

# Indian Opinion

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## PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH

**W**E are indebted to the *Daily Telegraph* for the full text of President Wilson's speech at Philadelphia. The President said:—

It warms my heart that you should give me such a reception, but it is not of myself I wish to think tonight, but of those who have just become citizens of the United States. This is the only country of the world which experiences this constant and repeated rebirth. Other countries depend upon the multiplication of their own native people. This country is constantly drinking strength out of new sources by the voluntary association with it of great bodies of strong men and forward-looking women. And so by the gift of the free will and independence of the people it is constantly being renewed from generation to generation by the same process by which it was originally created.

It is as if humanity had so determined that this great nation, founded for the benefit of humanity, should not lack the allegiance of the people of the world. You have just taken the oath of allegiance to those who temporarily represent this great Government. You have taken an oath of allegiance to a great ideal, to a great body of principles, to a great hope of the human race.

You cannot dedicate yourself to America unless you become, in every respect and with every purpose of your will, thorough Americans. You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourself in groups. America does not consist of groups. The man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become American, and the man who goes among you to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes. My urgent advice to you would be, not only always to think first of America, but always also to think first of humanity. You don't love humanity if you seek to divide humanity into jealous camps. Humanity can be welded together only by love, by sympathy, and by justice, not by jealousy and hatred. I am sorry for the man who seeks to make personal capital out of the passions of his fellow-men. He has lost touch with the ideal of America, for America was created to unite mankind by those passions which lift, and not by passions which separate and debase. We came to America, either ourselves or in the persons of our ancestors, to better the ideals of men, to make them see finer things than they had seen before, to get rid of things that divide, and to make sure of the things that unite

### United In All Things

It was but an historical accident, no doubt, that this great country was called the United States, and yet I am very thankful it has the word "united" in its title, and the man who seeks to divide man from man, group from group, interest from interest, in the United States is striking at its very heart.

It is a very interesting circumstance to me in thinking of those of you who have just sworn allegiance to

this great Government that you were drawn across the ocean by some beckoning finger of hope, by some belief, by some vision of a new kind of justice, by some expectation of a better kind of life. No doubt you have been disappointed in some of us—some of us are very disappointing. You found that justice in the United States goes only with a pure heart and a right purpose, as it does everywhere else in the world. No doubt what you found here did not seem touched to you, after all, with the complete beauty of the ideal which you had conceived beforehand.

But remember this: If we had grown at all poor in the ideal, you brought some of it with you. A man does not go out to seek a thing that is not in him. A man does not hope for a thing that he does not believe in, and if some of us have forgotten what America believed in, you, at any rate, imported in your own hearts a renewal of the belief. That is the reason that I, for one, make you welcome.

You dreamed dreams of what America was to be, and I hope you brought dreams with you. No man that does not see visions will ever realise any high hope or undertake any high enterprise. Just because you brought dreams with you America is more likely to realise dreams such as you brought. You are enriching us if you came expecting us to be better than we are. See, my friends, what that means. It means that Americans must have a consciousness different from the consciousness of every other nation in the world. I am not saying this with even the slightest thought of the criticism of other nations.

The example of America must be an example not merely of peace because it will not fight, but of peace because peace is the healing and elevating influence of the world, and strife is not.

### Too Proud to Fight

There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right. So, if you come into this great nation, as you have come, voluntarily, seeking something that we have to give, all that we have to give is this. We cannot exempt you from work. No man is exempt from work anywhere in the world. I sometimes think he is fortunate who has to work only with his hands, and not with his head. It is very easy to do what other people give you to do, but it is very difficult to give other people things to do. We cannot exempt you from work. We cannot exempt you from strife and the heart-breaking burden of the struggle of the day. That is common to mankind everywhere. We cannot exempt you from the loads that you must carry. We can only make them light by the spirit in which they are carried. That is the spirit of hope, it is the spirit of liberty, it is the spirit of justice.

When I was asked, therefore, by the Mayor and the committee that accompanied him to come up from

Washington to meet this great company of newly admitted citizens I could not decline the invitation. I ought not to be away from Washington, and yet I feel it has renewed my spirit as an American. In Washington men tell you so many things every day that are not so, and I like to come and stand in the presence of a great body of my fellow-citizens, whether they have been my fellow-citizens a long time or a short time, and drink, as it were, out of the common fountains with them, and go back feeling that you have so generously given me the sense of your support and of the living vitality in your hearts, of its great ideals, which has made America the hope of the world.

## Racial Unrest in India

The Rev. John P. Jones, D.D., Professor of Missions at the Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford; until recently Missionary at Madura, India, writes in the *Journal of Race Development*, published in the United States:

The race conflict is to-day world-wide in its sweep. Never was it so tense and never did it threaten so much to create national and international difficulty as at the present time. It is not only the German people who are clamouring for a place "in the sun." All the yellow and brown races are coming to a racial self-consciousness and are demanding larger rights and, in most cases, equal rights with the white man. The arrogant claims of the man of the West to rule the world by his own prowess in his own way and for his own interest is defiantly challenged by the colored races. They now rise in a new consciousness of racial dignity and of moral worth, and are asking the white man: "Who made thee ruler and judge over us?" I have never known this tension to be so great or the sentiment so strong and universal in India as it has been recently, owing to the unjust treatment of Indians in South Africa and, more recently, in Canada. They do indeed definitely say that they "do not fight for equal political rights, they recognize that in view of the existing prejudices, immigration from India should be strictly limited, provision being made for entrance of a sufficient number annually for reason of the wear and tear." These quoted words were written by an Indian authority.

This race conflict is not only acute, it is also unique in that land. It is to the everlasting credit of Great Britain that she has taught the people of India to claim as men those rights which are so dear to all. In all her 200 colleges the 37,000 students are inspired constantly by their English teachers to realize their manhood and to hold most dear all rights incident to that manhood.

In that land the racial difficulty is different from that in other countries. It is unique and peculiar in two particulars. (a) In the first place, it is not the conflict between superior and inferior races, as we are apt to characterize the racial conflict in this country. It is rather the meeting and the conflict of two long separated Aryan brothers, whose common home was somewhere, either in Central Asia or in Europe (authorities disagree). These two brothers were reared in the same home. They prospered and multiplied and finally, say, some four thousand years ago, separated; each to seek his fortune elsewhere. One found his promised land in western Europe, the other in southern Asia, in the peninsula of India. Each triumphed over his enemies in the new land and built for himself a home and founded a civilization all his own. By a strange and unique Providence these two brothers, after millenniums of separation, have come together and are jostling each other upon the plains and mountains of India. (b) In the second place, the bitterness of the present race problem in India is affected by another element. India is a part of the British Empire. She

now become a willing member of, and desires to remain permanently in the union. She appreciates the

dignity and value of this union with the white man in many ways; but under the training and through the instigation of the white man himself she is insisting that it be on honourable terms, that even if she enjoy not equal rights and privileges with the Anglo-Saxon she at least be treated with respect and dignity.

India is no longer willing that she, who constitutes three-fourths of the population of the Empire, be denied the same prerogatives as the other fourth.

But, unfortunately, this other fourth is not willing to grant her this request. The white man of England, or Canada, or Australia and of South Africa enjoys, and claims the right to enjoy, equally with the inhabitants of India, all the social, political and commercial blessings of that land. Yea, the white man can, and does, exercise prerogatives and enjoy privileges and opportunities in India which are denied to the native. What, however, chiefly exercises the Indian at this time, and what so annoys him, is that he is not permitted to enter the other countries of the Empire. Australia is a closed door to him as an immigrant. Canada has recently ruthlessly slammed her doors in his face. South Africa is willing to deal with him only as an inferior in semi-bondage, though she badly needs his services. Even in England he is made to feel that he is a *persona non grata* to be patronized as a ward it may be, but not to be welcomed as an honoured fellow citizen of the common Empire.

The sinister events of the last two years have roused all the people of India to resentment and indignation beyond anything I have ever known in that land. The recent treatment of Indians in South Africa and in Canada has stirred her to her depth and constitutes in itself a more serious menace to the integrity of the Empire than anything else I know.

Great Britain deploras this narrowness and racial prejudice of her colonies, but is helpless to remove them, since they claim absolute independence and are ready constantly to cry "hands off" whenever the mother country appeals to them on lines of Imperial union and harmony. The situation represents a similar *impasse* to that between state and federal authority in this land in reference to the reception of the Eastern peoples. The people of India are loyal to the Empire but with increasing vehemence they demand that justice and right to be dealt evenly between them and the white man, at least within the borders of the Empire. If the other sections of the Empire deny to them the right of entrance, it is but right that those sections also should be denied the right to come to India; and when this is accomplished, we shall witness the absurd and impossible vision of an Empire, which is made up of mutually independent and antagonistic elements whose only common law and aspiration is that of mutual exclusion and repugnance!

The only redeeming feature to the situation was the effort of the Viceroy to demand from South Africa humane, if not equal, treatment to the Indian. And this brought forth concessions from the South African Government. But that the Viceroy, who is eminently conciliatory and ambitious to help his Indian people in this struggle, is nevertheless a white man, possessed of the weakness and foibles of his arrogant race, is evident from his futile attempt to defend Canada in her recent expulsion of the shipload of Indian subjects from her coasts.

At the present time and stress of war India may be willing to hold these fundamental claims and rights in abeyance: but from this time forward Great Britain must count with this new aspiration and deepening purpose of India to find an honourable place in that great Empire. She has no desire whatever to leave the Empire; she knows that her highest interests are connected with it, and she now gladly and unreservedly throws herself into the great war, not only to demonstrate her loyalty, but also to prove herself worthy of the confidence of the West.

I anticipate that through this war India will reveal, as never before, and in a new aspect, the strength of

## Indian Indentured Labour in the Colonies

Sir Henry Colton, K.C.S.I., contributes the following article to *India* of the 28th ultimo—

Two years ago Mr. James McNeill and Mr. Chimman Lal were deputed by the Indian Government to enquire into the conditions of Indian indentured labour in Trinidad, British Guiana, Surinam, Jamaica, and Fiji. Their Report has now been presented to Parliament; and if I could possibly have praised it I would have done so. The two large volumes of which it consists are a monument to the industry of their compilers. But when I have said this I can add no more. The report is overwhelmed with a vast mass of detail which it was unnecessary to record; it bristles with statements and figures which are of no real utility; and on the other hand, it omits or slurs over perfunctorily the most vital facts and information which were within the writers' possession, but of which, apparently they entirely failed to realise the importance.

I would detest anyone to read this report without a sense of bewilderment. It may be gathered in a general way that indentured labourers are fairly well paid and well to do, that their tasks are tolerably easy, and that their health is carefully, though not always effectually, looked after by their employers. But there was really very little need for enquiry into these points, which have never been seriously disputed. It is evident that the number of criminal prosecutions for petty offences is everywhere excessive, that the magistrates are machines for sending men to prison, and that the duties of the Protector of Immigrants are inadequately discharged; but under these heads it is doubtful whether any information is elicited which is not already contained in the report of the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Sanderson. One may learn, also, though one has to dig and delve to find it, that the social conditions of life among indentured labourers are simply detestable and horrible, and that, when all other considerations as to the welfare of the immigrants are winnowed away into comparative insignificance, this one question stands out pre-eminent in a manner which can no longer be ignored. There is, however, no such pre-eminence accorded to it by Mr. McNeill and Mr. Chimman Lal, and that is the most surprising and disappointing feature of their report.

### • The Disparity of the Sexes

A former Chief Commissioner of Assam—it was not I—once described the condition of coolies on a tea estate as that of beasts in a menagerie. He was referring rather to their moral than to their physical condition; but whether the remark is justly applicable to tea coolies or not, there can be little doubt that it does apply to the Indian immigrant coolies in our sugar-growing colonies. Mr. McNeill and Mr. Chimman Lal are, of course, careful not to go so far, but this is what they do say of indentured women:

"The women who come out consist as to one-third of married women who accompany their husbands, the remainder being mostly widows and women who have run away from their husbands or been put away by them. A small percentage are ordinary prostitutes. Of the women who emigrate otherwise than with their husbands and parents the great majority are not, as they are frequently represented to be, shamelessly immoral. They are women who have got into trouble and apparently emigrate to escape from the life of promiscuous prostitution which seems to be the alternative to emigration. . . . What appears to be true as regards a substantial number is that they ran away from

home alone or accompanied by some one by whom they were abandoned, that they drifted into one of the large recruiting centres, and, after a time, were picked up by the recruiter."

If this be true of the source of supply, we can hardly expect to find that the condition of the women is materially improved on the plantation. The Commissioners write:

"As regards immorality on estates we have already stated that the majority of women are not married to the men with whom they cohabit. Of these unmarried women a few live as prostitutes, whether nominally under the protection of a man or not. The majority remain with the man with whom they form an irregular union. They are, however, exposed to a good deal of temptation as there are on all estates a number of young unmarried men."

In point of fact this guarded language, grave as it is, very imperfectly reveals the actual situation. Apart from all other explanation, the root cause of the appalling sexual immorality which prevails in every colony is the overwhelming preponderance of adult males to adult females among indentured immigrants. The Commissioners know this very well, but they touch on this point only to evade it, and I search the 334 pages of their report in vain for precise figures. Fortunately they are to be found in a return which was presented to Parliament by the Colonial Office in March, 1914 (Cd. 7262). From this return we learn that in Trinidad and Tobago the number of adult males is 31,989, and of adult females 17,159; in British Guiana the number is 53,083 to 34,779; in Jamaica it is 7,137 to 4,775; and in the Fiji Islands it is 20,062 to 8,785.

The mere statement of these figures is sufficient; and it must be remembered that these immigrants are ignorant and low-class people who live together on crowded plantations in colonies many thousand miles away from their homes, and that the unmarried men are absolutely unable to find wives or associates outside their own race. Mr. McNeill and Mr. Chimman Lal may truly say that the women who emigrate do so "to escape from the life of promiscuous prostitution which seems to be the alternative to emigration," but it would have been more true and appropriate if they had had the courage to add that promiscuous concubinage was the only possible condition of life which awaits them after emigration.

### The Result in Fiji

What follows? I will take only one colony, that of the islands of Fiji, which is undoubtedly the worst in regard to the disparity of the sexes. The attention of the Commissioners does not seem to have been particularly drawn to the number of cases of violent crime which are due to marital jealousy. They allude to it parenthetically, but give no statistics. I do not know how many cases of grievous hurt, homicide, and murder are annually to be attributed to this cause. But I do know that an extraordinary number of persons are annually sentenced to capital punishment in Fiji, and that the proportion of executions to population is larger in these islands than in any other place within His Majesty's dominions. And I know also that most of these cases are among Indian immigrants, and that the cause of crime is that which I have indicated.

I do not forget that when this question was directly raised by the late Mr. Pointer in the House of Commons as long ago as April 28th, 1914, the Secretary of State for the Colonies replied that its consideration was postponed pending the receipt of Mr. McNeill and Mr. Chimman Lal's report. There is the less excuse, therefore, for these gentlemen in passing it over without investigation. They do, however, enquire into the frequency of suicides among immigrants, and it will hardly be credited when I say that the number of suicides in Fiji during 1912, which is the latest year for which the Commissioners report, amounts to one in every 853 of indentured immigrants. In the Province of Madras, from which most of these unfortunates are said to

\*Report to the Government of India on the condition of Indian Immigrants in four British Colonies and Surinam: by James McNeill, of the Indian Civil Service, and Chimman Lal; Part I. Trinidad and British Guiana (Cd. 7744, 1s. 4d.); Part II. Surinam, Jamaica, Fiji, and General Remarks (Cd. 7745, 1s. 6d.).

come, the ratio of suicides in 1908, the latest year for which comparative statistics are given, was one in 22,873. That is a sufficiently startling figure in itself, but it is nothing when compared to the state of things disclosed in Fiji. The Commissioners observe that the greatest number of these suicides are due to "domestic quarrels and jealousy." They do not say how many of these suicides were men and how many women, and do not appear to have realised how relevant detailed information of this kind would have been to the objects of their enquiry.

The present rule requires that for every 100 male adult immigrants 40 women over ten years of age should be shipped. The Commissioners propose that there should be no minimum limit of age, and that the percentage of females to males should be raised to 50. Was there ever put forward a more inadequate remedy for a gigantic evil? They observe that "an increase to 100 per cent. may seem at first sight suitable, but that this becomes less attractive on consideration," and that "unless women emigrated as wives insistence on a parity between the sexes would be anything but a gain to morality." I confess I do not follow this argument, for the relationship of one man to one woman, even though no marriage takes place, appears to me a more moral arrangement than the sort of polyandry which now prevails. But why not suggest that only married couples should be accepted? I suppose that the answer to this would be that the task of recruiters would become an impossible one.

### The Only Remedy

If so, the whole system of recruiting stands condemned. The truth is, however, that indentured labour itself, within the confines of India and to distant colonies alike, is no longer defensible. It is no longer in the experimental stage, for it has gone on for more than fifty years. We are only too ready to blind our eyes to the inherent evil which accompanies it. With all the experience we have had, we are unable to eradicate that evil, and the only effectual remedy is to put a stop to indentured labour altogether.

Indian educated opinion has long been agreed on this point; the policy of Government is, I think, tending in this direction, and certain we may be that Commissions and Reports, and half-way measures such as this Report suggests, will avail nothing in permanently bolstering up methods which every instinct of morality rejects.

### The Democratic Spirit in India

At a recent "Canadian War Dinner to declare the essential unity of democratic ideals in the British Empire and the United States," Dr. Sunder Singh was called on to speak on behalf of India. His remarks are thus summarised by the *Toronto World*:—

Even more significant was the speech, brief and effective, of Dr. Sunder Singh, the representative of the Sikh nation, of whom so many are now fighting in France. Dr. Singh did not express his consciousness of any distrust existing in Canada towards him or the race which he represents, but he showed that he was prepared to meet any formulated expression of such distrust wherever it may exist. It had existed in India in official circles, and his countrymen demanded as a right the opportunity to take their place beside their fellow-Britons and help to fight the Empire's battles. Yet there was more than this, for it was the innate spirit of democracy stirring in India, as in Belgium and elsewhere, that brought these Indian troops into the field where democracy wrestled with despotism. India, said Dr. Singh, asked no more than that when the world had been delivered from the menace of German militarism she should be granted the rights purchased by the blood of the first-born in accordance with the principles of democracy for which they had fought.

### Colour Bar at the Show

At a meeting of the General Committee of the Royal Agricultural Society, held at the Show Ground, Maritzburg, a discussion arose (says the *Times of Natal*) on the subject of allowing coloured people to participate in the Society's events.

The Secretary read the rules of the Society on the subject, in which people of other than European descent are distinctly debarred from membership and all privileges accorded Europeans.

Mr. W. J. O'Brien said it was a pity that the rule had been read, as it was very ambiguous; and it would require all the Judges of the Supreme Court to decide whether a person was coloured or otherwise.

Mr. John Moor replied, stating that the rules of the Society must be upheld.

Mr. O'Brien: "Quite so; and we will appoint you to settle the question." (Laughter.)

### News in Brief

The attention of all those qualified is drawn to the fact that the latest date on which applications for registration as voters for the Durban Town Council elections can be sent in is to-day.

London, June 26th.—The Hindu Technical Institute of Lahore has offered the services of a hundred mechanics to go to England to make munitions.—*Reuter*.

India states that the appointment of Sir Edward Carson and Mr. F. E. Smith to be Attorney-General and Solicitor-General will be received with astonishment in India. A year ago these gentlemen were preaching open rebellion and resistance to constituted authority, if a legislative measure of which they disapproved was passed into law. To-day they find themselves the law officers of the Crown.

The Acting Controller of Labour, Federated Malay States, in his report for last year, states: All the Indian labour employed throughout the Federated Malay States is free. Labourers are landed free of debt, and are at liberty to leave their employment at any time upon giving a month's notice. Further, by an amendment to the Labour Code passed on December 14th, 1914, no Indian immigrant can enter into a written contract to serve as a labourer.

At a great meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel over which the Archbishop of York presided at the Albert Hall, London, His Grace called special attention to the levotion of the Indian soldiers in the war; at another meeting of the same Society the Bishop of Singapore insisted that the only way in which Christian and other efforts could flourish in India was by real comradeship between Briton and Indian. He, too, based his arguments upon the comradeship of both in the war and said that the growth and strengthening of that spirit would react in India so that "what perhaps seemed unnatural fifteen years ago will in the future seem an absolute necessity."

At the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Mr. J. H. Oldham, Secretary of the World Conference Continuation Committee, declared that the loyalty of India had touched our hearts most deeply, that loyalty was accompanied with expectation—the expectation of a larger voice in the counsels of the Empire. "Our relations with India," he added, "must in the future enter on a new stage—that of preparing India for freedom so that when she was ready for it, England should see India free."