adopt the attitude that it was quite prepared to submit its actions to the review of the men suggested by those who have brought the charges against it. The main consideration is to secure an investigation satisfactory to all the parties concerned. If the inclusion of Sir J. Rose Innes and Mr. W. P. Schreiner, two eminent lawyers, would give more confidence, not only to the Indians in South Africa, but to the people of India, we see no good reason why they should not be placed upon the Commission. We should certainly prefer to find them upon the Commission rather than, say, the nominee of the Government of India, as has been proposed in some quarters. A unanimous report from Sir William Solomon, Mr. Esselen, Col. J. S. Wylie, Sir James Rose-Innes, and Mr. W. P. Schreiner would carry great weight, not only in South Africa, but in England and India as well. Moreover, the Imperial aspect of the dispute is so extremely important that the Union Government would be justified in going as far as it possibly can in order to show India that its attitude is not unsympathetic."

Mr. Gandhi Interviewed

Mr. Gandhi, interviewed by Reuter's on the subject of the reply received from the Government, said that there seemed in it a tone of conciliation of which he was trying to take advantage. He would not state anything beyond saying that he had placed himself in private communication with the Government, but he thought that a way out of the deadlock was possible, and that without any loss of prestige or dignity the Government could respond to the earnest prayer of the Indian community for representation of its interests. The Government's declaration that it, at any rate, did not intend the Commission to bear a partisan character, was a hopeful sign.

Mr. Gandhi added that he wanted to assure the Europeans in South Africa that he felt just as much for Europeans as for his own countrymen regarding sufferings to be undergone by them both, in a struggle of this gigantic nature, and that realising fully his sense of responsibility, he would leave no stone unturned to avoid a revival of passive resistance. He claimed to rank amongst the staunchest loyalists, alike to the Imperial Government as to the Union Government, and his loyalty being rather to the Constitution than to the persons, was unaffected by acts of Government, however harsh he might consider them to be. He, therefore, begged the citizens of South Africa to believe him in his declaration that he would leave nothing short of compromising his own conscience undone to avoid a recrudescence of sufferings. On his release from imprisonment he was deeply pained to learn that employers on the coast, for some of whom he entertained high regard, had to suffer losses. He only hoped that the Government would appreciate the private communication which he had made; and that the European public would lend their support, even though it might be on truth

Another Interview

The *Natal Mercury* has the following in its issue of the 30th December:—

Interviewed by our representative yesterday morning, Mr. Gandhi was asked as to the bearing of the Indian National Congress on the South African question.

"The effect of the Indian Congress resolutions which we have received," said Mr. Gandhi, "certainly strengthens our position, because the Congress has given its powerful and unanimous support, and it has expressed entire approval of our prayer that Indian interests should be represented on the Commission. I can therefore only hope that, what with the Congress's support, and what with the efforts that are being made by influential European friends to-day, to induce the Government to concede our prayer—which has been hailed by the whole South African Press as being just in itself—that this prayer will be granted by the Government."

"Unless we have a satisfactory reply in reference to our prayer, it will not be possible for us to take any part in the Commission; but just now, at the request of friends who have intervened, and in view of the fact that I am still in telegraphic communication with the Government, we have decided not to proceed with the contemplated march to Pretoria on Jan. 1, but that we shall wait until we know that we have left no stone unturned to arrive at an honourable settlement, and that there is no hope of such a settlement being concluded. For the present, the march is only suspended; but all the evidence I am receiving day by day forces the gravity of the situation on my attention. I see poor men are already making preparations, and people who go and tell them that the march is not to be proceeded with on Jan. 1 are not even believed. I am therefore endeavouring to circulate a leaflet signed by myself informing everyone that we are suspending the march for the time being."

Asked if it was intended to call out the Indians on strike again on January 1st Mr. Gandhi said: "We are not calling out the men on January 1st. But," he added, "we shall leave no stone unturned to bring about a strike, only with a view to bringing about imprisonment, and nothing else, if all the endeavours we are making for a settlement with the Government come to naught. I am hoping that the contemplated march will not be necessary, and there are reasons for my thinking that it may not be; but the communications that are in my possession are of such a delicate nature that it is not possible for me to say anything further at this stage."

Mr. Gandhi proceeded to say that he was pained deeply that the indignation of the Indians was aggravated by the stories of distress by the passive resisters released from gaol. He proceeded to detail allegations of "brutal and barbarous treatment" in Durban Gaol—that assaults were committed by native warders on passive resisters, that complaints were unheeded, and that many of the prisoners were suffering from dysentery. It was also alleged that they were given unwashed prison clothing to wear, were denied the use of books, and were chafed by responsible officers. Prisoners were stated to have been even bathed in sheep-dip after taking their bath; while allegations were made that many prisoners had to hunger-strike before their religious susceptibilities were respected. All these allegations Mr. Gandhi was reducing to affidavits, to be sent to the Government for investigation.

South Africa, in an editorial on the Viceroy's speech, says "there are six million natives in the sub-continent who can with difficulty be kept from spitting upon the Indians whenever the two races meet, and who have always been ready to 'wet their assegais' in Asiatic blood. What would those natives think if General Botha were to knuckle down to the Indian demands and place this immigrant coloured race on a pedestal to which it is not entitled?"

Indian National Congress

London, December 26.—Reuter's correspondent at Karachi telegraphs that the annual Indian National Congress opened there to-day, and was largely attended. The notable absentees were Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, the former's absence being due to indisposition.

The various speakers vehemently denounced the treatment of Indians in South Africa, and claimed that they were entitled to equal treatment with Colonials of European birth. They trusted that the Imperial Government would realise the position, which daily was becoming graver, and it was absolutely necessary that a Royal Commission should investigate the allegations made.

It was also urged that the time was opportune for the further employment of Indians in the Indian Public Service, especially in the higher grades.

Nawab Sayed Mahomed, of Madras, was elected president of the Congress.

The President's Address

London December 26th.—Reuter's correspondent at Karachi states that Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas, in welcoming the delegates to the Congress, dwelt upon the position in South Africa. He expressed his profound gratitude to Lord Hardinge for the attitude he had taken on the question, and said that the conduct of the Union Ministry in neglecting to raise even a little finger to remove the disabilities of Indians when the Immigrants' Regulation Act was passed was entirely indefensible and a sorry exhibition of weakness.

The president (Nawab Sayed Mahomed) in his address said that the spectacle of a world-wide Empire which was powerless to restrain an irresponsible Colony was incomprehensible, and caused dismay in the Indian mind. It was certainly derogatory to the high character of British statesmanship. He had no faith in the suggested friendly conferences in London between representatives of South Africa, India, and England. Indians should ignore the Union because South Africans were convinced that the South African War was undertaken for the sake of the Indian settlers in the Transvaal, and these had been the primary cause of the loss of South Africa's independence. He had more faith in retaliatory measures than in conferences and suggested placing an embargo upon the importance of Natal coal into India, the moral effect of which would be very great upon the Indians.

Congress Resolutions

London, December 27th.—The Indian Congress has passed a resolution protesting against the treatment meted out to the Indians in South Africa. The speakers vehemently claimed citizenship of the Empire, and had a strong belief in the political future of India with a harmonious working together of the various communities.

The proposer of the resolution in his speech said the Mogul Emperors saw a vision of a united India, and they ought to realise it under the aegis of British rule. He also voiced an appeal for the misunderstandings of the past to be forgotten.

London December 28th.—A Reuter telegram from Karachi says that the Indian Congress has passed a resolution to the effect that people of British dominions which refuse Indians the rights of British citizens should be ineligible for appointments in India.

The Congress also passed a resolution demanding the prohibition of indentured labour.

The Congress further decided to send a deputation to England to urge these and other resolutions.

Support from the Congress

Following cablegram has been received by Mr. A. from the President of the Indian National Congress, Nawab Sayed Mahomed:—
Twenty-eighth Indian National Congress, Karachi,

expresses deep indignation at ill-treatment Indian strikers, Natal, and accords cordial support to your request for extension of commission of inquiry commission by addition of two gentlemen enjoying confidence of Indians in South Africa and fervently trusts that your demand will be satisfied so as to secure full and impartial enquiry. India at your back in your struggle, heart and soul."

Meeting at Maritzburg

Mr. Gandhi, with Messrs. Parsee Rustomjee, Polak, and R. Gvindoo, all recently released from gaol, appeared at a meeting of Indians in the City on Saturday afternoon. There were about 1,000 persons present.

Mr. Gandhi, in a speech of noteworthy moderation, (says the special correspondent of the *Natal Mercury*) intimated that negotiation of an important character were proceeding in connection with the grievances of the Indians. Indians had, he said, to await the final issue of the negotiations. He counselled them to be ready, as it might happen that they would be called upon to join in the march from Durban to the Transvaal to court arrest. He did not anticipate that the march would commence on Jan. 1. It might not take place until Jan. 15. And in the event of such a march taking place, they had to make all the necessary arrangements for commissariat, which was a matter of very great importance. He claimed, in the course of his speech, that they were simply seeking to obtain the elementary rights of humanity and ordinary justice. Mr. Rustomjee and Mr. Polak also addressed the gathering.

Progress of the Strike

Fifteen Indians indentured to the La Mercy Estate were charged in the First Criminal Court, on the 24th instant, with refusing to return when ordered to do so, when released from prison, whether they had gone in connection with the recent strike. They explained in mitigation of their plea of guilty that they had returned to their barracks only to find that all their goods had been turned out. They returned to town in a state of fear, and laid their complaint before the Protector, who told them to go back. Previous to the late strike, they averred the bad treatment meted out to the Indians employed at the estate led several to suicide, and, if they now went back, there would be suicides by the dozen.

Asked why they had done so, the 15 said they were afraid they would be shot. They were cautioned and discharged.

Transvaal Indian Women's Association

An enthusiastic meeting of the Transvaal British Indian Women's Association was held at the Star Picture Palace, Vrededorp, on Sunday afternoon. The hall was crowded, about 300 women being present. Mrs. Rama Moodley occupied the chair, and explained the present position, after congratulating Messrs. Gandhi, Kallenbach and Polak on their release from prison. She spoke in strong terms about the Commission which had been appointed by the Government. The Government, she considered, should have chosen Commissioners more impartial than Col. Wyllie and Mr. Esselen, who were known to be antagonistic to the Asiatics. She suggested that Sir James Rose-Innes and Mr. W. P. Schreiner should be added to the Commission. About 150 of the women present offered their services, if they should be required, to go to Natal and join the march to Pretoria. Four representatives

of the Tamil Benefit Society were present by invitation and addressed the meeting. Several women also spoke, and it was decided with acclamation that each woman present should contribute 5s. to the Passive Resistance Fund.

The following resolutions were carried unanimously:

"This meeting of the Indian women of the Transvaal congratulates Messrs. Gandhi, Kallenbach and Polak upon their release from prison."

"This meeting respectfully urges the Government to comply with the request put by the Indian leaders in regard to the Commission appointed."

"This meeting places on record that unless the request put by the leaders be granted, the present passive resistance struggle will continue to the bitter end."

—Leader,

"Worse than Slaves"

We print the following from the *Pretoria News* of the 8th instant:—

Sir,—It was with much surprise that I read in your leading article of Saturday, the 6th instant, the statement that in British South Africa and more especially in Natal the most British Province in the Union, "the Asiatics were treated much worse than slaves."

This I submit is grossly untrue, and a wicked libel upon the employers of such labour in Natal, and it appears to me that in all fairness you should carefully reconsider this statement, and withdraw this infamous charge, or justify it to your readers in full detail.

I am, etc.,

JOHN DOUGALL.

(If Mr. Dougall will reflect a moment he will see that there is nothing grossly untrue or wickedly libellous in our remark. Let us consider the indentured "Coolies." If they were slaves, that is to say, if they were the property of their masters, they would be treated far better than they are to-day, the greatest care would be taken of their health and they would be well fed and housed comfortably. One of the strongest arguments—perhaps the only argument in favour of slavery—was the fact that it was so obviously in the interest of slave owners to treat their slaves well. Then again a slave had always the hope of obtaining his freedom and with it the full privileges of citizenship. The Indians in South Africa have no such hope under laws.—Editor, *Pretoria News*.)

News in Brief

The charge against Mr. West of harbouring indentured Indians at Phoenix Settlement has been withdrawn. It appears that the Attorney-General, after seeing the papers, declined to prosecute.

Sixteen Indians, including the Association leaders, charged with public violence during the month of November, were brought before Mr. J. Y. Gibson in the First Criminal Court on the 24th instant, when the charge against them was withdrawn on instructions from the Attorney-General.

On Monday morning Mr. Budree was released from Durban gaol, and he was met at the gates by several of the Indian leaders. Mr. Budree, like others had serious complaints to make of rough treatment.

The cases against Messrs. S. W. Shroff and C. R. Naidoo who were charged with inciting have been withdrawn by the Public Prosecutor at Verulam Magistrate's Court.

The magisterial inquiry into the deaths of the five Indians killed at the Blackburn and Hillhead affrays has been adjourned till January 6th. The bodies have been exhumed and an examination made by Dr. Hill and Dr. Fisher in the presence of Dr. Nanji, Mr. Ritch and Mr. West. The doctors' report will be presented, at the resumed inquiry.

An Indian was charged with trespassing on a tram line on the property of Harrison Bros., Avoca. The accused said that he was going to catch the train and was directed by someone to go that way. Mr. Harrison said that he did not know where the man was going. He wished it to be known that his firm strongly objected to any Indian going on their property, and he made the somewhat unusual request to Mr. West, who happened to be present, to make a note of it in *INDIAN OPINION*. The Magistrate cautioned and discharged the accused and warned him not only to refrain from repeating the offence himself but also to inform others.

At the Conference of the Union of Ethical Societies held in London on the 24th November, the following resolutions were passed:

That this Conference of the Union of Ethical Societies, held on November 22nd, 1913, views with the gravest concern the unjust treatment inflicted upon Indian subjects of the Crown by the dominant white races of South Africa, and it urges His Majesty's Government, and those in authority in South Africa and in India, to take immediate steps for securing the release from prison of Messrs. Gandhi, Polak, and Kallenbach, and for the removal of the grievances under which Indian fellow subjects labour in the Union of South Africa.

That this Conference of the Union of Ethical Societies expresses its sincere sympathy with its fellow members Messrs. Gandhi and Polak, in the imprisonment which has been inflicted upon them for championing the cause of the Indian workers in South Africa, and it desires to assure them of its complete abhorrence of all forms of race hatred and persecution, and records its earnest desire for their speedy release from prison that their work on behalf of the Indian workers may be continued.

The following are the names of the passive resisters who were sentenced at Volksrust last week; Messrs. S. Bob Khan, Letchymanam, Rathana Moodley, Armuga Naiker, Armuga Padayachy, M. Moonosamy Pather, M. Soopan Moodaley, Jeram Ranchod, L. B. Naik, Sellapa Naidoo, Rajoo Naidoo, Valoo Pillay, and Josey.

A meeting of the Mauritian and Colonial-born Hindu Society of Port Elizabeth was held at Port Elizabeth, at which resolutions were passed similar in terms to those passed at the other centres.

"Reginald A. Bennett, in the *Wireless Mail*, says:—It will probably come as news the majority of people not in close touch with British possessions under tropic skies that in June, 1914, by order of his Britannic Majesty's Government, all indentured labour is to cease in every country over which the Union Jack floats, and no new contracts are to be made." We do not know where the writer got his information.

A Reuter telegram from Singapore says that a special meeting of planters of the Malay Straits decided not to reduce coolies' wages, in view of the possible serious effect on Indian recruiting.

Discussing the £3 Indian tax, the *Rand Daily Mail* says:—"It is clear that no settlement is possible whilst the Indians defy the law, but, if it is true that the majority of the Natal members of Parliament are not in favour of the retention of the £3 tax, there may be a way out of the difficulty. If a well-known man, Mr. Merriman, for example, gave notice to move on the day the Union Parliament resumes business, that the tax should no longer be collected, and the Ministry announced its intention of accepting such resolution, a way of settlement might be open. No doubt there are certain disadvantages to such a step, but the probably there are greater disadvantages to every other suggested solution of the trouble. It seems to us that the only alternative to some such action is a prolong

ation of the struggle. The matter is one in which the Natal members should take the lead—Natal imported the coolies, and Natal imposed the £3 tax. If Natal now considers that the tax presses with undue harshness upon the Indians, it should say so."

The *Natal Witness* of the 24th instant, publishes, on the front page, photographs of Mrs. Gandhi and the other ladies who were released from gaol on the 22nd instant. Another group consists of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Kallenbach, Mrs. Polak and Mr. Isaac.

The railway authorities at Durban station played what they thought to be a clever trick on the crowd of people waiting to receive Mrs. Gandhi and party from Maritzburg on the 22nd instant. About five hundred people had assembled on the arrival platform, being informed by the European officials that the train would come in there. But this was only a blind, for the train ran in on the outside platform. Now this was a dangerous thing to do, as there were many women and children present and, when the crowd rushed out, there was danger of the weaker ones being knocked down. An attempt was made to prevent the people from going on to the outside platform, but the crowd, already irritated at what had occurred, would stand no nonsense, and, with a loud burst of cheering and hooting, the man at the entrance was swept aside and the people thronged the platform. We hope that the station-master will take a lesson from this incident.

In reply to a deputation which waited upon the then Attorney-General of Natal (Mr. Harry Escombe) on the 2nd of September, 1896, in regard to the £3 tax, the latter said: "As regards the Indians being put in prison for not paying, the answer was that the Indian Government point blank refused to allow the refusal of a man to go back to India to be treated as a crime. The money could be got in if the man was able to earn his living. If he could not earn his living, he could not pay."

The Licensing Board for the County of Durban recently refused a licence to an Indian, the Board holding that the Licensing Officer was entitled to hold, *inter alia*, that the applicant was not able to keep books himself in the English language. When the question was raised before, it was decided that, provided a set of books were kept by a competent book-keeper in English, the original entries could be made in the Indian language. This decision is therefore a step further towards the extermination of Indian trade.

All true lovers of freedom and justice will appreciate the following message sent to the assembled thousands at Bloemfontein on the occasion of the unveiling of the memorial in honour of the Boer women and children who died in the concentration camps during the late Boer War:—

"To ex-President Steyn and the people. In great weakness I struggled 7,000 miles to unveil your monument. At the last stage my body failed. Only in heart and spirit may I be with you to-day. We can never meet again. The words I had hoped to speak must go to you in print. Accept them from me. In bidding you farewell I leave you in the lofty companionship of the spirit, but I would fain have been the first to do them honour. Let this thought prevail. Pain soon vanishes, even its memory fades. What endures is the spirit in which it was faced. The spirit of heroic inspiration, manifested by your dead, has lived with me for thirteen years. You and your children have its precious possession for all time. It has penetrated the world at large; therefore your monument, which Mrs. Steyn will unveil on my behalf, is not only an African; it is a world monument, of which all world's women may be proud for they gave bodies to the Commonwealth. They were free to live, even unto death, hence it followed as night

followed the day that they were true also to their men, their country, and their cause, and have enriched your history. They have ennobled womanhood. None more deeply than I share with you to-day in according all honour to the dead."

The Chief Justice of Canada has decided that Indians can be excluded from Canada only for idiocy, disease, crime, or mendicancy, the same as other Britishers. It is the intention, says a Reuter's message, of the Canadian Government to introduce, in next session of the Dominion Parliament, legislation restricting Oriental immigration into British Columbia.

Johannesburg, December 14th, (*Mercury Special*).—The Government has made a number of grants in the cases of widows and dependents of persons killed during the strike disturbances, and of innocent persons who were injured. Grants have now been made in some 12 cases. Some of the amounts are as full grants, and others as instalments. The total amount so far distributed is approximately £2,000. In the majority of cases the grants are to persons injured.

London, December 14th.—A Reuter telegram from Washington states that the Pacific Coast Congressmen tried to induce the House Immigration Committee to amend the pending Immigration Bill in such a way that the literary test compelling immigrants to be able to read and write in some language should not qualify Asiatics for admission to the United States; but all their efforts failed. The Bill, as it stands, classifies as excluded aliens persons unable under the existing law to become naturalised citizens of the United States, unless otherwise provided for by existing agreements regarding passports, or by conventions that may hereafter be concluded.

NOTICE

Indian Inquiry Commission

It is notified for general information that His Excellency the Governor-General has been pleased to appoint a Commission the terms of reference of which are as follows:—

(1) to hold forthwith a Public Judicial Enquiry and to report as soon as possible as to the disturbances in connection with the recent strike of Indians in Natal, the causes and circumstances which led to that strike and to those disturbances, the amount of force used in the suppression of the disturbances and the necessity for the use of such force, and as to any acts of violence alleged to have been committed upon persons sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the strike; and

(2) to make recommendations in respect of any of the above matter.

The Commission proposes to sit in Durban on the 12th, January, 1914, and at other places in Natal on subsequent dates. Anyone desiring to give evidence is requested to communicate with the Secretary, stating what subject they propose to give evidence on. The Secretary's address up till the 7th January will be

37 Sauer's Buildings,
Loveday Street,

Johannesburg,

thereafter it will be care of the Chief Magistrate, Durban.

(Sd.) FRITZ B. ADLER,

Secretary.

इंडियन ओपिनिअन

बुधवार, ता. ३१ डीसम्बर १९१३

हिंदी और तामील

यह समय सत्याग्रहकी जो लड़ाई चली है और चल रही है वही लड़ाई कोइ तयारीख में माग्येज चला होयगा यह लड़ाईका सच्चा मान यह देखमें रहेंतें हिंदी और तामील भाषा बोलनार भाइ और बहनोंका है, इनका आत्मभोग प्रथम दरजजाका है, हमारे सब बंधुओंमें से कीतनेक तो गोरा सीपाहीओंकी जालीम गोलीकामी भोग हो चुके है, यह नरसीकिता सान और याददास्तके लीये हिंदी और तामील में खबरी छापनेका हमने निरणय कीया है, कीतनेक वापे अवल हम यह दोहुं भाषामें पत्र छापते रहे, परंतु मुस्कैलीयो के लीये हमारे बोह बंध करना पडा, आज तक यह मुस कैलीयों वुस् नहि हू है तथापि जो कोमका मनुष्यने इतना पडा आत्मभोग दे बीया है इनका मानमें हमारे बोदा मुस कैलीयो ठठा कर इतना तो कमतीमें कमती करना हमारा फरज है वेसा समज कर लडत चल रही है तब तक यह दोहु भाषामें एक ही पृष्ठ छापनका हम शरू करते है, इस काम हाथ लेनेमें हमारी मुराद, वेपारी साइस उठानेकी नहीं है, लडत बाद यह भाषामें पत्र छाप शकेंगे के नहीं वोह संजोगसे देखे जायगे.

सत्याग्रहकी लडतका खबर

बघोंसे चल रही यह सत्याग्रहकी लडतका हेतु पा. ३ का खुनी कर नीकाउनेका है, हिंदी धर्मालुसार जो खारी हुह है वोह यह मुलकमें मंजुर रखानेका है, यह मुलकमें पेशा हुआ हमारे भाइओंको केपमें १९१३ का नया इसीमेखल कायदा हुआ तब तक जैसा जाने आनेकी छुटी रहा वेसाही छुटी मीलना चाहीये, और यह मुलकमें जो जो कानुन हमारी कोमको लागू होतें है उसका अमल जुलमरहित होना चाहि ये, इस सबमेंसे हमारे गीरमीट वाले हिंदी भाइओंको तो गीरमीटका पा. ३ का कायदा तोडाने के सबवसे शमल कीया गया है, खुनी कर छुट जानके बाद वोह भाइओं यह लडतमेंसे मुक्त हो सकते है.

यह लडतमें मुख्य मुद्दा वोही है की सरकार हींदी कोम का हीतको धातोका विचार करते समय हमारी कोमका विचार देखे, आज दिन तक हिंदीओंको ऐसा गीना गया है की जीसकी लामनी पर कुच्छ ख्याल दीया नहीं है, उसका परीणाम अपने देखते है की पा ३ जैसा भी कर हमारे गरीब भाइओ और बहनोंको देना पडता है.

यह जुलमगार करकी सामने अपने बहुत वर्षों तक पोकार करा, समाओं बुलाया, अरजीओं भेजा, यह करसे जो बुरा परीणाम अपन देखते है उन परीणामोंका हाल विदीत करने का सोका हिंदुस्तान और विलायत जो जो देप्युटेशन गया रहा उन्होने लीया रहा, परंतु सभी अर्ण्य वदन समान हुआ.

अंतमें गत वर्षमें गोखले महाराज यहाँ आये रहे तभी उनको यह कर नीकाउनेका खुनीयन सरकारने विश्वास दीया रहा, परंतु अफसोस है कि हमारा मान्यवर गोखले महाराजका भी विश्वास मंग हुआ, परीणाम क्या आया वोह आंखोंसे अपन आज काल देख रहे है.

अबी सरकारने कोर्ट बीठाया है और उनको पा. ३ का कर और हाल जो सामला बला उनमें जो जो हमारे भाइओ पर जुलम सुजर चुका उसका तपास करनेका काम सोपे है, लेकीन यह कार्यमें भी सरकारने तो उनका इवेशका रीबाज मुजब हींदी कोमका अनादर कीया, इस परसे यह कमीशन को मंजुर करनेकी सामने हींदी कोमने सखत वांधा उठाया, और मां, गांधी, मी, पोलाक तथा मी, केलनबेक जेलमेंसे मुक्त हुए तभी डरबन आके सरकारको यह मतलबका कागद लीखा, और रबीवार ता. ३१ को रोज डरबनमें जंगी समा हुआ, यह सभामें मी. गांधीकी अनुमतीसे सरकारकी ऐसी राहके सामने अपना पुरा वापसंदगी बतलानेके लीये डरबनसे प्रीटोरीया तक हजारों हिंदी भाइ बहनोंकी कुच ले जानेका मुकरर हुआ.

पहेला कागद सरकारको लीखा उसके बाद दिन पर दिन मामला बढा गंधीरू देखनेमें आया, सरकारका जबाब आया है उनमें सभाधानीको छांय होख पडते है, भाक्षा दक्षिण आफ्रीकाके गीरे मित्र सत्याग्रहकी लडत फीरसे न उठाना पडे वैसे मुराद रख कर अपनको मदद दे रहे है, लोर्ड एम पथील लडनमें अरी महेनत उठा रहा है, और मी. गांधी तथा दुसरा भागेशनाका इरखास्त मंजुर करानेके लीये हिंदु स्थानमें गोखले महाराज आस्मान जमीन एक कर रहे है वैसे स्थितिमें पहेली तारीखका कुच हाल छरत तो मुक्तपी रहा है, कुचका दिन आगे पर मुकरर कीया जायगा तभी नोटीससे खबर होया जायगा, इरमीयान कोठांभोमें और दुसरी दुसरी जगहमें काम करने वाले सब कामदारो शांतिसे अपना काम पर रहेगे और भी भाइओंको खर करेगेकी हाल कुच बंध रहा है तथा खबर मीलनेसे कुचमें एकदम शमिली होनेकी सप्यागी रखे.

काम पर होवे या तो कीसी जगहमें हिंसे तपीभी सत्याग्रहीका धर्म हैकी कीसी प्रकारका जुलम और धमकी धातो ब्रास कीसीकी नहीं देवे, आत्स भोग—अपने पर दुख उठाने—का तो यह लडत है, वाणी और कर्मसे कीसीको ब्रास देने वाले सत्याग्रही नहीं कहा सकते है, हींदी और गीरेकी माल मील कतको हरेक प्रकारसे रक्षण करना वोह सत्याग्रहीका धर्म है, सत्याग्रही बुराईका बदला लेनेका ख्याल भी नहीं करे और सत्यकी खातद कोठी वाला साधेव अपका पोलीसके हाथसे मार यातो बंडुककी गोलीका धा भी इशरका नाम लेके सहन करे, शरीर हजारों तरहकी रक्षा करनेसे भी पडने वाला है, आत्मा अमर है.

इंडियन नेशनल कॉमिश्नकी २० मी बैठक कराचीमें ता. ३६ के रोज शरू होह, प्रमुखपदे नवाब सइयद महमद खीराजे ये, अपना सत्रालकी कोंगरेसमें प्रथम दरजजा दीया गया है, और अपने संतोषकारक कमीशन मीलें वेसा ठराव कीया है.