

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

A SPECIAL message to the *Natal Mercury* states,—After considerable and costly litigation, extending over several years, it is now considered that the decision of the Appellate Court of South Africa in upholding the application of the Asiatic firm of Dadoo, Ltd., in controversy with the Krugersdorp Municipal Council, will bring the question of Asiatic trading to a final issue. The Krugersdorp Council, which has been involved in innumerable local appeal cases, invariably resulting in the Magistrate ordering the issue of a general grocer's licence, stands now in exactly the same position as prior to the first attempt to restrict Asiatic trading. Every feasible measure has been exhausted to check the Asiatic encroachment into business quarters of the town, but the Courts have not endorsed the of the Council. The question will, it is stated, be placed in the hands of Parliament.

The question of the presence of Indians and other coloured people on the municipal tram-cars has again received some prominence through the circulation of a petition in the town urging upon the Town Council the necessity of providing separate vehicles for the transportation of Indians and Natives. It is understood the petition is being very largely signed, and it is evident (says the *Natal Mercury*), that in view of public opinion the Corporation will have to take some steps in connection with the matter.

Discussing the question of Asiatic Repatriation the *Natal Mercury* ends its article in the following words:

"By all means let the policy of voluntary repatriation be carried out; but if there is to be any propaganda work in connection with it, such propaganda should begin with the Indians who are least indispensable, not with those who are most useful in important industries and irreplaceable by whites and replaceable only with difficulty, if at all, by Natives."

London, July 5.—In the House of Commons to-day, replying to Captain Wedgwood Benn (Liberal, Leith) and Mr. Kiley (Liberal, Whitechapel), who complained that Chinese labourers were again being indentured in Samoa before the mandate for that island was issued, Colonel Amery, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, emphasised that the matter was entirely within the control of the New Zealand Government. The Imperial Government never at any time was responsible for the administration of Samoa. He had no doubt that any reservations by the Samoan Chiefs against the importation of Chinese would receive the fullest consideration from the New Zealand Government, and he declined to submit the question of forbidding Chinese indentured labour in the mandated areas to the Council of the League of Nations.—(Reuter.)

San Francisco, July 2.—A plank in the platform of the Democratic Convention, dealing with Asiatic immigrants, says that the policy of the United States

with reference to the non-admission of Asiatic immigrants truly expresses the judgment of Americans, and it pledges itself to the support of States whose geographical position or internal conditions make this policy, and the enforcement of the laws enacted in pursuance thereof, of particular concern.—Reuter.

THE GOVERNMENT'S REPATRIATION OFFER

IT is now some time since the Asiatic Inquiry Commission issued its interim report on voluntary repatriation. People have, naturally, been anxious to know what the Government's scheme was, and our friends in India are asking for details. The Union Government have now given some indication of what they intend to do for those Indians who wish to avail themselves of the offer. Mr. Wynne-Cole, for many years Licensing Officer for the Province of Natal, has been appointed Repatriation Commissioner. We have had the opportunity, this week, of hearing from this gentleman's own lips what the Government's offer consists of. We are informed that the Union Government will pay the passage and all other expenses to the destination of those who wish to be repatriated. In order to relieve somewhat the hardship of the Gold Regulations and to remove what has undoubtedly been a barrier to Indians availing themselves of the privileges under the Relief Act of 1914, the Government have decided to allow every adult Indian to take away with him gold coin and jewellery to the aggregate value of £25 or £50 for every family. When asked whether more than two adult Indians in the same family would be allowed each £25, Mr. Wynne-Cole replied that two adults would go to one family and the other adults, if any, would be separate. So what it amounts to is that each adult, married or single, is to be allowed to take away their own property in the shape of gold or jewellery to the total value of £25. In addition to these inducements, the Union Government is given to understand by Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. Corbet, the representatives of the Government of India at present in this country, that employment will be found in India for all those who will accept it. It is stated that there is a shortage of labour in India and that the wages are in some cases as much as one rupee per day. Asked as to any further inducements in the way of a gift of money or other compensation for relinquishing their rights of residence in South Africa, Mr. Wynne-Cole said that the Government were considering the matter in consultation with the Government of India, and he was not prepared to say for the moment what further offers would be made, but he believed that they would be both attractive and substantial.

We had the privilege of attending also a meeting of Employers of Indian labour and others interested in the repatriation movement at which the Repatriation Commissioner explained the methods he intended to adopt to carry out the instructions of the Government who have declared emphatically that there could be absolutely no surrender on the Government's part in regard to the policy which they had adopted after the fullest consideration. Mr. Wynne-Cole told the sugar-planters and others that he intended to visit the estates, mines and other centres of industry and explain, with the help of Indian "recruiters" the Government's offer to Indians. He was not surprised to find, as he did that day, that employers were not inclined to offer him any assistance in the duty imposed upon him by the Government. He certainly intended to use only legal methods, and he would on no account trespass on private grounds and would not think of entering upon any estate without the permission of the owner. But he would take the opportunity, nevertheless, of addressing the Indians on some public ground. Needless to say, the employers attending this meeting were frankly antagonistic and made no secret of their grievance against the Government who were treating them, as they thought, so badly by offering inducements for Indian labourers to leave the country. Sr Liege Hulett and other prominent tea and sugar planters prophesied the total ruin of these industries in the absence of Indian labour. After much discussion all in the same strain, this meeting of employers passed a resolution, drawing the Government's attention to the serious state of affairs which would be occasioned by this repatriation scheme.

In the absence of the complete scheme which the Union Government are said to be still considering, details of which we are promised later, it is not possible to pronounce a definite opinion in the matter.

On the general question of offering free passages to those that desire to leave this country there is nothing to be said against it. It is as a matter of fact nothing new, as this privilege has been extended since the passing of the Relief Act in 1914. What the Government had failed, however, at the time, to do was to inform the people of the offer. This step it now seems to be taking with a vengeance. Mr. Wynne-Cole now not only re-offers the free passages which were granted under the Relief Act, but with the aid of "recruiters" intends to encourage and induce the Indians to leave the country. If it is a question of facilitating matters for those Indians who have wished to go but owing to restrictions have not been able to do so, merely to inform them would suffice, and the community we are sure would in that case readily assist the Government. But if the intention is to induce the Indians, with the aid of recruiters, to leave the country, as they had been induced to come to this country under indenture, by telling them stories—which may not be quite true—of the milk and honey conditions under which they would be placed, would amount, not to voluntary repatriation but to worse than compulsory repatriation. In that case the community would be quite unable to tender any assistance to the Government but would have to take steps to see that true facts are placed before the Indians and that the conditions are clearly explained to them.

Mr. Wynne-Cole has been careful to point out, that

no sort of compulsion is to be exercised under the scheme and he wishes us to contradict any rumour which may be current. This we gladly do at the same time, pointing out that the Government have no power to compel a single Indian, lawfully resident, to leave these shores. This should be clearly understood.

ANTI-ASIATIC LEAGUE

IN another column we publish a fuller report of the South Africans' League's "mass" meeting held at Pretoria on the 28th ultimo, and the comments offered on same by the *Pretoria News*, a contemporary which has always stood for right and justice to all, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. We find it difficult to reconcile the conflicting statements made by the chairman of that League Mr. Phillips. Erstwhile the cry was that the Asiatic "undersold" the white trader, but on this occasion it is the opposite. Mr. Phillips must have been suffering from mental aberration, either owing to the poor response given by the Pretoria white public to his League's invitation, or owing to the shallowness of their case, when he unconsciously admitted that "he did not consider himself better than the higher caste Indian." Be that whatever it may, but it is manifest from the circumlocutory speech of his that the League's list of grievances against the Asiatics is now exhausted, and Mr. Phillips and his confederates are musing over the problem to manufacture fresh ones.

INDIAN QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT

REPATRIATION MATTERS

Capetown, July 9. (Reuter).—Mr. VAN HERS (Christiana, Nat.) referred to the agitation against Asiatics, particularly in the Transvaal, and said that, so far, the Government had made no declaration on the subject. In the Transvaal feeling was very acute. It was not a simple problem. Segregation would not tend to raise the status of the Asiatic. The objection against them was that his standard of life was so low that Europeans could not compete with him; he demoralised his neighbours, and in the Transvaal the feeling was that the only solution was repatriation. Seeing that so much money was spent on Asiatic affairs, the country was entitled to know what the Government intended doing, and what steps it proposed taking to do away with what, in the Transvaal, was considered an absolute pest.

Col. CRESWELL (Troveville, Labour) hoped that the Government was going to do everything possible to facilitate Asiatics leaving the country. (Hear, Hear.) Assisted passages were given to Indian coolies who desired to depart, but he questioned whether the fact was as widely advertised as it should be. He suggested that the restriction imposed on the taking away of gold legitimately obtained was a direct deterrent to Indians, whose savings had nothing to do with the war embargo. He asked what arrangements were made to see that on arriving in his own country the Indian received the full value of the gold seized from him?

Sir EDGAR WATSON (Port Elizabeth, Unionist) said they were importing sovereigns at anything up to 30s. each, and Col. Creswell said what they should do with the sovereigns was to allow them to be carried out of the country to India by emigrants. That was the taxpayer of this country was to be deliberately asked to import sovereigns at a cost of 30s. each to supply them to Indian emigrants at 20s. each for these emigrants to take to India and sell for 40s. each. He did not know how that could be justified.

Col. ORSWELL pointed out that there was every reason why there should be an adequate gold reserve, and that sovereigns should be bought for South Africa. Having a bank-note in his hand, he showed that such notes should be paid on demand in gold. Yet he emphasised owing to the embargo on the export of sovereigns these bank notes had not their proper value in purchasing goods abroad. They had not their value in gold, although on the bank note was written "Pay on demand in gold."

Mr. KENTRIDGE (Fordsburg, Labour) ridiculed the idea that because it suited certain interests to keep the bid in the country the Indians should be obliged to take paper with them, for which they could not get full value. The gold mines were allowed to send their gold output of the country to get the fullest value, but the poor Indian had to be stopped. The policy at present pursued by the Government in confiscating the property of the Indians which it was alleged they were smuggling out of the country could only have the effect of discouraging the Indians from leaving.

Mr. W. ROUX (Ceres, Nat.) emphasised that the Indians were not stealing anything, but were only taking their own money with them.

Mr. WILCOCKS (Winburg, Nat.) argued that the Indians had a most detrimental effect on the Native mind, and also on the poorer class of the white population, and particularly on the poor whites. The Government, he declared, should grant all possible facilities for the repatriation of the Asiatics. Other countries are differently situated to South Africa, but South Africa had its own problems, and had to deal with them in its own fashion.

Mr. MARWICK (Illovo, Unionist) dwelt on the position of the Asiatics, and argued against further encroachment by the Asiatics in the purchase of land. He hoped that the report of the Asiatic Commission would be dwelt with as soon as possible. He drew attention to the difference in the position of the Asiatics as compared with that of the Natives who, though being born in South Africa, were not allowed to acquire land, while there was no such prohibition in regard to Asiatics.

Mr. THOMAS WATTS (Minister of the Interior) said that the Government was encouraging Indians to leave the country, and was even providing free passages. The position at day was that Asiatics were allowed to take 500g gold with them of their own savings. That did not include small ornaments. He did not wish to argue the morality or otherwise of confiscating the gold which Indians had tried to smuggle out of the country, but the Government did not intend to return that money any more than they proposed returning the money which had been confiscated from other people who had tried to smuggle gold. The Minister mentioned that, in accordance with the recommendation of the Indian Commission, an official had been appointed to facilitate the repatriation of Indians wishing to leave, and that they would not be kept hanging about at the ports. The Minister then declared that the numbers of Asiatics coming into the country were very small, and they were principally the wives and children of Asiatics already in the country. Every precaution was taken to prevent fresh Asiatic immigration.

Mr. HUNTER (Stamford Hill, Unionist) while arguing that the Indians who had settled on the land as market gardeners were an asset to the community, said that the man they should get rid of was the man with the long shirt. The indentured coolie should go home, and did not go home, but it was those Indian traders who did the damage, and it was the wives of the working men, who had no pride of race, who bought from the Indian because he was a half-penny cheaper than the man of their own race, who caused the trouble. The Commercial class was very much to blame, because the Indian who started with half a crown could get credit, where the white trader could not.

Mr. KENTRIDGE (Fordsburg, Labour) contended that the Indians only provided cheap labour, and he asserted that in Durban, for instance, the Indians were ousting white labour. The Indians undoubtedly were very able in some ways, but they created competition as regards labour, and competition which was altogether injurious to the white man.

ANTI-ASIATIC AGITATION

THE PRETORIA MASS MEETING

Before a very large attendance at the Town Hall (says *Pretoria News*), a "mass" meeting was held to discuss the Asiatic Question. With the exception of the Rev. R. B. Hattingh, none of the gentlemen announced to speak appeared on the platform. A letter of apology, however, was received from Mr. G. McLean, who was unable to attend owing to a Council meeting.

The Rev. R. B. Hattingh presided and briefly explained the objects of the meeting. The Asiatic question was so great, he said, that immediate notice must be taken of it. There were two sides to be considered, the negative and the positive. They were at present on the negative side, and were endeavouring to eliminate the Asiatic perit. The Asiatic would bring the white man down to his level and lift the Natives up until the three races were equal, and thus South Africa would become non-European.

Mr. L. J. PHILIP, chairman of the South African League, said the question of trade did not concern him greatly. Were the danger only in this direction he would not have been present. The matter was of far more vital importance to the whites in South Africa. He did not consider himself better than the higher caste Indian, and no racialism caused him to take up his present attitude. The Asiatic, if he had proved anything at all, had proved that half-hearted restrictions were useless when applied to him. It was not necessary for him to discuss a white South Africa since he took it for granted that any white man at all worthy of his skin was prepared to uphold the traditions handed down to him by his parents and to secure his future status for his children's sake. Fifty years ago it was not so. What, he asked, would be the state of the Transvaal in 40 years' time? The secret of the Indian's success was not that he sold cheaper than the European trader. The Orange Free State proved that he was not cheaper, since the cost of living there was lower than in any other Province in the Union and there were no Indian traders there. The Indian standard of living was from 8.11 to 11.14 per cent. below that of the Europeans, which had been proved by the Cost of Living Commission, so if there were profiteering in the Union it was amongst the Indians. The time was not far distant when, if not checked, the Transvaal would have the Indian labour competition. In Capetown 12 months ago the Indians had claimed, as residents, privileges equal to those of the white citizens. Their pluck could not but be admired, but in the Transvaal there was a "groundwet" the basic principle of which was no equality between the two races. It was South Africa's duty to acknowledge those principles; otherwise what opportunities or prospects could exist for one and a quarter million whites amongst seven and a half million blacks? The Indians would not admit this or submit to restrictions, but it must be put to them that they were here in our country, and if they wished to remain here it must be on our conditions. The Gold Law contained restrictions in regard to Indians and property on the Witwatersrand, and the Supreme Court at Pretoria held a few months ago that it was illegal for owners in that area to rent properties to Indians, but the Government had failed to administer the law, and how vested interests had been made. Prior to 1912 and the Indians' compact with Gen. Smuts, there had been one great obstacle to any complaint, namely

South Africa's sense of justice to those here then, but whilst admitting this, a higher duty to ourselves had to be considered. The Indians last year had overstepped themselves by 291 of them obtaining licences from the Receiver of Revenue at Johannesburg whilst an Act was being passed in Parliament that was to be strictly enforced. The passing of the Act on the 15th May, 1919, had legalised the licences of 184 of the 621 then existing, and so further vested interests were created. The Indians now claimed the right to travel between the Provinces, and with 180,000 of them in Natal what would happen to the Transvaal in two years' time unless this were checked? The worker in the Transvaal would be in a similar position to the worker in Natal forced to compete with Indian labour. His remarks did not apply to the better class of Indian, but they must be judged by the only standard the Native knew, namely physical fitness, and Natal would show that the Native was physically superior to the Indian there. The Natives would not live under the conditions under which the Indian lived, when 300 hundred of them were crowded in 75 small rooms in Durban. They were a menace to the health of the country. It would be idle to talk of turning them all out. Segregation was the only remedy, and if this failed, then more drastic measures would have to be taken, of which he would not at present speak, "but," he concluded, "the question is soluble in a just manner. I am not prepared to sacrifice the future of the white children of South Africa to expand the Indian Empire." (Applause.)

Messrs. J. Wertheim, hon. treas. of the League, and J. Hunter, secretary, spoke in the same strain.

The matter was then thrown open to discussion, and Mr. Duxbury said he did not quarrel to any great extent with the remarks made, but he failed to see that any constructive policy had been shown. It was a great question and went to the heart of the people of South Africa. In 1885 the British Empire had realised a sense of justice to the Indian Empire and that position was present to-day. It was not a matter that could be settled in a moment. Time must be taken to consider the matter.

The meeting then closed.

THE ASIATIC QUESTION

Pretoria News has the following comment on the Anti-Asiatic meeting recently held in that town:—

The anti-Asiatic "mass" meeting here last night was a fiasco—poor of numbers and poor of argument. Mr. Hattingh, on the one hand, declared that the Asiatic would bring the white down to his standard of his existence and pull the Native up. Mr. Phillips, on the other hand, admitted that there were Indians just as good as himself, and asserted that the Natives would scorn to live under Indian conditions. It is, of course, for Mr. Phillips to say who has done the pulling in his case, but we shall assume that the Indians to whom he refers have quite come under the influence of him and his, and that would seem to undermine the ideas which Mr. Hattingh endeavours to disseminate. Then Mr. Phillips, disavowing any thoughts of racialism or trade jealousy, went on to drum in the principles that there can be no equality between the two races and to complain that because the Indian lives more cheaply than the white man he therefore makes the bigger profit. All of which shows that one needn't call on Mr. Hattingh or anyone else to question his statements; he questions them himself. The whole tone of the speeches, as a matter of fact, was based on colour and trade, and in no instance did argument bear a semblance of the constructive. In some instances it was simply childish, as that contention that the Asiatic does all he can to evade restrictions—a childish excuse for the policy aimed at because this propensity is no more evident in

the Asiatic than in the rest of the community—the liquor sellers of the Rand as a case in point. No, is it quite legitimate excuse for the policy that the Asiatic may compete in the white labour market. In some instances, indeed, the white labour market—the building profession for instance—is positively paving the way for such a state of affairs. The white labour market must first be beyond reproach before that line of argument can be accepted. The position in regard to Asiatics as a whole is admittedly not acceptable to certain sections of the community, but since most of the Asiatics here are members of the British Empire we are in duty bound called upon to take the widest possible view of the question. The South Africans League has yet to learn that, as the speeches last night eloquently showed.

THE REPORT OF THE AMRITSAR SHOOTING

INHUMAN AND UN-BRITISH

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA'S STRONG CRITICISM OF GENERAL DYER

The Report of Lord Hunter's Committee on the Punjab disturbances has been issued and contains majority report signed by five English members, minority report by three Indian members.

The English members while admitting that the firing was justified, say that General Dyer's conduct was open to two criticisms in two points, viz., he fired without warning and he fired too long. The Indian members stigmatise the general's conduct as inhuman and un-British.

A despatch from the "Indian" Government accompanies the report. In it is stated that General Dyer's conduct at Amritsar exceeded the reasonable requirements of the situation, and the Commander-in-Chief is called upon to take appropriate action.

MR. MONTAGU'S COMMENTS

Writing in response to the Government of India's despatch reviewing the findings, Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, after recapitulating the circumstances of the Amritsar affair, declares that his Majesty's Government are determined that the principle which has consistently governed its policy of the usage of the minimum force necessary when civil authority has to be supported by military action shall remain the primary factor of policy whenever circumstances unfortunately necessitate suppression of civil disorder by military force within the British Empire.

Brigadier-General Dyer's action was in complete violation of this principle, the force he employed greatly exceeding that required to achieve the dispersal of the crowd, and resulting in lamentable and unnecessary loss of life and suffering; but this, Mr. Montagu proceeds, is not a full statement of his error.

PEOPLE IGNORANT OF PROCLAMATION

Large numbers of people in the assembly were ignorant of his proclamation, owing to its being published in only a portion of the city, some distance from the scene of the meeting, and no warning was given before fire was opened. While in the circumstances of the state of Amritsar, the heat and strain to which the troops had been subjected, it would be unfair to lay undue stress upon the first point, the omission to give warning was inexcusable. Further, it was an omission from General Dyer's obvious duty not to see steps were taken for attention to the dying and wounded. But the gravest feature in the case against him was his conception of his duty in the circumstances confronting him.

His Majesty's Government, continues Mr. Montagu, repudiate emphatically the doctrine upon which he based his action, which might have taken, to judge from his own statement, even a more drastic form had

he had a larger force and had not physical accident prevented him using armoured cars.

While thinking it possible, owing to the interruptions of communications and other factors, that the danger to European and British and Indian troops was greater than appears from the Hunter Committee's Report, and that General Dyer was entitled to shape his plans with regard to conditions generally in the Punjab, Mr. Montagu declares he was entitled to select for punishment an unarmed crowd which had committed no violence, had not attempted to oppose him by force, and many of whom were ignorant they were disobeying his commands.

The crawling order would have been difficult to defend even if carried out against persons guilty of crime. It was designed to stigmatise, inflicted, as it was, upon persons unconnected with the crime, and as an object lesson. The order offended against every canon of civilised government.

That General Dyer displayed honesty of purpose and unflinching adherence to his conception of his duty could not be questioned, but the conception was fundamentally at variance with what the Imperial Government had a right to expect from others holding H.M. commission; that it was impossible to regard him as fitted to remain entrusted with responsibilities his rank and position imposed upon him. You have reported to me that the Commander-in-Chief has directed Brigadier-General Dyer to resign his appointment as Brigadier.

MR. MONTAGU'S APPROVAL

The Commander has informed him that he would receive no further employment in India and that you have concurred.

"I approve this decision," states Mr. Montagu, "and the circumstances of the case have been referred to the Army Council.

As to the prolongation of martial law in the Punjab, Mr. Montagu intimates, speaking retrospectively, an earlier abrogation might have been available, though the point would not have been pressed but for the manner in which martial law was administered in some cases.

Expressing strong disapproval of those orders and punishments, the Imperial Government considers those responsible should have their conduct marked by censure or other suitable action, the instances cited by the committee justifying the assertion that martial law administration in the Punjab was marred by the spirit which prompted, not generally but not uncommonly, enforcement of orders calculated if not intended to humiliate Indians as a race, and not flout the standards of propriety and humanity which inhabitants not only of India, but of the civilised world generally, have a right to demand from those in authority over them.

SYSTEM TO BE DEvised

Apparently and regrettably officers in the Punjab overlooked the fact they were administering martial law, not to subdue the population of a hostile country temporarily occupied as on act of war, but to deal promptly with the disturbers of peace among a population mainly loyal to the King Emperor. It was difficult to believe this would have occurred had the civil authority had closer contact with martial law administration, and it was of paramount importance to devise a system which would effectively secure this contact in this connection.

In the concluding portion of Mr. Montagu's letter, in which opinion is expressed that martial law, while in certain conditions is a necessary remedy, but apt to lose its value unless applied wisely and with good judgment, the writer declares the inquiry will have served a valuable purpose if it results in a code of regulations answering its legitimate purpose, but subverting no more than required ordinary public rights and settled processes of civil justice and government.

EMPLOYMENT OF AEROPLANES

As to the employment of bombing aeroplanes to overawe the crowd at Gujranwala, the Imperial Government, while intimating that in certain conditions of unrest propaganda dropping and moral effect, summarise the correct use of air-craft, concede that in future explicit instructions must be issued for the employment of armed aircraft in emergencies such as prevailed, and will see that such instructions are issued.

Regarding Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Government are not immediately concerned with his administration of the Punjab general, and express appreciation of his services in a period of exceptional difficulty, but are unable to endorse his unqualified approval, accorded on insufficient information, to General Dyer's action, and consider it unfortunate he did not obey his first impulse and suspend judgment. The motives which inspired him are less open to criticism.

As to the impression that the Punjab Government, under his administration, was determined to suppress even constitutional agitation, the Imperial Government hopes the impression may soon be dispelled but recognise the difficulties facing him.

CHINESE IN TRANSVAAL

FIVE HUNDRED STOREKEEPERS

TRADING LICENCES QUESTION

Johannesburg, July 8 (Special)—Giving evidence before the Local Government Commission to-day, Mr. L. W. Ritch, on behalf of the Transvaal Chinese Association, said there were 1,100 Chinese in the Transvaal, of whom 900 were in Johannesburg. Their occupations included 500 wholesale and retail storekeepers, about a hundred laundries, and about a hundred kafir eating-houses and store-keepers. There were approximately 17 private limited liability companies, the majority of whose share-holders were Chinese, with an aggregate capital of approximately £28,000. The properties in most instances were occupied by companies as business premises. The Chinese worker in the Transvaal, said Mr. Ritch, catered for poorer classes reasonably and honestly.

Referring to the question of trading licences, Mr. Ritch said that the Krugersdorp Magistrate had reversed the decision of the Town Council not to grant licences to certain Chinamen.

At Potchefstroom and Ermelo, and on the East Rand side, similar refusals to grant licences on national grounds had been referred to the magistrates, who upheld the Council's decision. There was always a danger of a magistrate being influenced by local policies and prejudice. He submitted that a right of appeal to the Supreme Court should be allowed.

INDIANS ABROAD

[By MR. C. F. ANDREWS IN "YOUNG INDIA"]

There is one thing that comes out more and more clearly as experience goes concerning the treatment of Indians abroad. It is this, that our Indian village-men and women are too economically defenceless to be sent into foreign countries, thousands of miles across the sea, to become the labourers on great estates owned by great companies, and run on partly capitalistic lines. I have been twice now to Natal, and twice to Fiji. In both countries, thousands of indentured Indian labourers, men and women have been transported and transplanted by immigration. They were recruited by professional recruiters who were paid so much per head for each villager whom they induced to go out,—and the price of a woman was higher than the price of a man, because a woman

was more difficult to obtain. A vast number of these men and women were induced to go out by these professional recruiters by their deception. They were not informed anything about the conditions of the life to which they were going, and in many instances, they were told deliberate lies about it. Even the Government itself participated in this fraud, because, in Fiji for example, Indians were informed that they would get one shilling, i.e. twelve annas, a day but they were not told that they would only get wages for 5½ days in the week, nor were they told that the cost of living would be three times greater in Fiji than it is in India itself. Thus, one very respectable villager, who had been receiving 6 annas a day in India, and went out deliberately on the word of the Indian Government, thinking to better his condition, told me himself that his condition was worse instead of better in Fiji, because a shilling in Fiji did not go so far as six annas in India.

The economic ignorance and helplessness which thus can be traced in India itself with the recruiting and indenture, follows the steps of these Indian villagers all the time they are abroad, in a foreign country, whose customs and habits of life are all different and there are no village laws and sanctions about marriage and other moral sanctions; the life of our Indian village people goes to rack and ruin. The morality, which in the Indian village was of a high order,—especially in the purity of the domestic life,—breaks down completely, and I have seen some of the most pitiful sights in my life among the Indian women who have gone abroad, and I have heard from their own lips the story of their degradation, told with tears of shame.

It is true, that, out of the thousands who thus go out few manage through sheer force of character to struggle out of the mire. These make a new start and become prosperous, but how few they are who do this? And how many sacrifice the most precious thing in life,—their Dharma, their moral character,—while they strive to get money! The majority sinks instead of rising; their life becomes worse, not better.

Many years ago, I was an ardent advocate of Indian Emigration. It seemed to me, that it would relieve the congestion of India's population, and also would stir with activity the stagnation of the social order, and shake off from Indian life some of its thoroughly bad customs. I felt also, that the spirit of adventure was needed and some knowledge of a greater and wider world. All these gains, I hope, might come from Emigration.

My first shock was what I saw in Natal, in 1913-1914, when I was there with Mahatma Gandhi. I can never in my whole life forget one morning at Phoenix, how I was told that a poor Tamil labourer had escaped from the plantation, near by, and had come to the Ashram for refuge, I went out to see him and help him, if I could do so in any way. At the sight of me—an Englishman he shrank back just like a hunted animal, and was prepared to run away once more. The look of fear in his eyes still remains, in my mind as I picture the scene even to-day nearly seven years later.

Then Mahatma Gandhi came up and all was changed. The fear went away from his eyes, and he came near and made his obeisance. Mahatma Gandhi went up to him and saw the wounds of the lash upon his back. He showed them to me. They were quite recent.

Mahatma Gandhi asked Mr. W. W. Pearson to go and watch the case in the Magistrate's Court. There was a charge brought against the Tamil labourer of deserting his work, and the counter-charge brought against the manager of using violence. The scene in the court was Mr. Pearson told me afterwards was a very university of justice. The Magistrate hobbled with the manager, who was accused of cruelty. The complaint against the manager was dismissed, and

the Tamil labourer was sent back to work under the same master who had lashed him before. He was legally bound to that master for five years and could not escape.

These things opened my eyes. Further more, Mahatma Gandhi explained to me the conditions under which the labourers lived—the forced immorality due to their position—the temptations to drunkenness and gambling openly placed before him, at their very door, and not seldom encouraged when the 5 years of indenture drew to its close, in order to make the labourers penniless and so to get them to sign up again, for another indenture, for another period of years.

But even then, I said to myself,—“it is possible to improve the system, to make regulations much stricter to prevent fraudulent and forcible recruiting, to increase the population of women and men on the Estates, to get Indians to emigrate in families, instead of as individuals.”

I was in that mood and state of mind, when I went out for the first time to Fiji.

(To be continued)

THE AMRITSAR RIOTS

GENERAL DYER'S EXPLANATION

A Reuter's message from London dated July 8, states:—A white paper has been issued giving the defence of General Dyer in connection with the incident at Amritsar.

The paper was issued in view of the debate on the Hunter Commission's Report in the House of Commons this afternoon.

General Dyer points out that he knew the dangers of the position from a military point of view and the cloud over Afghanistan; he also realised that the gathering in Jallianwallahbagh was not fortuitous, but assembled with the express intent to challenge Government authority and to defy him to fire upon them. It was, in fact, a rebel army, and he was conscious of a great offensive movement that was gathering, and to sit still and await complete mobilisation would be fatal. He could not regard the Jallianwallahbagh assembly as a mere political gathering; he looked on Amritsar as the storm centre of rebellion, and he also knew that attempts were being made to seduce his troops.

If he had shirked the challenge there would infallibly have followed a general mob movement inside and outside Amritsar, which would have destroyed the European population and involved in its ruin the law-abiding Indian population, leading to similar results throughout the Punjab.

General Dyer contends that his object was right. The force used was not excessive, and it achieved the desired effect. He holds, moreover, that no less a force would have achieved his effect.

In the House of Commons, replying to Sir William Joyns-Hicks (Unionist, Twickenham Division of Middlesex), in regard to General Dyer, commander of the troops during the Amritsar riots, Mr. Churchill announced that the Army Council, after considering the Report of the Hunter Committee, and the statement of General Dyer, came to the conclusion that, despite the great difficulties encountered by General Dyer at Jallianwallahbagh on April 13, 1919, he could not be acquitted of an error of judgment, and he accepted the decision of the Commander-in-Chief of India that General Dyer could not be further employed in India, and it was not considered that further employment should be offered him outside India. (Cries of "Why" and "Shame.") In view of all the circumstances, the Army Council did not feel called upon to take further action. Replying to further questions, Mr. Churchill said he endorsed the decision.

