

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

THE Ladysmith correspondent of the *Natal Advertiser* states:—The Wagon Bridge Rugby football ground, Ladysmith, was put up for lease by public auction on Monday, Sept. 25, in accordance with the law governing the leasing of the ground. No opposition to the clubs involved obtaining the ground at the upset price was expected, and it came as a surprise when a number of Indians put in an appearance, apparently with the intention of bidding. Some consternation was caused, but Mr. H. E. K. Anderson, who represented the Ladysmith Cricket Club, Ladysmith Rugby Club, and Ladysmith Athletic Club, appealed to the Indians present, pointing out that the ground was primarily intended for Europeans, and while the clubs mentioned had not sufficient funds to pay more than the upset price, it would cause a lot of unpleasantness if the ground were lost to the European sports clubs. One of the Indians defended their action by saying that the Indian clubs had no permanent playing fields, and they had as much right to one as the Europeans. Mr. Anderson was able eventually to persuade the Indians to withdraw, informing them that in the circumstances the Council might take a sympathetic view of their desires, and provide a ground under similar conditions. The Indians thereupon withdrew from the bidding, and the clubs were able to obtain the lease at the upset price.

To any right-thinking person, the attitude of the European Sportsmen of Ladysmith would appear selfish rather than sportsmanlike. Indians are born with the spirit of "giving in," and the Ladysmith Indians have proved their generosity by "giving in" to the foolish obstinacy of the European Sportsmen. The above incident is only one of the many illustrations of how the greed of the Europeans in this country is increasing. They want to have the best of everything and Indians cannot have them though they may be willing to pay a much higher price. When Indians protested that the Indian clubs had no permanent playing fields, the reply given by Mr. Anderson coolly was that "in the circumstances the Council might take a sympathetic view of their desires and provide a ground under similar conditions." In other words, "You may break your heads with the Council as much as you like, but please withdraw from this land because the Almighty has reserved it only for us! If these sportsmen of Ladysmith have even a spark of sportsmanlike spirit in them, their duty would be to join the Indians whole-heartedly and procure for them a suitable play-ground at any cost.

The opening ceremony of Shri Vishvaroop Mandir and Shri Gopal Krishna Gekhale Hall will take place at Tongaat on Friday the 13th October 1922 at 12 a.m. All Indians are cordially invited by the Secretary of the above institutions to be present.

The 17th anniversary celebration of the Hindu Young Men's Association, Pietermaritzburg, will be held in its Hall on Sunday the 15th inst., commencing at 9.30 p.m. It is needless to say that this Association has, since its inception, made gradual progress in promoting Tamil education and propagating the Hindu religion. It has succeeded in these two branches of the Hindu life in no small measure, and if the present enthusiasm

which is shown by the members as well as the general public continues, much more useful work will be achieved. Among the features of the anniversary proceedings will be Maypole dance and recitations and songs by the school children. Delegates from all parts of the Union are expected to attend. A hearty invitation is extended by the Secretaries to all to attend.

The Asiatic Question was one among the subjects discussed at the twenty-fifth Annual Congress of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa which sat in Bloemfontein. The following is one of its resolutions moved by Mr. E. F. Hoare:—  
"That with a view to maintaining civilised standards of wages, civilised conditions of labour and equitable competitive conditions in commercial enterprises, the Government be asked to consider the advisability of setting up trading licence boards which shall have power to review, confirm, alter or reverse the decisions of licensing officers."

In moving the above motion, Mr. Hoare is reported to have said that, the scope of the motion was very broad and was not confined to the Asiatic menace. That businesses in the Union were carried on under legal discipline and the proposed boards could efficiently institute inquiries and mobilise evidence regarding infringements of the Factory Regulations, Wages Regulations, and the provisions of the Insolvency Act, and could bring pressure to bear upon persons who would pull down the standard of civilisation for their personal profit, for the desire to lower those standards, was not confined to any race or colour. In the long run, the well-being of all sections of the community depended upon the maintenance of civilised standards. At present, the issue of trading licences was in the hands of individual officers whose powers were restricted and whose decisions were easily upset. The proposed Boards would be in a stronger and much better position.

A motion having for its object fuller powers to municipalities to deal with the issue of trading licences to Asiatics was moved by the Springs Chamber, but, after discussion, was withdrawn in favour of one by Mr. Niven (Johannesburg) which was to the effect that the recommendations of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission of 1921 form a suitable basis for the introduction of legislation affecting Asiatics.

In the course of an interview with Colonel Mentz regarding the rumour of dissension in the ranks of the South African Party and a general election, the *Middelburg Echo* is reported by Reuter to have been informed that, there was a certain amount of dissatisfaction about the Indian question in Natal, but a full discussion was held between Cabinet Ministers and the Provincial authorities, with the result that good progress is now being made toward satisfactory joint action being taken and a solution being found. "You have my authority," said the Minister, "for stating that there is no truth whatsoever in the rumour that any ordinary members of the party are breaking away, or of a general election."

### THE LATE BABU MOTILAL GHOSE

We regret to learn from the Indian papers that Babu Motilal Ghose, who was suffering illness for some months died on the 5th September, at the age of 77. He was connected with the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* for the last fifty years. A few years before his death in 1911, Babu Sishir Kumar Ghose, founder of the *Patrika*, gave up all public activities on account of ill-health and the editorial duties fell into the hands of his brother, Babu Motilal Ghose, which he continued to perform until comparatively recently.

Babu Motilal Ghose, one of the foremost of Bengali journalists was born in 1845. About his youth and education little is known. The seclusion in which he lived and his disinclination to thrust himself into the

insight on to court publicity for himself and his things, placed the biographer at a disadvantage to fill in the gaps of his early life. Motilal Ghose belonged to a well-to-do Brahmin family. Both Motilal and his equally famous brother, Sisir Kumar Ghose received their early education at the hands of their mother Amrita Mayi a highly cultured Hindu lady of the old school. Both the brothers held their mother in the highest respect and veneration and used to acknowledge with pride the great debt they owed to her for their excellent early education and training. The good lady took her care to instil into the minds of her sons the lesson of patriotism. Reared under such ideal environment, it is no matter for surprise that both Sisir and Motilal grew up into manhood with strong ideas about the future of their country and with the deepest resolves about bettering the political lot of their compatriots. They had a mission in life consecrated and sanctified by the blessings of their mother.

#### STARTING OF THE "PATRIKA"

It was brought home to them from the very first that one of the best ways to achieve anything substantial in the field of politics was to own a press and publish a paper. It was their first purpose to create an organ which would without fear or favour give expression to the feelings of their down-trodden countrymen and with this purpose in view the brothers started the *Patrika*. The paper was felicitously styled the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* in memory of their mother *Amritamayi*. The *Patrika* started from very humble beginnings, but the labours of the two brothers have made it one of the most important of Indian nationalist newspapers. The *Patrika*, like several other nationalist newspapers, had to go through times of severe trial and strain. In particular, its activities were severely restricted by the operation of the Vernacular Press Act and the conviction dawned upon the minds of the starters that it could serve their purpose better to convert the paper into an English newspaper as it could then voice Indian feelings with greater freedom from the trammels of the Press Act. Motilal Ghose set to work with a will and in one night he achieved the impossible task of transforming the vernacular *Patrika* into its English guise. The metamorphosis was a complete but agreeable surprise to its readers the next morning and it speaks volumes for the earnestness of purpose of young Motilal Ghose that he was able to do so much practically single-handed. He was Editor, printer, type setter, compositor, proof-reader all in one. Motilal always used to look back on the night's achievement with pardonable pride.

The collaboration of the brothers on the work of national regeneration, however, soon came to an end owing to the ill-health and premature death of Sisir Ghose which occurred in 1911. Thereafter, Motilal shouldered the responsibilities of conducting the paper and right well did he discharge them. In him the suffering people found their foremost champion and his paper was always the advocate of the people's rights.

#### A FEARLESS CRITIC

Who awakened Bengal from the torpor into which the province had sunk politically? Many persons contributed to this noble task, but Motilal will have front rank in the ranks of those devoted and self-less workers who were responsible for the political re-birth of Bengal. Motilal's face was scared and seamed with lines of thought and care. It was so because he had toiled early and worked late for the betterment of his country. The iron sway of that imperious Viceroy, Lord Curzon, found in him the strongest opponent. The partition of Bengal had no more bitter opponent than Babu Motilal. The heavy military expenditure, the bureaucratic excesses of the I.C.S., the various other sins of omission and commission of the Government found in the stalwart Bengali journalist and patriot an unflinching critic,

#### CONGRESS ACTIVITIES

But Babu Motilal's labours were not all devoted to pure criticism. In the shaping of the nation's destinies and in its political growth he took a leading part. He was one of the original founders of the Congress. In those early days when in the night of darkness and doubt the leaders of the nation were groping their way to salvation. Babu Motilal was one of those who helped in the founding of the National Congress. From that initial step forward, it is to his eternal credit, that he never once had to retrace his way. Through crisis and storm, through success and defeat, through the varying vicissitudes of his country, he never once lost faith in his country's destiny and in the lofty future that awaited the nation. Motilal Ghose had a very magnetic personality and he was largely responsible for inspiring the youth of Bengal. The Bengal national party owes its existence in a large measure to the patriotic labours of Motilal. Mr. C. R. Das is in one sense the political disciple of Ghose. He was a man of great strength of character. Once his convictions were formed it was well-nigh impossible to deflect him from the path he had chalked out for himself.

#### A MASTER OF SATIRE

From every trial he emerged more resolute in his purpose and actuated by a deeper determination not to bend his knees to Baal.

Babu Motilal was a very self-effacing and self-less worker. Hence it is perhaps that to-day we outside Bengal are not in a position rightly to estimate his work and services. But to every Bengali rustic and peasant the name of Motilal Ghose is a household word. His homely style of writing, and his homely anecdotes and stories quoted from the ordinary simple life of the countryside made an immense and powerful appeal to the masses of Bengal which a more polished diction and a finer flow of language would have failed to affect. Motilal was a master of satire as is well-known to those who have had the misfortune to come under the lash of some aptly turned phrase or deft expression of language emanating from his formidable pen. He was the Bengal bureaucrat's pet aversion. The journalist who made such an appeal to his countrymen and inspired them to the heights of political fervour proved to the bureaucrat a veritable bug bear.

Babu Motilal was always able to march abreast of the times. His mind had an elasticity which enabled him to keep pace with progress in political ideas. The latter day political changes which came as a surprise to so many of the older politicians found easy acceptance with Babu Motilal owing to the extreme adaptability of his mind. The N. C. O. creed had in him a staunch adherent. He was high in the confidence of Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal's admiration for the Mahatma was boundless. With the inauguration of the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme, Motilal's pen became very active in the national cause. To him, the Reforms, so sparingly doled out, were an insufficient instalment and he condemned them in no uncertain terms. He did not believe in entering the Councils. His death at this critical time is a great loss not only to Non-co-operators but to the whole of India.—*Bombay Chronicle*.

#### MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S FAMOUS SPEECH

##### MADRAS LIBERAL LEAGUE'S PROTEST

At a general meeting of the Madras Liberal League held at Mr. G. A. Natesan's office, on the 10th August, with Dewan Bahadur Govindaraghavan Aiyar in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously passed:—

##### THE PREMIER'S SPEECH

I. The Madras Liberal League considers that the effect of Mr. Lloyd George's highly provocative and most objectionable speech in the House of Commons

on August 4 would be to deepen the distrust of India in British pledges and professions and shatter her hope in England's good faith and sense of justice. It protests strongly against the views expressed by the Premier as they amount to a virtual repudiation of the Announcement of August 20, 1917.

The League further believes that a crisis even graver than the present would be created in India if the Premier's betrayal of her interests and the thwarting of her legitimate ambitions are not immediately repudiated.

With a view to ease the already difficult situation in this country, and to maintain the confidence of the people in the integrity and declared high purpose of British rule in India it is necessary:—

(i) That all political prisoners not guilty of, or charged with, violence or incitement to violence, should be released as early as possible.

(ii) That immediate steps should be taken for the complete realisation of the ideal of Responsible Government in India.

(iii) That the recommendations made recently by the heads of Provinces in India and by His Excellency Lord Reading regarding the settlement of the Turkish question should be adopted in their entirety.

#### TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

II. The Liberal League is shocked at the reports given in the public press about the treatment of political prisoners in various parts of India, and demands that the laws and the regulations should be changed to the extent found necessary, so as to ensure that the Provincial Governments adopt and carry out the recommendation made recently by the Bombay Legislative Council, according to which such prisoners as are not charged with, or convicted of, offences against the State accompanied by violence to person or property or incitement to such offences, should be treated like first-class misdemeanants in England.

#### AN AMERICAN VIEW OF INDIAN REFORMS

Prof. C. D. Van Tyne, who was recently touring in India, writes in the course of an article in the July number of the *Atlantic Monthly*:—

The judgments passed on the Government of India Act are as varied as the endless varieties of people that pass on daily in an Indian city. The young Englishmen regard the Act, with its promise of rapid Indianisation of the services, as the death-bell of all their hopes and ambitions. They blame Mr. Montagu for it and hate him accordingly. As they see it, they have been trained for a career which seems doomed to vanish.

#### GENERAL OFFICIAL VIEW

Aside from the young men, the official class in general looks with favour on the Act, and all are loyal to it. A few look upon it, said Sir Frederick Whyte, as the Duke of Wellington looked upon the Reform Bill, ready to take the damned thing and let it pass, because the King's Government must be carried on. Such think more of British capital and the future of British officialdom in India than of the future of its brown masses of humanity.

#### VIEWS OF BUSINESSMEN

It cannot be denied that many English and Scotch merchants and manufacturers have little sympathy with the Government of India Act, and they dispose of it with impatient denunciations as "all d-d nonsense"; but I must say that I found American business and professional men in India just eager to preserve the old British regime, and just as intolerant of any suggestion that the Indians can rule themselves. Their watchword in the present troubled time is 'sit tight on the walve.' That section of the Indian Press which most assiduously represents the opinion of the European commercial and manufacturing interests, com-

plains the loudest against the democratic tendencies in India.

#### A RULER'S VIEW

His Highness the Rajah of Alwar is quite contemptuous of the reformer class which has come to the top in India and though not at all eager for intimacy with Europeans, he is quite convinced that the British rule is best for him and all small princes. The democracy which the British seek to set up, Alwar declared, would destroy all the foundations of caste and with them the Hindu religion. In a word, if caste remains democracy will fail; if democracy succeeds, caste falls and with it the Hindu religion. Such a political system would fail because it would have no basis in religion, the only firm foundation of any civilisation. One could not substitute, within a generation, a new basis of civilisation, a new religion.

#### THE MODERATES' OPINION

The second group, the Moderates, like Sir Surendranath Bannerji, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, and Lord Sinha, were often found in high Government positions or had a large stake, economic or social, which curbed their eagerness for Swaraj (self-rule). Nevertheless, they wished the march to go on apace. They hoped in their own lives to see the Promised Land. The Government of India Act was very good for a start, but more must come. They uttered many complaints against the British raj (rule) but thought it the only safe one at present. They had more confidence in their own people than was shown by the Conservatives, but it was not boundless.

#### THE NATIONALIST POSITION

But there were two other classes of Indian leaders, Nationalists and Non-co-operators, who aimed at the same thing, but would attain the goal by different means. The Nationalists, bitterly denouncing the Government of India Act as utterly inadequate, would nevertheless enter the Legislative Assembly or the Provincial Councils, and fighting the British by constitutional methods force further concessions. The Gandhi follower would refuse to have anything to do with the Government of India Act, and by non-co-operation with the Government bring it to a standstill. Both wanted Swaraj at once. Some would keep the British, some would drive them out; but both would have them give up their claim to the right to determine when the Indians were ready for Swaraj. 'We are as competent as they to decide that question,' the Indians bitterly asserted. Some would admit that they would be glad to profit for a time by the British experience in governing. Many had the curious idea that the British would give them naval and military protection while surrendering political control. The British, in a word, were to 'keep the ring' while the Indians played at politics, serenely free of the ultimate responsibility of governors. When I asked what motive the British Government would have for assuming such a burden, they seemed surprised at my cynical ignorance of altruism. Besides, they explained, we would protect British capital and interests in return for the security they would give us. "You expect, then," I said, "that of all the British people will assume a military burden and expense in order that a very few may have their Indian property protected." Our Philippine fellow-citizens I found entertaining like ideas. But there are other Indians of the Extremist factions who, like Mahatma Gandhi, their leader, are ready to wash their hands, if need be, of all British contracts. It is they and their leader who most challenge the world's attention.

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