

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

RACIAL riots have taken place in Chicago, resulting in 27 deaths and 1,000 injured, many of whom, says the Reuter message, died of their wounds. The *Times* correspondent at Washington says the beginning of the trouble arose when a negro bather wandered into the area reserved for whites, who drove him back with stones. This was the spark which ignited the smouldering blaze. However, the bad feeling is due to a variety of causes. Negro soldiers complained of the different treatment they experienced in the United States compared with their treatment in France, while white Bolshevik agents tell the negroes that they should use their military training as a hint to the whites that they are not inclined, after fighting for freedom abroad, to revert to the conditions under which they are treated in a humiliating manner. Negro preachers and magazines are saying practically the same thing, and also uttering a warning to the whites they had better look out unless they treat coloured people better.

We refer to the above in our leading article, and we also recommend our readers to observe what the *Natal Advertiser* has to say on the question in the leaderette which we reproduce in another column.

A mass meeting of Durban Indian waiters was held on Friday the 1st inst., at Rawat's Bio to discuss and decide upon the reply received from the masters. The Indian waiters have been organised since May last, and the beginning of the month a demand was sent to the hotel proprietors asking that the head waiters be paid £9 per month with food and quarters, and the waiters £6 with food and quarters or £8 without food and quarters. In reply to this, the masters appointed a sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. W. H. Hamilton, Joel, Oliver and Allerton, to meet a deputation of the waiters. The meeting took place on Thursday, July 24th, and the masters offered the sum of £5 with food, and £6 10s. without food.

We understand that the waiters have refused the above offer but refrained from taking drastic action until after the Peace Celebrations.

In the House of Commons (says Reuter from London), Mr. Bennett (Coalition Unionist, Seven Oaks) drew attention to the protests of the Indians in South Africa against the Asiatic Trading Act, and asked if in the event of the Union Government holding the promised new inquiry, the Government of India could assist the Indians to present their case. Col. Amery (Under-Secretary for the Colonies), in reply, said he had no doubt that a full opportunity would be given to the Indians to present their case, though he had no information at present in regard to the details of the proposed arrangements.

Mr. Jannadas Dworkadas has published a lengthy statement setting forth his reasons for severing his connection from the Satyagraha Sabha. After stating he could not agree with Mr. Gandhi on law-breaking

propaganda, he declares:—The circumstances which have led to the suspension of the movement have not materially altered and that its resumption is likely to create a ferment throughout the country more serious than witnessed during April and May. The contemplated action of Satyagraha Sabha would, he says, not only damage India's cause but would impede the growth of Satyagraha and endanger British connection. After pointing out that the situation had become more critical since the movement was suspended he says they must take into account the mischievous elements in the country which might take advantage of the law-breaking propaganda as a fit channel to work at their nefarious designs. His opposition to the Rowlatt legislation remains and he pleads for more constitutional agitations. In conclusion he appeals to Mr. Gandhi not to resume civil disobedience.

The following is an extract from the Budget speech of the Hon. Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, delivered in the House of Commons:—

He could not do better, in describing this body of men, than quote the words of a very great and distinguished Indian, Mr. Gandhi. There was no man who offered such perplexity to a Government as Mr. Gandhi, a man of the highest motives and of the finest character, a man who his worst enemy, if he had any enemies, would agree was of the most disinterested ambitions that it was possible to conceive, a man who had deserved well of his country by the services he had rendered, both in India and outside it, and yet a man who his friends, and he would count himself as one of them, would wish would exercise his great powers with a greater sense of responsibility and would realise in time that there were forces beyond his control and outside his influence who use the opportunities afforded by his name and reputation. His hon. and gallant friend (Colonel Wedgwood) would realise that Mr. Gandhi was not the only man who, despite the most laudable motives, sometimes showed a lack of political wisdom.

Colonel WEDGEWOOD: I should be quite content if I had Mr. Gandhi's virtues and powers.

We are glad to know that the efforts of the Durban and District Indian Educational Advisory Committee are meeting with success. Through the persistent work of this Committee a Matriculation class was established by the Education Department at the Carlisle Street School, Durban, about a year ago. The score or so of students who are preparing for the Cape Junior Certificate, are expected to sit for examination this year.

About the same number of boys, having passed the sixth standard last June, expressed the desire to proceed with higher studies, and it has been arranged to start a second class for them. It was only to be expected that the Provincial Executive, which controls education in the Province, would provide each year for those students who were ready, and we trust that we shall continue to see, year by year, fresh batches of Indian youths availing themselves of the facilities offered.

We understand that, as a result of an interview which the Secretary of the above committee (Mr. Suchie Maharaj) and Mr. Charles Nudliab of Maritzburg had with the Acting Superintendent of Education recently, a similar class is to be opened at Maritzburg. We hope that City Indians will take the fullest advantage of the offer and follow the example of Durban by forming an Advisory Committee to encourage parents and assist the Department.

So far only male students have joined these classes, but we hope that Indian girls will also be included in the near future. We know that Indian elementary schools only teach up to Standard four, but there is at least one institution in Durban that proceeds to the sixth standard and prepares girls for the Indian Teachers' examinations. So there is no reason why some of our girls should not take up higher studies.

We are afraid that *Natal Mercury* is becoming more and more un-British. It takes exception to General Smuts' views in favour of self-government for India even in a modified form, and tells the general that he had better let such matters alone as he was not too successful in his dealings with the Indian question in this country.

We do not quite follow the 'line of reasoning' in the above. It sounds silly enough. But for crass stupidity we have never seen anything to beat the following sentence from our contemporary's leading article:—"The Asiatic row demand free right of trade in the Transvaal, and this concession cannot be granted, because there is the possibility that the right would be exploited by German traders, who are already on the alert for openings for commerce."

The editor must be one of those crack-brained "vigilants" who see the bogey of a German at every turn. The obsession seems to have turned his brain. Ever Sir Abe Bailey and his friends do not suggest that a German trader might secure a footing in business disguised as an Asiatic!

The truth, of course, is that a German will have no need to hide behind an Indian. He will walk straight in and secure his licence to trade whilst a British Indian will be treated as an "undesirable person." The Transvaal swarms with every kind of alien trader, and it is from this class that the organised opposition to Indian trade comes.

We are also led to wonder why the *Mercury* is so anxious to save the Transvaal from these "dangerous" Indian traders. Has it forgotten that there are a few in Natal and even in Durban? Has the "free right of trade" which Indians enjoy in Natal been exploited by Germans? If not, why this nonsense?

Our contemporary well knows that Germans and other European aliens have always traded, do now, and will continue to trade, in the town of Durban and throughout Natal, with considerably less restriction than do loyal British Indians.

As for the *Mercury's*—or Lord Sydenham's—opinion that the vast majority of the Indian people "do not want to be interfered with" by the grant of self-government, we feel that our contemporary would be wiser not to express opinions on matters which it knows very little about. In any case its opinion is worthless.

General Smuts on his return to South Africa, referred in eloquent terms to the sacrifices made by English and Dutch, Natives and Coloured men, in the war. There was, he said, a great voice coming to South Africa from those thousands of graves all over the world, telling us they know no more bitterness towards

each other. There was no hatred that spoke from the grave. English, Dutch, coloured and black people everywhere had stood together and done their duty, and they all appealed to us to stand together for the future of this great country in the spirit in which they fought, and in which they struggled. "We have been comrades in arms, let us be brothers in peace—(Applause)—for only in that way shall we be able to realise the destiny that Providence has in store for us."

For the extension of the Durban Indian Market no fewer than 11 tenders were received by the Town Council. In view of the urgent need for the proposed increased accommodation the Council decided to proceed with the work at once and the lowest tender that of Mr. Charles Carr, Durban, amounting to £12,600 was accepted.

A correspondent writes to the *Natal Mercury* with reference to a paragraph which appeared in that paper concerning the question of the landing of five Mauritian workmen. He says they were debarred from landing at Delagoa Bay, and arrangements had to be made to land them at Durban, and then to convey them by rail to their destinations. He is particularly annoyed at the man "having to affix 'thumb marks' to their permits."

In view of the extremely high prices ruling for rice in the last few years, many planters on the Natal coast north of Durban and on the Zululand coast are seriously proposing (says the *Natal Advertiser*) to grow rice for their own requirements and to devote any surplus to the general markets. In years gone by quantities were successfully grown in Natal, and there is an increasing belief that there is scope for making it a paying crop.

A Reuter telegram from London states that much interest centered in the march past by the Indian troops, who were not able to take part in the recent Victory Pageant. They arrived in special trains from Hampton Court, and, headed by the combined bands of the Guards Brigades, presented a striking and picturesque appearance as they marched from Waterloo Station to Buckingham Palace grounds, where they were received by the King. There were also present the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, Field-Marshal Haig, and other notable personages. The King addressed the troops, thanking them for their devotion to the throne and Empire, for their services in the war, and cheerful bearing of suffering and sacrifices.

Says the *Pretoria News*: The Smuts-Gandhi treaty of peace, in which our great Imperialist was so badly beaten, was founded on one fundamental principle: "No more Indians to come in, and those here to be treated fairly and justly." Capt. Blackwell tells us that we are in danger of the menace of the Indian competition in the Transvaal. Let us consider what this competition means. If we expel the Indians how shall it profit us? All merchants belong to the parasitic class. That is true. But if we expel one parasitic class we merely open the door for another. If we expel the Indian we make room for the Russian and the lowest class of Greek.

If the Indians were to maintain the same standard of living, pay similar wages and salaries, in short, spend as much as the white man, merchant or mechanic, then a case could be made out for equal privileges, but they do not, and the fight would not be fair, (says the *Natal Mercury*, referring to the Johannesburg Conference resolutions).

The same journal, in its profound wisdom, solemnly declares that "we do not think visiting permits are possible." Our contemporary might with advantage study the Immigration Act.

THE CONVENTION

WERE we glad that the Emergency Convention of the South African Indian National Conference, held at Johannesburg, was well attended by delegates from every important centre in the Union. The presence at a united gathering of all sections of the Indian community is an indication that the Indian community is able, if necessity arises, to combine forces against the adverse elements arrayed against them. It is, of course, true that very excellent resolutions passed at the convention are in themselves mere pious expressions of opinions or in the nature of simple requests which the Government may or may not take notice of. But the fact that they embody the considered opinion of the thinking part of the Indian section of the population should be sufficient to show to the Government that they should be treated with respect and consideration. Such questions as the removal of the provincial barriers and the grant of the municipal and political franchise to every qualified Indian in the Union are not going to be solved by the mere asking. We should realise that our claims must be backed up by determination to achieve the objective desired. The rank and file must be educated up to the value of the vote and those who are at present in possession of the franchise should use it wisely and well. We venture to say that, when we are ready to demand earnestly the vote, no power will be sufficient to withstand our demand. It is not enough to ask for these things. We must fight for them. We hope, therefore, as a result of this Conference, every town and district will have its Voters' and Ratepayers' Association whose work it will be to foster public spirit. In the Transvaal, where there is not even the municipal franchise for Indians, similar bodies composed of eligible and would-be voters should be found with the object of pressing their claims to citizenship and educating their brethren in the duties of bourgeois and citizens. Let the Municipalities, Provincial Administrations and the Government be made to understand that we are serious and determined in our efforts to improve our status. We are here to stay. Our lives are cast, for good or ill, among our European fellow citizens. We feel the same pain and pleasure as they do, and we are willing to share the same responsibilities. If we claim equal legal rights it is because we accept the duties also. We admit that some of our people are not educated and are not yet ready to enjoy full rights of citizenship, but that could be said even of the large majority of the poor white population of the Union. The same argument has been used to keep down the rising ambitions of every nation and people on the face of the earth. For one section of the population to say that another is not fit to exercise political rights whilst doing nothing to assist them to fit them for that position is the attitude of the slave-owner.

The demand for education up to the University is timely. Everything depends upon what efforts we make in that direction. We must show the Government that we really want our children educated and that we will not rest satisfied with anything short of equal opportunity with others. It is the duty of parents, who can afford it, to encourage their children to continue their studies beyond the elementary stage. And it should be the privilege of wealthy Indians to assist poor parents to educate their children. We have a right to free education the same as Europeans, but we shall get that

in good time only by making sacrifices. We shall do well if we, as a community, determine that no child shall remain uneducated through lack of means. Our status depends upon education and nothing else; and that is why we lay stress upon it. Conferences may pass resolutions until doomsday but we ourselves are the real masters of our destiny.

THE DANGERS OF RACIALISM

THERE is an old saying: "Where there's smoke there must be fire." In discussing the cabled news from Chicago regarding the racial riots which have occurred there between whites and blacks, the *Natal Advertiser*, in a leaderette, gives expression to the same thought when it says:—"Men—even black men—do not rise up against the existing order unless there is something in the existing order which has made it intolerable to them." In other words, men in Ireland, Egypt, India, South Africa and elsewhere do not raise their voices in solemn protest and resort, in some cases, even to violence, thereby risking their own lives, unless there is reason for it. The Negroes of America have come to realise that, whilst they are good enough to die with on the battlefield, they are not to be allowed to live peaceably along with white people in their own country. No one is foolish enough to believe that the senseless wandering of a Negro hither into the area reserved for whites was in itself sufficient to arouse passions resulting in a deadly conflict with over a thousand casualties. In order to understand anything of the racial problem in America the mind must go back to the time when Negro men, women, and children were snatched away from their homes in Africa and sold as slaves to the cotton planters of America. It would need an ocean of repentant tears to wash away the stain of those crimes committed by a civilised people against a helpless, primitive race. But if, instead of sorrow and repentance, we find hatred and intolerance, the sin is aggravated a hundred-fold. To quote again from the *Advertiser*:—"There is no need for white men to fear the black if they treat him justly. If they will not, however, treat him justly, it is not the prowess of the black so much as the corroding sin of injustice that will finally involve our white civilisation in disaster." That is well spoken—and, be it remembered, by a South African newspaper. How well such words apply to our Native and Indian problems! If only the white population could realise the eternal truth:—"As a man soweth so shall he also reap," there would be change of attitude towards those who to-day are regarded as but hewers of wood and drawers of water. Those few Europeans who have espoused the Indian or Native cause in this country have no doubt realised this truth. They have, we believe, felt that, in helping to remove the racial bar, they have been doing the greatest possible service to themselves and their own nation. They have looked upon every form of racialism as an evil force which must inevitably bring about disaster to their own race if not checked in time. Surely, the warnings coming from all corners of the earth are loud and clear enough to arouse the sleeping world! Yes, the world is not yet awakened to the deeper things of life. War is no remedy for selfishness and arrogance. The remedy is to be found only within the human heart. Is it too much to expect that the dominant races of the world will come to their senses before disaster befalls

them? Whether it be in this country, or in America, India, Egypt, Russia, or wherever men cry out for justice, it is certain that, sooner or later, by one means or another, those who now suffer under the heel of oppression, and are made to drink the cup of humiliation, will come to their own; whilst the oppressor will just as surely be brought low.

RICE PRICES FIXED BY THE GOVERNMENT

The maximum prices of rice have been fixed by the Union Government as follows:—

All brown rice (except Madagascar rice) 60s. per bag wholesale—5d. per lb. retail.

All white rice, 72s. per bag wholesale—6d. per lb. retail.

Madagascar rice (white or brown), 47s. 6d. per bag wholesale—4d. per lb. retail.

Bag in each case to be 164 lbs. Wholesale prices to be regarded as f.o.r. Durban persons selling wholesale elsewhere than in the Borough of Durban, to be entitled to add cost of transport. In cases of dispute as to proper amount to be so added, magistrate of district to decide.

Nothing less than a bag of 164 lbs. to be considered a wholesale transaction, any less quantity to be considered retail.

Under sub-section (c) of (1) 2 of the Public Welfare and Moratorium Act, the Government has the power to expropriate stocks of rice, upon the terms therein laid down.

WHAT ARE "VESTED RIGHTS"?

DR. KRAUSE MAKES IT CLEAR

The following extracts from the evidence given by Dr. Krause, counsel for the Transvaal Indians, before the Select Committee on the Disabilities of the Indians in the Transvaal, puts the questions, what are "vested rights," and, what is a "successor," in the true light:—

The ordinary public, the people who do not think, and who do not come into touch with the Asiatic, they call every Asiatic a Coolie, no matter what he is. One does not, however, expect that from the Legislature. Apparently that was the position in 1885. They were only acquainted with a particular class of Indian. There were a few of the better class, but they were in a very small minority. The Legislature in those days was afraid of an influx from Natal, and that was what they desired to provide against. I hold that in 1885 the word Coolie was used in order to indicate the man coming from Natal. The Indian who traded at the corner of Church Street and St. Andries Street where Mr. Hamilton's shop is now in Pretoria, was M. C. Camrodien. He is dead now. That was in 1884. It is quite true that even in those days the decent class of trader was to a certain extent known to the people—although there were very few of them; the legislation undoubtedly also applied to them, but their right to trade was never restricted. So far as I know there has never been any agitation against the Indian dealers on the part of the rural population. The rural population gives great support to the Indian traders. The Asiatic dealer has been a friend of the rural population. I spoke of race prejudice against the Asiatics. I did not mean to convey that it was prejudice on the part of the Dutch or English race against the Asiatic—it is a prejudice against the coloured race. I do not wish to go so deeply into the matter as to say that it is a prejudice on the part of any particular section, and I do not mean to say that the prejudice comes from the rural population. It is not a general racial feeling coming from the rural population—the prejudice comes from the dealers and traders. I do not think that when General Smuts made the agreement in regard to vested rights, he referred only to rights existing at that time.

I think General Smuts dealt in general with the rights of the Asiatic community—he dealt with the inherent rights of the Asiatic community of South Africa, their right to trade—that was their vested right. Their right to trade was affected only in certain areas of the Transvaal, but none the less theirs was a vested right. The position is that even if they did not all exercise that right at that time, even if they were not availing themselves of that right, they could have that right—it was theirs. Say, for instance, to take another example, a man was a hawker at the time; that fact would not prevent him from becoming a wholesale dealer later on. Surely nobody wishes to say that he should always have remained a hawker. He had the right at the time to trade—consequently, carrying the point to its logical conclusion, he had the right to expand his trading. Many of those men were only hawkers in olden days, and have become great traders since, just as many of our present day millionaires started as hawkers in olden days. You ask me what were their rights which were not vested then—they had no right to acquire property, but the law did not interfere with them and it specially protected those who owned property at the time in 1885. They cannot acquire property yet, but they get property as companies to-day. According to our Company Law the property does not belong to the individual but to the corporation. You ask if they are not just availing themselves of a loophole in the Law—but I ask, how can you abuse the law if the Law allows you to do a thing, if it does not disallow you? There is another point; that say "you tell us that we must not have property, but why not? Here in the Cape the coloured man and the Asiatic have acquired property, and they have not done any harm in having property."

You ask me to give an explanation of the word bazaar as appearing in the Law. I should say it is a place where trade is carried on. In the Law of 1885 the word bazaar is not used at all. There are a number of other words used indicating the places where they should live; the Law speaks of streets, squares, etc., but it does not make any reference to bazaars. In regard to the use of the words vested rights and the interpretation given by Mr. Gandhi, you must not forget that he also speaks of successors there. Say a man has a business in Johannesburg, and the successor lives in Pretoria, there is nothing to stop the man who is living in Pretoria to go over to Johannesburg. If you grant that, and I submit that you cannot get away from that, then you must also grant that the man has the unrestricted right to shift his place as often as he wishes. The successor is always a newcomer, but my contention is that the successor need not necessarily have been carrying on a business such as the man from whom he is taking over. I hold that they all have the inherent right to trade. None of the men who are here were indentured labourers in the past. I do not say that they all had capital when they came in. Some of them worked themselves up, while others came with capital.

You will find that the petition which has been presented does not really say that the agreement entered into between General Smuts and Mr. Gandhi should be maintained. The petitioners are concerned with the safeguards and privileges which they have hitherto been allowed to enjoy. The effect of the agreement was that the question of immigration was settled and a general promise was made by the Government, that in respect of the administration of the existing law, where the Indians suffered under disabilities, the law would be administered in a just manner.

I interpret the word "successor" to be any person, any successor in title, no matter how he acquires his right to succession, whether he purchases it or otherwise. That is the only way in which you can explain it. It cannot mean, as has been contended, a man's heirs, because he cannot bring any of his heirs over the age of 16 into the country. As to the place where a successor has to come from, I do not think it necessary that a man to succeed another must live in the