

Indian Opinion

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— EDITORIAL

Land Settlement

We have been privileged to see a copy of the Hon W.L. Heape's despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated 9th August, 1944, on subject of Land Settlement in British Guiana.

The despatch is as vague as it is incomprehensible and inaccurate and it is not surprising that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was unable to come to any definite conclusions. Although the Legislative Council decided that the recommendations of the Land Settlement Committee should be given effect to by the purchase of Plns. Cove and John and Vergenoegen, Mr. Heape, while administering the Government, in the absence of Sir Gordon Latham, who was actually in London in consultation with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the position was not made clear in the despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies with the result that he has recommended in his reply dated 4th October, 1944 that:—

"Having regard to the high cost of the work and to the complexity and difficulty of land settlement work in general, I consider that it will be desirable to move slowly in the matter until the Land Settlement Officer whose appointment has been provided for under the recent Colonial Development and Welfare scheme has had time to make experimental settlements and gain further experience of the most suitable methods

of land settlement under British Guiana conditions."

The Secretary of State recommended finally that "in view of the heavy expenditure involved and the difficulties and complexities of the question I should be obliged if I might be consulted before any definite steps are taken on the lines proposed."

Regarding the suggestion that the Land Settlement Officer should "make experimental Settlements and gain further experience" we cannot imagine how such a suggestion could be made by the Secretary of State. Is the Secretary of State and the Executive Officers of this Government unaware of the fact that Land Settlements are successful in many parts of the Colony, notably Windsor Forest, La Jalousie, and other places within the Colony?

The Land Settlement Officer is a most unsuitable person for the position and it is to be wondered what action, if any, the Land Settlement Committee will take in this important matter. Further it is time that strong action is taken by the interested members of the Legislative Council to let Government understand that the time for experiments in Land Settlement is past. The British Guiana Government has been experimenting for a CENTURY. Have they learnt nothing within this period?

From what we have been able to gather no less than twenty thousand families, Indians, Africans, and others are most anxious to settle on the land and no Land Settlement Officer, Consulting Engineer, Chairman of Drainage & Irrigation Board, Colonial Secretary and even the Governor should be allowed to continue to delay long suffering people from settling permanently on the land in British Guiana. Will the Legislative Council continue to allow a few men to continue to retard the advancement of the people of the Colony? Are the Vested Interests dominating the Colonial Office?

So far as our own people are concerned as we have mentioned before under our writings under REPATRIATION OF INDIANS, we advise our brethren to prepare to shake the dust off their feet from British Guiana as soon as conditions permit.

Sugar Estate Labour Libelled

As was announced last week Mr. George Wilkie Deputy Manager of Plo. Port Mourant was shot at on the Estate on Friday at about 11 a.m. This was certainly a lamentable incident; but there can be no human justification in the labour hating Daily Argosy's attack on the labouring section of the community because of this incident.

We cannot find words strong enough to condemn the Daily Argosy to the extent it deserves on its lopsided view in this matter.

Undoubtedly this is the attitude which destroys rather than builds good relationship among the people of the colony.

We cannot but call the attack on the labouring community by the Daily Argosy anything but yellow and cheap cowardice.

We would like to know where and from what authority the Daily Argosy got the information that "This dastardly act must set back for some time the improvement in the relations between Capital and Labour in this colony and more particularly the relations between Capital and Sugar estate Labour". Now do they know that the outrage was committed as a result of dissatisfaction between Capital and Labour?

Where would this type of condemnation of labour lead this country to by a newspaper that is supposed to represent all shades of public opinion?

We hereunder publish the editorial of the Daily Argosy of November 25th for the information of our readers and let them be the best judges of the unwarranted attack on the labouring community of the colony.

ANOTHER PORT MOURANT MURDER
The news yesterday of the death under tragic circumstances of Mr. George Wilkie, Deputy Manager of Port Mourant, is both alarming and distressing.

Continued on page 2

We may advise our members that arrangements are being made to send a Deputation to LONDON and DELHI to place the plight of the Indian people before the friends of Indians in the United Kingdom and India.

Rank Malnutrition on Sugar Estates

UNQUALIFIED DISAGREEMENT WITH
DR B. S. PLATT'S FINDINGS ON
NUTRITION SITUATION IN
THE COLONY

BY THE EDITOR

We cannot stifle our conscience and allow the statement that there is no gross malnutrition in the colony to remain unchallenged, no matter who is the person that makes it. With the fact at our disposal, we cannot bring ourselves to even partially agree with Dr. Platt's views; which can only be regarded as based on very incomplete information and observation. It is hoped that his detailed surveys later on would lead him to examine carefully those sections of the community that really and truly suffer from serious malnutrition.

We do not want to enter into the details of the discussions as was lectured to the Legislative Council but to clearly state that after discussing the matter with several Medical Practitioners and other Scientists, we have come to the conclusion that Dr. Platt will have to re-examine the statement he has made with regard to the malnutrition problem in British Guiana.

We do not question Dr. Platt's ability as a Scientist but certainly he is missing his mark if he says there is no gross malnutrition among the labouring classes of the Colony especially the Sugar estates. What kind of examination did he carry out in ten days?

We are prepared to accompany Dr. Platt and point out the places where the incidence of malnutrition is so serious among the workers that all true Scientists would do nothing else but strongly decry it.

The malnutrition problem of British Guiana is closely bound up with the economic structure of the colony. Dr. Platt say he is not an economist and cannot advise on this aspect of the problem but we do expect that he will re-examine his statement and reconsider his decision with regard to the malnutrition problem in British Guiana after his assistants have gone into the question again.

Meanwhile we propose to abstain from further comments until Dr. Platt has had an opportunity to make a more detailed survey and examination of the nutritional problems of the various sections of the community as we see it, on his return to the Colony.

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"Education For India of Tomorrow"

MILLIONS are being enfranchised and unless those millions are educated, popular government will be a curse and not a blessing to the country," said Mr. M. RUTHNASWAMY in a discussion on "Education for the India of Tomorrow," broadcast on April 24, in the A. I. R. series, "India Tomorrow."

Various phases of education—elementary, secondary and higher—which should be available for all the people of India to equip them for the new era of responsibility were discussed by the speakers—Sir C. V. Raman, Mr. Ruthnaswamy and Dewan Bahadur Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar—with Prof. J. H. Cousins presiding.

It was recognised that school education should be intimately connected with the daily life and the environment of the pupils, that from the early stages of education physical fitness of the boys and girls should be given primary consideration; that the sense of obligation or duty to one and another and to life at large must be encouraged in the young; and that stress should be laid on the development of productive skill and artistic taste.

As regards the proper basis for the expansion of secondary education, Sir C. V. Raman was for the establishing technical high schools intended for vocational education, Mr. RUTHNASWAMY held that second-

ary education should also take account of the social and cultural needs of the pupils and of the country, and should undertake the development of character.

The speakers then proceeded to discuss higher education. Sir C. V. Raman said that he would like to see students provided for in independent institutions following other than the traditional University methods and less weighted down by the examination system. "Our Universities, he suggested, might devote much more attention than they do at present to advance teaching and research."

Dr. MUDALIAR believed that technological studies of an advance type could be stimulated and would benefit by closer association with the study of pure sciences in the universities just as the pure sciences would benefit by such contact.

MR. RUTHNASWAMY thought that the universities ought also to provide higher education of a less advanced character to all those who were fit for it or were able to afford it. It was admitted that, while certain specialised courses of study would be of greater value to them, women students should not be denied access to any of the courses of study open to men. The needs of Public Services in relation to higher education were also discussed.

In concluding the discussion Prof. Cousins made it clear that it was not intended that the artistic aspect was to be left out of the higher grades of education.

—Indian Information

Sugar Estate Labour Lihelled

Continued from Page 1

We had hoped that in view of the apparently improved relations existing between Capital and Labour we had heard the end of the adoption of gangster methods on the Corentyne Coast or for that matter anywhere else in the Colony.

Law and Order must prevail in this country as elsewhere in the world.

Individual and personal safety must be guaranteed and we can have no sympathy with anyone who either attempts to take or succeeds in taking the law in his own hands and perpetrates acts which are contrary to law.

In this case Mr. Wilkie has been deliberately murdered this dastardly act must set back for some time the improvement in the relations between Capital and Labour in this colony and more particularly the relations between Capital and sugar estates labour.

We propose to reserve further comment on this regrettable incident until we are in possession of further and more complete information.

Meanwhile we cannot condemn too strongly despicable acts of this nature.

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AGENTS

The Status Of Women

That socio-economic changes on a large scale were needed to revolutionise the status of Indian women, was emphasised by RANI LAXMIBAI RAJWADE, Chairwoman, at the outset of a discussion entitled 'The Status of Women'—seventh in the series, "India Tomorrow"—broadcast from A.I.R. Stations on May 1. According to Rani Laxmibai Rajwade the problem of status was not political alone.

Those who took part in the discussion were: Lady Rama Rau, Mrs Atiya Habibullah and Mr S. Natarajan. MRS HABIBULLAH was of the opinion that the problem was part of the general problem concerning equality of opportunity for all human beings, men and women, and that, to begin with, economic equality had to be ensured by specific action. The speakers dealt with the question of women's right to equal pay, equal opportunity to enter the professions and equal rights of inheritance etc.

PURDAH MENTALITY

MR. NATARAJAN pointed out that making women economically independent was not enough in India where even the most advanced seemed still to suffer from the Purdah mentality. This led to a discussion on education for women, their legal rights, the joint family system and the existing marriage and inheritance laws. Suggestions were then made to remove the disabilities which prevented women from sharing in full the privileges and duties of citizenship.

Concluding the discussion, RANI LAXMIBAI RAJWADE expressed the hope that in their desire for equality, women would bear in mind their duties as mothers of the race, guardians of beauty and perpetuators of the spiritual values of life.

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India's Women Help the Navy

The Navy once was a purely masculine institution, but in Great Britain the Women's Royal Naval Service ["Wrens" for short] have long played an important part in releasing men for combatant duties afloat, and more recently the Royal Indian Navy has followed suit. There are women serving with it as officers and auxiliaries.

Not long ago men—and men only—paraded in their hundreds on the quarter-deck of H.M.I. Signal School at Bombay. They are now joined by women, each dressed in a white sari, or blouse and skirt, crowned by a Naval cap perched at a saucy angle. These are members of the Naval Wing of the Women's Auxiliary Corps, and they attend the Signal School for two weeks, preliminary training in Naval organisation, followed, if they are destined for the Communications Branch, by six weeks' instruction in cyphering and coding.

A revolutionary change for a Naval establishment, but the girls take their work very seriously, and have won golden opinions for their keenness to learn. They attend their own classes, and when the day's work is over, have a pleasant and roomy hostel to return to, situated just north of Malabar Hill, within sight of the sea. After serving for six months, an auxiliary—as a woman rating is called—can apply for a commission, or she may be recommended for one earlier if she has shown special aptitude. She then takes a two weeks' course in H.M.I.S. *Peroze*, the training establishment at Bombay for officers of the Royal Indian Navy. And that's a big change too, for until the W.A.C. (I) Naval Wing was formed, no woman had entered the establishment.

But one fine day the prospective W.A.C. [I] Officers marched firmly in and started to learn about the administration of a warship, about bells and dog watches, and what a 'make and mend' is [that, at all events, must have struck a familiar note].

Later, they were taken round the Dockyard and were shown over Warships, where bearded sailors gasped at the unwonted spectacle, but recovered their equanimity in the face of such a business-like desire to learn. For living quarters the W.A.C. [I] Officers were given the pleasant building known as Admiral's House, where the nautical atmosphere is enhanced by stirring pictures of sea battles and other mementoes of India's long Naval history.

Every woman who joins the W.A.C. [I] Naval Wing serves in a shore establishment in India either at a port or at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi—and so releases a man for active service. Auxiliaries act as

cypher and teleprinter operators and in other ways help to keep the worldwide network of Naval communications functioning smoothly. Others are engaged in secretarial duties. With promotion, responsibilities increase, leading to key appointments at Naval Headquarters and elsewhere. Serving in the Naval Wing are women from Madras, Bengal, Rajputana, the Punjab, Bombay Presidency and other Provinces and Indian States as well. There are Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians among them.

More members are wanted, to help relieve the strain on India's manpower, and they may either volunteer for local service only or else elect to be posted to a port or to N.H.Q. as required by the Navy.

Mr. Balkaran Singh's Observations At Inaugural Meeting Of Tagore Arts Society

Mr. Balkaran Singh observed that if the Tagore Arts Society was a Quasi-government body as defined by the Chairman, and it had always been the policy of Government not to discriminate, therefore there was something radically wrong with the rules which gave a self appointed Committee the privilege of accepting and rejecting applicants for admission to the Society; he further commented on the self appointed Committee who drew up rules with never a thought of our Courts; although they had a lawyer on this self appointed Committee, it was rather extraordinary that this Committee assumed that one was guilty before one had committed any act contrary to the rules of any good Society.

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Can Unemployment Be Uprooted In India ?

SEVERAL million men will come back from the war looking for jobs, and there will be other millions no longer required because war production will be at an end.

This state of affairs in post-war India was postulated by one of the speakers in the course of a discussion on "Can Unemployment be Uprooted?"—fifth in the A.I.K. Series, "India To-morrow"—broadcast on April 17.

Sir Raghunath P. Paranjpye was in the chair and those who took part were: Col S. S. Sokhey, Dr. John Matthai and Prof. R. Choksi.

"How are we going to deal with our millions in India?" asked PROF CHOKSI.

"Industrialise," suggested COL. SOKHEY. "When I speak of industrialisation, I am thinking of production as well as distribution," he explained. "Let production be planned for predetermined ends, and there will be no unemployment."

PROF. CHOKSI was for radical changes in the whole set-up of education. An ignorant people, he explained, have no armour against unemployment; and those who are armed by our system fight with obsolete weapons; and without an occupational bias we invite chaos and unemployment. If we remedied the faults, we would remedy education, and incidentally curtail unemployment.

DR. MATTHAI, who thought that Col. Sokhey's idea of planning implied that men must accept the service motive instead of profit, was of opinion that education might do a lot to inculcate the service motive.

The discussion was wound up by SIR RAGHUNATH who said that both short-range and long-range planning seemed to be absolutely necessary.

As a long term objective he wanted to see the service motive become more powerful than the acquisitive motive. This could only be done by planning education and requiring equal personal sacrifice from all. He concluded by saying that the Russian example was sure to have an immense effect upon the moral, social and economic outlook of the whole world.

— "Indian Information"

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Letters To The Editor

Editor, "Indian Opinion"

Sir,

The new Spirit Shops Ordinance at Rose Hall Village is a farce, for one can find that rum is being sold openly, during the closing hours without due regard for law and order.

It makes one wonder what the department concerned is doing.

Is government honest about this regulation or is it just a farce? Government must remember that the public is watching with great concern and particularly so the action of those who were against the Spirit Shops ordinance.

Will Government do something about it?

R SINGH.

Trinidad Indians Defends Negroes Cause

Sir,—I read with a great deal of interest and curiosity letters in your issue sympathising with my Negro friends on the question of language test for voters. I do hope that when this now much talked of delegation goes to London, the Negroes will be fairly represented among the delegates?

C. B. MATHURA

18 St. Vincent Street
October 10, 1944

Music Scholarship

The Editor

Port-of-Spain Gazette.

Sir.—Since death has robbed Mr. Philip Pilgrim of making use of the scholarship in music awarded him by the British Council, and British Guiana of the honour of two scholarships at one and the same time, the selectors ought to waste no time in offering the scholarship to some one else.

Trinidad can well benefit by British Guiana's loss especially if the Council wishes to save itself the condemnation of studiously avoiding one section of the community in deciding upon its awards.

Yours faithfully,

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