

Indian Opinion

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION

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ONE PENNY

INDIAN OPINION: Items of news interests and Literary contributions must be addressed to P.O. BOX 43, Georgetown, B.G. Features and other items appearing in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board. The editorial column reflects the policy of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

The Civil List

The Legislative Council passed an amendment to the Civil List on 28th November which increased the salaries of several Senior Civil Servants including the following:—

The Governor from £5,000 to £5,750 which includes contingencies and allowances in lieu of exemption from Customs Duty in addition to a free furnished residence.

The Colonial Secretary—£1,650

The Attorney General—£1,600

The Colonial Treasurer or Financial Secretary—\$1,400:

One of the reasons for increasing the Governor's emoluments from £5,000 to £5,750 is, we understand, to raise the status of the Colony to that of a first class Colony, similar to Jamaica and Trinidad.

With one exception all the members who were present at the Legislative Council voted for the increases and for raising the status of the Colony.

The Honourable C. R. Jacob who opposed the passing of the Civil List asked the pertinent question whether the increase of the Governor's Salary would automatically raise the status of the Colony? He thought that it was only reasonable to raise the salaries of the other Senior Administrative Officers to the level of the Trinidad and Jamaica scales if there is to be co-operation with the Governor, and less dissatisfaction among all ranks of the service.

Is the Government unaware of the fact that there is serious dissatisfaction among all ranks of the service especially since the Civil List has been passed? If His Excellency Sir Gordon Lethem is not aware of this fact, we advise him to make the necessary enquiries. So far as we are concerned, instead of raising the salaries of the officers on the Civil

Masses Confidence In Present Governor Waning

Deplorable Incident At Government House

Peaceful Party of Around Four Hundred Persons Dispersed by Squads of Police

Dissatisfaction of Government Method of Land Taxation Main Cause

On Monday one of the most shocking and immoral incidents took place at Government House when led by Mr. Jenaraine Singh President B.G.E.I., a peaceful party of around four hundred persons mostly East Indians were

forced to disperse by the police after awaiting for over four hours to place their grievance of increased land taxation and a breach of an oral agreement between themselves and the Government since the year 1912.

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List, certain salaries should have been reduced and further, certain officers should be either retired or promoted to other parts of the Colonial Empire, British Guiana, peopled as it is, can not bear the additional burden.

The estimated population in 1943 of the three Colonies is:—

Jamaica: 1,250,000

Trinidad: 600,000

Br. Guiana: 360,000

While Trinidad has a large surplus and a huge Reserve Fund, British Guiana has a huge Public Debt of \$20,000,000 and \$1,010,627 is being paid for interest and Sinking Fund in 1944.

We have been informed on the best authority, that the British Guiana Civil Service Association is gravely dissatisfied and their representatives had made strong representations recently to the Committee which enquired into the remuneration of administrative, professional, and technical officers regarding the disparity of salaries that are paid in Trinidad and Jamaica to officers of equal rank, experience and ability.

Regarding the dissatisfaction among the Administrative Officers, the following comparative figures of salaries should be of interest:—

In Trinidad, the Colonial Secretary received £2,000, the Attorney General, £1,750 and the Financial

Secretary, £1,750 during 1944.

In Jamaica, the Colonial Secretary received £2,000, the Attorney General £1,600 and the Financial Secretary & Treasurer £1,500 during 1943.

It will be seen, therefore, that the three Senior Administrative Officers in the other two first class Colonies are receiving far higher salaries than the officers of equal rank and status in British Guiana and since the Governor is entitled to the same salary as the Governor of Jamaica and Trinidad, the Senior Officers of this Colony should all demand that their status and salaries be raised immediately.

What is the Legislative Council going to do about this matter? Are the majority of the Members, who have really lost their right to represent the majority of the people going to give the increases and so make the Colony bankrupt? The New Legislative Council should take the matter up, and what is more our people should take a firm stand in this matter and rather than being exploited from day to day with little or no hope for improvement in the social and economic fields, our people should be prepared to say good-bye to British Guiana as soon as the world situation improves and India is in a position to welcome us back home.

Municipal Elections

MR. R. B. GAJRAJ SCORES VICTORY OVER MR. W. S. DERYCK

The Election of Councillor to represent Ward No. 1, Kingston on the Georgetown, Town Council for a term of two years beginning from January 1, 1945 took place yesterday and resulted in a victory for Mr. Gajraj a young businessman who defeated the retiring Councillor, Mr. W. S. deRyck by 12 votes for the Kingston seat.

Mr. H. E. Belgrave, Town Clerk, discharged the duties of Returning Officer and the elections were carried out in a most friendly atmosphere. A fairly large crowd was present at the declarations.

THE RESULTS

The returning Officer, Mr. H. E. Belgrave, announced the results at the end of the polling as follows:

WARD NO. 1—KINGSTON

Number of votes recorded—63

Mr. R. B. Gajraj ... 37

Mr. W. S. deRyck ... 25

Spoilt ... 1

Total ... 63

Majority—12

The Returning Officer, said that he therefore declared Mr. Gajraj duly elected Councillor for Kingston Ward.

NO CLIQUES

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Gajraj declared that to say he did not feel happy or proud would be a travesty of his feelings.

There was no doubt that when one took part in a contest and emerged victorious he must feel very pleased indeed; but one must not forget to pay homage or tribute where it was due. He desired to pay tribute to the electors of Kingston who turned out in full force to record their votes.

For many years, because the seat was not contested the electors of Kingston did not have to record their votes. He owed them a deep debt of gratitude; and promised to give them the best possible service in the Council. He did not propose to become a member of any group or clique but intended instead to work in the best interests of the people.

Continuing Mr. Gajraj moved a vote of thanks to the Returning Officer for the very efficient manner in which the election was conducted.

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The Lingua Franca Of India

Both Hindi and Urdu should be weaned from certain influences under which they have been functioning and which have made them drift further apart from each other, and should adjust and reconcile themselves to the needs of the times and to the requirements of the people.

These two points were brought out in the course of a discussion on "What should be the *lingua franca* of India?"—fourth in the A.I.R. series, "India To-morrow"—broadcast on April 10. Mr. A. G. Shirreff, Adviser to the Governor of the United Provinces, who presided over the discussion, was sure that if these two points were constantly and diligently kept before our minds, they would, in the not too distant future, result in the evolution of a common language for India.

Rai Krishna Dass and Rai Bahadur Ram Babu Saxena advocated their respective case for Hindi and Urdu, while Dr. Tara Chand looked upon Urdu and Hindi as two extremes of a single medium of speech. "Urdu goes on absorbing indiscriminately more and more Arabic and Persian words," he said, "while Hindi continues to imbibe a large number of Sanskrit words." Dr. Tara Chand observed that in evolving a national language for India no political or religious considerations should colour our judgment.

The discussion started with the postulate that *lingua franca* of India should be a language most widely spoken or understood and must be one which had naturally grown from the genius of people. The *lingua franca*, whatever it might be, should not replace any of the local or provincial languages but should serve as a means to inter-provincial intercourse.

India's War Supplies to Russia

A graphic picture of the work of Indian troops in carrying war materials for Russia through Persia and Iraq will shortly be available in a film which is now being prepared by a special team of cameramen.

The film tells the complete story of a gigantic undertaking from start to finish: from the time goods are loaded at a port in Iraq to their final delivery into Russian hands in North-West Persia. The whole journey of some thousand miles by river, rail and road—through varied landscape and weather—shows Indian soldiers at work as engineers, labourers, drivers and sentries, all performing their allotted task with skill and patience, often in the most trying conditions.

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Rice Producers Dissatisfied

Bunglings Of The B. G. Rice Marketing Board

For the past few weeks representations have been pouring into us from rice producers all over the colony especially the Corentyne area.

The Chief source of trouble lies in the bunglings and mismanagement of the Rice Marketing Board along with their inability to deal with the removal of milled rice from bonds rice-factories and other storage depots.

Every Rice factory, Bond and stelling is jammed, and packed to capacity and transportation is practically dead. We cannot imagine the lack of organization ability and foresight on the part of the management of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board to have created and allowed the existence and continuation of such conditions factors which are detrimental to the entire rice industry.

Matters have been reaching climax in some area where the economic set up of entire villages have been completely thrown into chaos and the lives of entire families brought to a standstill.

We cannot remain indifferent and allow the entire economic transactions of our people to reach such a pitiable and chaotic state.

We wonder what motive is guiding the Management of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board to thus treat the producers of rice.

We cannot and will not allow the B. G. Rice Marketing Board to retard the development of the rice industry which has been built up at the supreme sacrifice of misery and starvation by the East Indian population.

We demand an immediate enquiry by the elected Legislative Council into this matter which we consider extremely prejudicial to the rice industry and the people as a whole of British Guiana and the West Indies.

We have been demanding of Government a change of attitude in its manipulations with respect to the entire composition of the B. G. Rice Board and its Management. Government has to date given a deaf ear to our demands so that we place the present chaos as the entire responsibility of Government.

We hereunder publish for the information of our readers the composition of members of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board so that they may judge for themselves; if its possible for these men to in any way foster the development of the rice industry—

We maintain on our part the view of our columnist "Watchdog" who wrote on September 9th the following with respect to the personnel of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board. "The personnel of the Board is shocking to the

producers of rice. There is not a single member in its composition who will meet the approval of the actual producers."

The personnel of the Board is as follows:—

Hon E. F. McDavid Colonial Treasurer, Mr W. A. Macle Competent Authority, Mr. J. I. D'Aguiar General Merchant, Mr H. C. Humpbrys Barrister-at-Law, Mr Peer Bacchus General Farmer, Messrs H. G. Seaford, R. V. Evan Wong and G. H. Smellie Businessmen.

After our readers have examined these names we hope they will have some smelling salts nearby.

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Masses Confidence In Present Governor Waning

Continued from Page 1

The Governor refused point blank to see representatives of the party and instead ordered police—mounted and foot, to keep guard.

The incident of Monday was related as follows:—

At about nine o'clock Mr. Jenaraine Singh received a telephone message that he was urgently required as President of the B.G.E.I.A. at the Georgetown Ferry Stelling by a large party who wanted him to lead them to Government House.

At the Ferry Stelling were present around four hundred persons from Windsor Forest, Settlement who wanted to place their grievance of an increase of over four hundred per cent land tax before His Excellency and to state their dissatisfaction of Government's intention to place Windsor Forest under the Local Government Board against the wishes of the entire population there.

The party under pledge of peaceful behaviour was then led to Government House where the Private Secretary informed Mr. Jenaraine Singh that the Governor will not see the representatives of the party under any circumstances. The instructions from the party which was standing in front of Government House was then conveyed to Sir Gordon Lethem that they (the party) will sit on the avenue opposite Government House until such time as the Governor chose to see their representative even if it took them all day and night. The party thereupon squatted in the avenue. Mounted, foot and plain clothes police soon after arrived on the scene and patrolled around the peaceful party.

The Hon. Dr. J. B. Singh, Legislative Council representative of the district arrived on the scene, spoke to the party and then interviewed the Governor on his personal capacity. Unfortunately his efforts were fruitless and the dissatisfied party remained seated.

Refreshments were provided at about 1.30 p.m. to the party by members of the British Guiana East Indian Association. While this peaceful party was in the midst of their refreshment, increased number of foot police arrived soon after accompanied by a Supt. of Police and a full lorry load of policemen.

The Superintendent told Mr. Jenaraine Singh to ask the party to disperse but was told to give the orders himself. His efforts failed and the entire lorry load and other policemen around were called to disperse the party. Matters were fast coming to a climax. The object of the party was thwarted. Instructions were given to the seated party that it must now return whence it came and in the same manner without uttering a word of insult or committing violence of any kind.

Sugar Industry Places Profits Above Life

Unemployment Rampant

BY LIBERTY

The entire world is at war and men everywhere have so organized their community that they are making maximum efforts to produce every type of material whether for internal or external use in order to give an opportunity to all and sundry to earn a means of living. Unfortunately this cannot be said of British Guiana. Unemployment has been present to a considerable degree all through the war but recently has grown to such an alarming proportion that the Colony is fast becoming a place of increased misery and starvation.

The Sugar Industry which has always subtly influence the local and Imperial Governments to maintain a large percentage of landless and unemployed has again been active in this direction. The proprietors of the Sugar Industry have long placed

profits above human life. It is no wonder therefore that these men who reside in England are once again up to their old game.

The only strange thing about it all is that these men should continue to foster such a policy in spite of their being placed in a position to see in their own homeland to what extent man's brutality reaches out to man.

The exploitation and misery that these sugar estate owners and management subject the Guianese to is far worse than the actual bombing that they themselves have suffered. It is a great pity that the owner cannot realize that the only means of their continued existence lies in an entire change of policy. Their present attitude is definitely damaging to the British Empire and the earlier they realize this and change it the better it would be for all concerned.

NOTICE

For Sale

Steam Boiler, Pumps and Propelling Engines of Fire Float "Vesta"

BOILER—WITH FEED PUMP: Requires repairs when it could be passed for a pressure not exceeding 165 lbs.

STEAM PUMP—MERRYWETHER 1000 g.p.m. capacity. in good condition.

STEAM PUMP—HADFIELD 200 g.p.m. capacity.

STEAM PROPELLING—ENGINES—2 With reverse gear. In good condition—30 to 40 H.P. each.

With the exception of the boiler which requires repairs the pumps and propelling machinery are in good condition and suitable for use on sugar estates, rice mills, gold or diamond workings, etc. and the propelling engines could either be used in a boat or converted for use in driving a winch in the timber business etc.

Tenders require for the whole lot and must be addressed to Superintendent Georgetown Fire Brigade, Georgetown.

If no satisfactory tenders received the items will be put up to Public Auction separately.

Inspection at Police Headquarters, Georgetown, by appointment with the Superintendent Georgetown Fire Brigade.

C. T. MATTHEY
Superintendent, Georgetown Fire Brigade.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS;
Brickdam, Georgetown;
28th November, 1944.

Social Security

BY THE WATCH DOG

Modern means of Communication. The Airplane, Radio, Television etc have so connected up the world that no one part can today be considered separate from the other in the same way whatever happens in any one part directly affects the other.

England has been offered a "womb to tomb" social security plan.

Russia has demonstrated the vast strength of communism and its power to organize the entire population so that there is absolute social security from birth to death.

America has so industrialized herself that automatically all unemployment practically ceases and creates conditions to have about the highest standard of living of the world.

These three nations have undoubtedly influenced the path which should be followed by the people of British Guiana but to these people knowledge of the facts is not all as they are not in a position to implement any of their thoughts as the reigns of Government is entirely out of their hands.

To be Continued

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