

Indian Opinion

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ONE PENNY

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— EDITORIAL

Advisers To Government

Not infrequently we find ourselves blaming the Governor and the Government for certain actions which are definitely detrimental to the welfare of the inhabitants of the Colony, though in the majority of cases the responsibility can be traced to the advisers of Government. Many of the ills of the colony can be placed directly on the shoulders of these advisers of Government (mainly members of Boards and Committees appointed by the Governor). We feel that Government has not exercised due care in the selection of its advisers, that very many of these advisers have ceased to think of the welfare of the inhabitants of the Colony. It is common knowledge that most of these members think only of themselves by grinding their own axes. It is also common knowledge that very many of them are now too long in this advisory capacity and cannot think in any new direction or in the direction that leads to the improvement of the welfare of the Guianese.

It would be advisable therefore for the Governor to reshuffle the personnel of all the Boards and Committees by asking each one to resign separately and then to reappoint those men who have the welfare of the country and its people at heart. The present oligarchy is annoying and the inclusion of a few experienced and informed people would considerably lift the present low tone of many Boards.

Census

British Guiana has not had a Census taken since 1931. Since then we have had to make several important decisions which were of importance to the inhabitants of the colony. Many of these important decisions were based on the 1931 Census fully fourteen years ago. One of the most important of these was not to grant Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith due to

the high percentage of illiteracy portrayed by a census taken fourteen years ago. Section 54 of this Franchise Commission Report states:—

"As the result of the last Census submitted in December 1931 (note the year) the total population was returned at 310 933 souls of whom 130 540 were classified as East Indians. It was then ascertained that

(Continued on page 3)

The India Famine Relief Fund

We take this opportunity to present to the general public the certified statement of accounts of the Indian Famine Relief Fund.

We wish to thank all those persons and firms who so generously contributed to this cause and assisted in the collection of the funds.

The committee will ever remain grateful for the response that was given to suffering humanity. Hereunder we publish the certified statement of the accounts.

SEETAUL PERSAUD (Treasurer) JENARINE SINGH (Chairman)

THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION

THE INDIA FAMINE RELIEF FUND

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS—FROM 11TH NOV. 1943 TO 10TH JUNE 1944

1944	June 10—To: Sundry subscriptions and Donations to date	\$19,431.97
PAYMENTS		
1943	Nov. 19—By Cabled Remittance to the Mayor of Calcutta	\$4,800.00
	23— „ Paid Bookers Drug Store for 2 Cinema Designs	6 00
1944	Jan. 28— „ Cabled Remittance to the Mayor of Calcutta	9,600.00
	„ Cables to Mayor of Calcutta & Pundit H. Kuzru	9.90
	Feb. 21— „ Paid the Daily Chronicle Ltd. for Advertisements	102.06
	June 9 — „ Cabled remittance to the Mayor of Calcutta	4,800.00
	14— „ Cost of cable re remittance	2.50
	16— „ Cost of cable to Mayor of Calcutta	2.70
	23— „ Paid the Daily Argosy Co. Ltd. for Advertisements	73 32
	„ Bad Coin	48
1945	March 6— „ Audit of Accounts	35 01
		\$19,431.97

I certify that the above Statement of Receipts and Payments of the India Famine Relief Fund exhibits a true and correct view according to the books, accounts and vouchers.

Georgetown, Demerara
6th March, 1945.

(Sgd) E.-A. ADAMS
"Certified Accountant"—Auditor

The Late Dr J. B. Cropper

The sudden and somewhat unexpected death of Dr. J. B. Cropper while on duty at All Saints' Church, New Amsterdam climaxes the noble career and fruitful service of another great Missionary who has earned for himself fame and renown. Like the chain of Missionaries and benefactors whose names today adorn our local history, the name of Dr. Cropper or more familiar still, SAHIB CROPPER will remain fragrant in the minds of the people of this country, particularly the Indians of the outlying districts to whom he was more than a father.

His demise will be regretted by many, but to those who have been closely associated with this great man, and more especially to those who owe much of their achievements to his direct help and guidance, his passing must be a moment of deep retrospective thinking.

Imbued with the true christian spirit, saturated with a never-fading love for the poor and unfortunate, endowed with strength and robust health to shoulder his task, Dr. Cropper, bubbling with enthusiasm to throw his all in his work, arrived in this colony in 1896. Unlike many other Missionaries, Dr. Cropper decided to spend his life in British Guiana. He did not believe in starting a job only, but completing it. The immortal lines of ELLAR, WHEELER WILCOX was always his companion:

My life is a brief brief thing
I am here for a little space:
And while I stay I would like, if I may
To brighten and better the place.

He soon succeeded in grasping local conditions, and at once picked up the thread dropped by his predecessor, and took the torch of Christianity to all the remote parts of this colony. By his affable disposition and cheerful personality, he not only endeared himself to all those with whom he came in contact, but was able to enlist their cooperation and support to further his work. It is not without reason therefore that even today Canadian "Mission Schools" and Churches are known to many as CROPPER SCHOOL and CROPPER CHURCH.

Dr. Cropper may have had many friends among other races in this Colony, but to the Indian people he was like the Rev. O.F. Andrews one of their own. The History of Indians in this Colony will occupy many pages to chronicle the work of this great friend and benefactor of the poor. He spoke Hindustani fluently and this, together with other inherent qualities knit him closer to the Indian people of this Colony. To Dr. Cropper the Indian people owe a debt of gratitude. Furious religious fanatics may not agree with me on this score, but I am persuaded to think that Indian who is A Good

Christian is a Good Indian. We can scarcely forget, even if we do not choose to remember, that, but for such Missionaries and their Schools, our Indian people would still have been grappling for a place in the scheme of things.

To us the name Cropper shall remain immortal. To his sorrowing relatives, including his wife and sister we tender our deepest sympathy.

SUGRIM SINGH Principal
Modern Academy.

Meeting

The Executives of the British Guiana East Indian Association would be holding three bumper meetings on the East Bank on Sunday 22nd instant, at the following places:—

Pln. Peters Hall.....8. am.
Pln. Farm.....1. pm.
Pln. Diamond.....3. pm.

All Indians are invited to come and listen to the interesting and educative talks on the many problems confronting the Indian Community.

Come and meet your Leaders on Sunday 22nd instant and have your problems solved.

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Influence to Voluntary Collective Bargaining

1938 AND 1944 COMPARISONS

For instance the average weekly earnings of adult male workers (aged 21 years and over) rose from 69s a week in October 1938, to 124s 4d in July 1944—a percentage increase of 80 per cent. But the increase in the case of the adult women (age 18 years and over) was from 32s 6d a week to 64s 3d, an increase of 98 per cent., and of girls (under 18) from 18s 6d a week to 34s 11d, an increase in about the same proportion as those of adult men, namely from 36s 1d to 47s 4d, an increase of 81 per cent.

Percentage increases varied widely in different industries, from less than 50 per cent for men in some industries to over 90 per cent in others, and for women from less than 50 per cent, to over 120 per cent. The highest average level of earnings in Britain is (as might be expected) in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding trades, in which adult men were getting 139/1d per week, as compared with an average for this class of workers in all industry of 122/7d per week (an increase of about 85 per cent, for the workers in this group of trades over their earnings in October 1938). Adult women in this group of trades are earning an average of 71s a week, which is actually an increase of no less than 113 per cent, over their average earnings in October 1938.

The broad conclusion emerging from analysis into average earnings is that in mid-1944 adult men were earning 124s 7d a week, and adult women 65s per week; youths and boys 47s 6d a week and girls (under 18) 35s a week. They are working about two hours a week for these larger pay packets.

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PHONE C 341

The Wakenaam Improvement Association

On Friday evening, 23rd March 1945, well over 40 residents of the district met at the Mackay Memorial Schoolroom and formed an association which aims at improving the moral, social and intellectual standards of the people resident on the Island.

The members, with one accord, expressed the feeling that the Association supplied a long-felt want in the community, and resolved that it form a nucleus to Social Work and other kindred organisations such as 4-H Club, Continuation School, Boy Scouts and Youth Movement Clubs to provide a vocational training for recidivists and recalcitrant youths.

The following is a list of office-bearers for the ensuing half-year:-

President — Edmund Thomas
 Vice-Pres. — Jno. Mansarally
 Hony. Secty. — Goolcharran.
 Asst. Secty. — L. Brotherson.
 Publicity Secty. — Ramsingh
 Treasurer — M. Hallim Rahat,
 Janitor — I. Lawrence.

Members of the Committee of Management:— Gerald Fraser, R. Ramraj, A. Rahaman, M. Gobin, M. R. Hack, Shahid Khan and B. Gishard.

Mr. E. A. Leung-Walker is Patron and an Honorary Member of the Association.

Census

(Continued from page 1)

30.1% of the total population from the age of 5 years and upwards were illiterate and that 59.3 percent of the East Indian section of it could be so considered."

When we realise that during the past 14 years there has been a universal country wide effort to educate, we cannot but refer to these figures as a gross mis-statement of facts conveniently applied to bolster up a move calculated to thwart the legitimate demand and aspirations of the people of this country, for we know that the Devil can quote Scriptures to suit his purpose. Even the Franchise Commission Report argue against itself in Section 57 when it states:

A Census is in our opinion the sole method by which definite data can be ascertained with any thing like accuracy. It appears to us that (only after some of the facts have been ascertained) the advisability of introducing Universal Adult Suffrage throughout the Colony and the results that might follow thereon, can be merely satisfactorily gauged.

The Indian people not denying the existence of illiteracy within their ranks, but certainly condemning the figures of the 1931 Census Report employed against them, now call on Government to arrange for the taking

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Sans Souci, Wakenaam

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of another Census so that they might be able to examine some of the decisions that have been reached and see how they fit in with the future welfare of the Colony.

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The Viceroy-Gandhi Correspondence

Continued from last issue

LORD WAVELL'S REPLY

New Delhi,
15th August, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 27th July. your proposals are:

(i) that you should undertake to advise the Working Committee (a) "that in view of changed conditions mass Civil Disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August, 1942, cannot be offered," and (b) "that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by Congress" provided

(ii) that His Majesty's Government (a) declares immediate Indian Independence, and (b) form a "National Government" responsible to the Central Assembly, "subject to the proviso that, during the pendency of the war the military operations should continue as at present but without involving any financial burden on India."

2. His Majesty's Government remain most anxious that a settlement of the Indian problem should be reached. But proposals such as those put forward by you are quite unacceptable to His Majesty's Government as a basis discussion, and you must realise this if you have read Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons on July 28th last. They are indeed very similar to the proposals made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps in April 1942, and His Majesty's Govern-

ment's reasons for rejecting them are the same as they were then.

3. Without recapitulating all these reasons in detail I should remind you that His Majesty's Government at that time made it clear:

(a) that their offer of unqualified freedom after the cessation of hostilities was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed by the main element of India's national life and the negotiations of the necessary Treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government;

(b) that it is impossible during the period of hostilities to bring about any change in the constitution, by which meant alone a "National Government," such as you suggest could be made responsible to the Central Assembly. The object of these conditions was to ensure the fulfillment of their duty to safeguard the interests of the racial and religious minorities and of the depressed classes, and their treaty obligations to the Indian States.

4. It was upon the above conditions that His Majesty's Government invited Indian Leaders to take part in an interim Government which would operate under the existing constitution. I must make it quite clear that until the war is over, responsibility for defence and military operations cannot be divided from the other responsibilities of Government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government and the Gov-

ernor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field. So far as the question of India's share of the cost of the war is concerned, this is essentially a matter for settlement between His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, and existing financial arrangements can only be reopened at the instance of one or the other.

MINORITY PROBLEMS

5. It is clear in these circumstances that no purpose would be served by discussion on the basis which you suggest. If however the leaders of the Hindus, the Muslims and the important minorities were willing to co-operate in a transitional government established and working within the present constitution, I believe good progress might be made. For such a transitional government to succeed there must before it is formed be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be framed. This agreement is a matter for Indians themselves. Until Indian leaders have come closer together than they are now I doubt if I myself can do anything to help. Let me remind you too that minority problems are not easy. They are real and can be solved only by mutual compromise and tolerance.

6. The period after the termination of hostilities for which the transitional government would last, would depend on the speed with which the new constitution could be framed. I see no reason why preliminary work on that constitution should not begin as soon as the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate to that end. If they can arrive at a genuine agreement as to the method of framing the constitution no unnecessary time need be spent after the war in reaching final conclusions and in agreeing to Treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government. There again the primary responsibility rests on the Indian leaders.

Yours Sincerely

(Sd.) WAVELL.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

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