

Indian Opinion

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THE ASIATIC BILL

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRANTS' REGULATION ACT

FOR the convenience of our readers we give below, in parallel columns, the various clauses as at present existing in the Immigrants Regulation Act, 1913, together with the alterations, additions and deletions proposed in the "Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill :—

THE ACT AS IT EXISTS

2. (7) No appeal shall be heard by a board unless notice thereof in the prescribed form has been given to the Immigration Officer by or on behalf of the person concerned within seventy-two hours after the refusal, detention, restriction, or arrest aforesaid, or, in case the appellant arrived by sea and the ship whereon he arrived is about to depart, unless such notice is given forthwith. In every case a deposit shall be made of an amount "sufficient, in the opinion of the Minister" to cover the detention expenses of the said person, the costs of bringing him before a board and of returning him to the place at which he was restricted if he desire to appear personally, and if he arrived by sea, the cost of his return passage by another ship to the place from which he came.

3. (2) A board may, of its own motion, and shall, at the request of the appellant or of an immigration officer, reserve for the decision of a superior court having jurisdiction, any question of Law which arises upon an appeal heard before such board under the last preceding section, and shall state such question in the form of a special case for the opinion of such court by transmitting such special case to the registrar thereof. The question so stated may be argued before such court which may call for further information to be supplied by the board if the court shall deem such information necessary and may give such answer on such case, supplemented by such information, if any, and may make such order as to the costs of the proceedings, as it may think right.

3. (3) For the purpose of this section "a question of law" shall, among other questions include a question of domicile, and "a superior court having jurisdiction" shall mean the provincial division of the Supreme Court which has jurisdiction where the board was sitting, or any judge of such division, or the Eastern Districts Local Division having such jurisdiction or any judge thereof, and "appellant" shall not include an alien.

4. (1) (a) Any person or class of persons deemed by the Minister on economic grounds or on account of standard or habits of life to be unsuited to the requirements of the Union or any particular Province thereof ;

THE ACT AS PROPOSED TO BE AMENDED

2. (7) The same, excepting the deletion of the words italicised and the substitution of the following :
"fixed by the immigration officer not exceeding one hundred pounds."

3. (2) The same, with the addition of the following words : "From any such opinion there shall be an appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court."

(3) For the purposes of this section—
"a question of law" shall, among other questions, include a question of domicile ; and "appellant" shall not include an alien.

(NOTE.—Portion italicised in the opposite section is to be deleted.)

4. (1) a. The same, with the addition of the following words :—

"Provided that for the purpose of this section the Northern Districts of Natal, as described in section three of "The Northern Districts Annexation Act, 1903" (Act No. 1, 1903, Natal) shall be deemed to be included in the Province of the Transvaal."

[NOTE :—Act No. 1, 1903, provides for the annexation to the Colony of Natal of certain Territories forming a part of the Transvaal Colony. Section three referred to above is as follows :
"From and after the taking effect of this Act the undermentioned Territories, situated Northwards of the Colony of Natal now forming a part of the Transvaal Colony, shall be annexed to and shall thenceforth form a part of the Colony of Natal, that is to say :—The District of Vryheid, the District of Utrecht, a portion of the District of Wakkerstroom lying south of a line drawn from the North-eastern corner of Natal, East of Volksrust

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(continued from the bottom of the second column)

to the headwaters of the Tongolo River, and thence along that river to the border of the Utrecht District.

The aforesaid Territories are in this Act shortly referred to as the Northern Districts."

4. (1) (f) Any person who has been convicted in any country of any of the following offences (unless he has received a free pardon therefor) namely, murder, rape, arson, theft, receiving stolen goods knowing the same to have been stolen; fraud, forgery or uttering forged documents knowing the same to have been forged, counterfeiting coin or uttering coin knowing the same to be counterfeit, housebreaking with intent to commit an offence, burglary, robbery with violence, threats by letter or otherwise with intent to extort or of any attempt to commit any such offence, and by reason of the circumstances connected with the offence, is deemed by the Minister to be an undesirable inhabitant of or visitor to the Union.

4. (2) Nothing in sub-section (1) contained shall be construed—

(a) as enabling a person to be deemed a prohibited immigrant in the Cape of Good Hope or Natal, if, being at the commencement of this Act lawfully entitled to reside in any Province, he shows or has shown that he is able to comply with the requirements described in section three (a) of Act No. 30 of 1906 of the Cape of Good Hope, or of section five (a) of Act No. 30 of 1903 of Natal.

[NOTE—Section three (a) of Act No. 30 of 1906 of the Cape of Good Hope, referred to above reads as follows.—

(a) Any person who, when asked to do so by any duly authorised officer, shall be unable through deficient education to himself write out and sign in the characters of any European language an application to the satisfaction of the Minister; provided that for the purposes of this sub-section Yiddish shall be accepted as an European language.

Section five (a) of Act No. 30 of 1903 of Natal referred to in this section reads as follows:—

(a) any person who when asked to do so by any duly authorized officer, shall be unable through deficient education to himself to write out and sign, in the characters of some European language, an application to the satisfaction of the Minister.”

5. The following persons or classes of persons shall not be prohibited immigrants for the purposes of this Act namely:—

(e) any person born before the commencement of the Act in any part of South Africa included in the Union whose parents were lawfully resident therein and were not at that time restricted to temporary or conditional residence by any law then in force, and any person born in any place after the commencement of this Act whose parents were at the time of his birth domiciled in any part of South Africa included in the Union.

(g) any person who is proved to the satisfaction of an Immigration Officer or in case of an appeal to the satisfaction of the board, to be the wife, or the child under the age of 16 years, of any person exempted by paragraph (f) of this section, provided that the wife or the child, (as the case may be), is not such a person as is described in sub-section (1) (d), (e), (f), (g) or (h) of the last preceding section.

4. (1) (f) The same, with the addition after the words “have been stolen” of the following:—
“incest, sodomy, bestiality, any offence involving fraudulent conduct in connection with any insolvency.”

4. (2) (a) deleted.

5. The following persons or classes of persons shall not be prohibited immigrants for the purposes of this Act namely:—

(e) any person, other than an alien, who was born in any part of South Africa included in the Union and whose parents were at the time of his birth lawfully resident therein and were not at that time restricted to temporary or conditional residence therein by any law then in force; Provided that any person who, if he were a prohibited immigrant, would be included within any class of persons which has, in terms of paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section four, been deemed by the Minister to be unsuited to the requirements of the Union or any province thereof shall lose the protection accorded by this paragraph if he has acquired or shall acquire a domicile in a Province of the Union other than that in which he was born;

(g) any person who is proved to the satisfaction of an immigration officer or in the case of an appeal to the satisfaction of the board, to be the wife or child under the age of sixteen years of any person exempted by paragraph (f) of this section;

Provided:

(i) that the wife or child (as the case may be) is not such a person as is described in paragraph (d), (e), (f), (g) or (h) of sub-section four; and

(ii) that where exempted person belongs to one of the classes described in paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section four the wife or child (as the case may be) enters the Union within five years after the first day of August, 1925, or within ten years

10. No prohibited immigrant shall be exempt from the provisions of this Act or be allowed to remain in the Union, or in any Province wherein his residence is unlawful, or be deemed to have acquired a domicile therein, by reason only that he had not been informed that he could not enter or remain in the Union or (as the case may be) in that Province or that he had been allowed to enter or remain through oversight, misrepresentation or owing to the fact having been undiscovered that he was such a prohibited immigrant.

22. Any person (not being a person born in any part of South Africa which has been included in the Union) who, whether before or after the commencement of this Act has been sentenced to imprisonment—

- (a) for a contravention of provision mentioned in the first schedule to this Act or any provision hereafter amending that provision or substituted therefor or for any offence mentioned in sub-section (1) (f) of section four;
- (b) for selling, bartering, giving or otherwise supplying intoxicating liquor to any coloured person in contravention of any law; or
- (c) for dealing in or being in possession of unwrought precious metal or rough or uncut precious stones in contravention of any law,

after the date of the first entry into the Union, whichever period may be the longer, of the person so exempted.

[NOTE.—Paragraphs (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) of sub-section (1) of section four referred to in (i) deal with criminals and deceased persons and paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section four referred to in (ii) is as follows:—

(a) any person or class of persons deemed by the Minister on economic grounds or on account of standard or habits of life to be unsuited to the requirements of the Union or any particular Province thereof.]

In the interpretation of this paragraph "the wife" shall include any one woman between whom and the exempted person mentioned there exists a union recognised as a marriage under the tenets of an Indian religion notwithstanding that by those tenets the union of that exempted person with other women at the same time would also be recognised as a marriage. Provided that no woman shall be deemed to be the wife of such exempted person—

- (i) if such a union exists between him and any other woman who has under any law relating to immigration or to Asiatic registration been recognised within the Union as the wife of such person and has resided or resides or is domiciled in any province; or
- (ii) if such exempted person has offspring resident or domiciled in any province by any woman who is still living.

and a union shall not be for the purposes of this section be deemed to have ceased to exist by reason only of the fact that according to the tenets of an Indian religion it has been dissolved.

"The child under the age of sixteen" shall mean a child who is the offspring of the exempted person and the wife as herein defined or the child of the exempted person and a deceased woman who if she had been alive could have been recognised at the time of the birth of the child as the wife (as herein defined) or whose union with the exempted person could have been registered at the time of the birth of the child as a marriage under section two of the Indians Relief Act, 1914.

10. The same, with the following addition:—

Any such person may be declared to be a prohibited immigrant and dealt with in terms of section nineteen of this Act and if such person is in possession of a registration certificate or a certificate of domicile or any other document authorizing him to remain in the Union or any province it shall be competent for any board to which he may appeal, if it be proved to the satisfaction of the board that such certificate or other document was obtained by fraudulent representations by or on behalf of the holder, to order that such certificate or other document be cancelled and the holder thereof be dealt with as a prohibited immigrant: Provided that if such person fails to appeal to a board the Principal Immigration Officer concerned may exercise all such powers as to the cancellation of any certificate or other document as are by this section conferred upon a board.

22. The same, with the addition of the following new paragraph:—

(d) for any offence under section twenty of this Act for which imprisonment has been imposed without the option of a fine.

[NOTE:—Section 20 above referred to reads as follows:—
Any person who—

- (a) aids or abets any person in entering or remaining within the Union or any Province in contravention of this Act, knowing that person to be prohibited from so entering or remaining;
- (b) aids or abets a person ordered to be removed from the Union or any Province in evading the order, or harbours any such person knowing him to be the subject of any such order;
- (c) for the purpose of entering the Union, or any Province in which he is a prohibited immigrant, or of facilitating or assisting the entrance of himself or any other person in

and who by reason of the circumstances connected with the offence, is deemed by the Minister to be an undesirable inhabitant of the Union, may be removed from the Union by warrant, and pending removal, may be detained in such custody as may be prescribed by regulation.

30. In this Act, and in the regulations made thereunder, unless inconsistent with the context,—
 "domicile" shall mean the place in which a person has his present home or in which he resides or to which he returns as his place or present permanent abode and not for a mere special or temporary purpose; and a person shall not be deemed to have a domicile within the Union or any Province (as the case may be) for the purposes of this Act unless he has resided therein for at least three years, otherwise than under terms of conditional or temporary residence permitted by this Act or any other law or as a person under detention in a prison, gaol, reformatory or lunatic asylum; and a person shall be deemed for the purposes of this Act to have lost his domicile within the Union or any Province (as the case may be) if he voluntarily go and reside outside the Union or the Province (except for a special or temporary purpose) with the intention of making his home outside the Union or that Province (as the case may be.)

Section *six* of the Indians Relief Act, 1914 :—

The Minister may in his discretion cause to be provided out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose of a free passage from any port in the Union to any port in India (with or without free conveyance by rail to such first mentioned port) for any Indian (other than an Indian who is or may become entitled under Law No. 25 of 1861—Natal—or any amendment thereof to such free passage), who makes a written request for such free passage etc.

ASIATIC TRADERS IN THE TRANSVAAL

In the Transvaal Provincial Council in moving the second reading of the "General Dealer's (Control) Draft Ordinance," the Administrator is reported to have said, the measure was put forward mainly to control the Asiatic trade in difference to representations made to restrict the issue of general dealers' licences. These requests were made by representatives of various municipalities.

The Executive Committee had felt that very careful steps had to be taken. It was hoped that the question of Asiatic trading would have been tackled by the Union Government. The Government had, however, decided that this aspect of the Asiatic problem must be left to the provinces. In framing the Ordinance they had taken into consideration the re-

contravention of the Act, commits any fraudulent act or makes any false representation by conduct, statement, or otherwise,
 shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds or, in default of payment to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a period not exceeding six months, or to such imprisonment without the option of a fine.]

30. In this Act and in the regulations made thereunder, unless inconsistent will the context :

"domicile" shall mean the place in which a person has his present permanent home, or present permanent residence or, to which he returns as his present permanent abode and not for a mere special or temporary purpose; and a person shall not be deemed to have a domicile within the Union or any Province (as the case may be) for the purposes of this Act unless he has lawfully resided therein for a continuous period of three years, otherwise than under terms of conditional or temporary residence permitted by this Act or any other law or as a person under detention in prison, gaol, reformatory or mental hospital, and a person shall be deemed for the purposes of this Act to have lost his domicile within the Union or any Province (as the case may be) if he absents himself from the Union or that Province (as the case may be) and does not return to the Union or that Province (as the case may be) within three years from the date of departure therefrom or in the case of a person who absented himself from the Union or any Province (as the case may be) prior to the 1st August, 1925, does not return to the Union or that Province (as the case may be) before the 1st August, 1928 : Provided that in cases where a person proceeds overseas for a special or temporary purpose the Minister may authorize the issue of a certificate of identity under the provisions of sub-section (2) of section *twenty-five* of this Act allowing the person concerned to return to, and resume his residence in the Province named within the period specified in such certificate or any extension thereof not exceeding ten years in all.

Section *six* of the Indians Relief Act, 1914, remains, with the addition after the words "any port in India" of the words "or elsewhere."

quest of the Municipal Congress from last year and also the report of the Asiatic Commission.

Mr. Geo. Hills (Lab., Benoni) said it should be stated frankly that the Draft Ordinance was intended to apply to Asiatics, if that was the intention.

Mr. H. J. Lamb (S.A.P. Yeoville) was of the same opinion, and moved the adjournment of the debate, because members had not had time to consider the measure.

The motion was defeated by 25 votes to 15.

Mr. R. H. A. Rabbie (Nat., Wakkerstroom) said that through the competition of the Asiatics many white dealers had to close their business. The danger did not exist only in the large centres, but also in the up-country villages. He strongly supported the second reading.

The draft was read a second time and the committee stage fixed for Tuesday the 11th instant.

NOTES AND NEWS

It is difficult to foresee what fate awaits India. At a time when proper guidance is most essential to the youth of India in her struggle for freedom veterans, one after another, are speedily passing away. Within the short space of ten years we have recorded the deaths of not less than five great leaders, namely, Gokhale, Tilak, Sir Subramania Aiyar, Ashutosh Mukherjee and Das, and now we receive the sad news of the death of Sir Surendranath Bannerjee. It is an undoubted fact that the present awakening of National spirit in India is the fruit of the labours of these leaders who have not had the good fortune of seeing with their own eyes the accomplishment of their self-imposed task but have departed leaving the task to be accomplished by others. Let us hope that they will be guided by the same spirit that has guided the past leaders. It is an irony of fate that Bengal should lose within a very short period three of her great men, for, the last three mentioned all belonged to Bengal. Bengal has ever stood first and even to-day stands first in her patriotism and this loss to her will be unbearable. Sir Surendranath leaves behind him one son and five daughters to whom and to Bengal we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

With this issue we present our readers with a photo supplement of the late Sir Surendranath Bannerjee whose life sketch appears in another column.

Mr. Jogodish Chandra Mukherjee the managing partner of the well-known firm of Calcutta—Messrs. Kamalalaya, (Wholesale and Export Clothiers, Hatters and Outfitters), who has recently come on a business trip to the Union has arrived at Durban last Wednesday from Johannesburg and is the guest of Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee. The firm represented by Mr. Mukherjee is perhaps the only Indian firm which is doing business on a large scale with many of the South African European firms. Mr. Mukherjee is, to our knowledge, the first Bengalee gentleman that has ever visited these shores. Although his mission is purely a business one he will, no doubt, incidentally have the opportunity of gaining a first-hand knowledge of the Indian question, of which, from the little chat we were able to have with him, Mr. Mukherjee seems to have already had some bitter experience. Mr. Mukherjee sails for India by the *s.s. Karagola* on the 17th instant.

A petition with about a thousand signatures has been submitted to His Exalted Highness the Nizam, Hyderabad, for granting political reforms as embodied in a Memorandum prepared by the State Reforms Association sometime ago. The previous memorandum from the State Reforms Association prayed the Nizam to grant representation in the Legislative Council in proportion to the percentage of classes in the State with protection of minorities. The Nizam had previously announced in a declaration that the Legislative Council should be constituted and enlarged on modern lines and it was in pursuance and conformity with the principles of this declaration that the State Reforms Association put in their memorandum.

Mr. R. Srinivasan, M.L.C., representing the interests of the submerged classes in the Legislature, has made his mark as a Social Worker. He was made Rao Sahab in the last Honours' List, on the birthday of H. I. M. the King. Mr. Srinivasan, it will be remembered, returned to India after completing a full term in civil service in South Africa and his many local friends will be pleased to learn of the services he is rendering to the Motherland.

Questions have been put in connection with Mahatma Gandhi as to who pays his expenses and whether he is expensive? Mahatma Gandhi himself answers these questions in *Young India* :—

"I do make the claim, that I attempt to act as I preach. But I must confess that I am not as inexpensive in my wants, as I would like to be. My food since my illness costs more than it should. By no means can I call it a poor man's food. My travels too cost more than they did before my illness. I am no longer able to travel long distance third class. Nor do I travel, as I did before, without a companion. All this means not simplicity and poverty, but the reverse of it. I draw nothing from the A.I.C.C. or the Gujarat Committee. But friends find my travelling expenses including food and clothing. Often during my tours railway tickets are purchased by those who invite me and my host everywhere covers me with kind attention.

THE ASIATIC BILL

THE Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill, introduced by the Minister of the Interior in the Union House of Assembly at the close of the session reveals the Asiatic policy of the Government. There are two important chapters, the first dealing with the reservation of class areas and the second with amendments to the Immigrants Regulation Act. Chapters III. and IV. deal with amendments to the Asiatics Registration Amendment Act of the Transvaal and the repeal wholly or in part of certain laws affecting Asiatics in Natal, Transvaal and the Cape Province.

Fortunately the Government have launched this Bill at the close of Parliament, the object being, as stated by the Minister, to enable all concerned to study the measure. We are of opinion that the Government anticipate strong opposition on the part of the British and Indian Governments, and thought it the best policy to allow the storm to gather and burst before the Bill is proceeded with. Be that as it may, the time that must elapse before the Bill can be brought before Parliament, can be made use of by the Indian community, both in India and South Africa, to enlighten the mass of the people to its provisions. That is the first step. This complicated Bill must be examined thoroughly, and in order to assist our readers we publish in this issue the amendments to the Immigrants Regulation Act side by side with the original clauses. Later on we intend to examine each clause as amended and endeavour to show what effect such amendments will have upon the rights of Asiatic residents and their descendants.

The first chapter, dealing with the reservation of class areas, affects adversely Asiatics only, although they are scarcely mentioned by name Cape Malays and half-caste races such as the "Cape Coloured," "Mauritius Creole" and "St. Helena persons" are exempt from the provisions of this Bill. There is, of course, a political reason for exempting these people. They have the Parliamentary franchise and can make their voice heard. Moreover there is a growing tendency to absorb certain Europeanised coloured people into the European community, as the trend of recent legislation dealing with wages and conditions in

the industries makes it impossible to place white and coloured workers on a different basis.

The procedure adopted in the Bill for bringing about the reservation of class areas, which will really be Asiatic locations, is for a municipal council, village or local board or health committee to intimate to the Minister that a certain area is wholly or for the greater part occupied for trading or residential purposes by a particular class of persons (Asiatics for instance). A commission appointed by the Minister will then investigate and report upon the desirability of setting apart such area for the use of a particular class of persons. By a proclamation in the *Government Gazette*, the Governor-General may declare a certain area to be either a class residential, trading or combined residential and trading area within six months of the receipt of the commission's report.

Supposing an area is set apart for Asiatics, no other persons may acquire or lease property therein unless he holds the right of renewal of a lease in writing at the commencement of the Act (which is already definitely fixed as August 1, 1925, whenever the Bill may happen to pass). Likewise no Asiatic would be able to acquire or lease property in a town or village *elsewhere than in the area set apart* unless at the commencement of the Act he is in possession of a written lease.

No European may be granted a licence in an Asiatic area, and no Asiatic may obtain a licence elsewhere unless in either case they receive a *special permit* granted by the Governor-General; provided, however, that those who at the time of the proclamation are carrying on business cannot be refused a renewal of a licence.

These special areas may be extended or reduced, after investigation, or the Governor-General may by proclamation decide to suspend for a period all the provisions regarding a special area if found to be inadequate or unsuitable to the population. Special areas proclaimed in the Transvaal will be placed on the same footing as locations already established under Law 3 of 1885.

The Bill provides for an advisory board consisting of not less than three persons of the class concerned resident in the same town or village, in addition to a chairman who, in the case of a non-European class area, may be a European. It is provided that no by-laws or regulations particularly affecting the class of persons concerned shall be made or withdrawn unless the advice of the advisory board has first been obtained.

By proclamation in the *Gazette*, the Governor-General may declare that no Asiatic, for instance, may acquire or lease property in the Province of Natal *save in the Coast belt* which is between the Coast line and a line to be drawn approximately thirty miles inland unless he holds a written lease at the date specified. *No Asiatic may acquire or lease property in the Coast belt from a person other than his own class unless it is within a special area.* This also applies to testamentary dispositions.

Our readers will now have a clear idea of what

is intended by this iniquitous measure. If this Bill ever becomes law, the Indian community's position in this country will be unbearable.

* THE LATE SIR SURENDRANATH BANNERJEA

The late Sir Surendranath was the greatest orator India has ever known. He was called the Lion of Bengal. Although his oratory was the secret of the unique hold that Sir Surendranath had over the affections of his countrymen, his other endowments were by no means of a mean order. Surendranath was born in 1848, the second of the five sons of Babu Durga Charan Bannerjea, one of the leading Allopathic practitioners, at that time, in Bengal.

SCHOLASTIC LIFE

At the age of seven, after receiving primary education Surendranath joined the Doveton College an institution mainly directed to the education of Anglo-Indian youths. In 1863, with Latin as second language, he secured a first class in the Entrance Examination and in 1868 he graduated.

IN THE I. C. S.

On the recommendation of the then Principal of the Doveton College and against the wishes of his relatives, Surendranath was sent to England, in that year to compete for the I. C. S. He joined the University College in London, and after working assiduously he appeared for the I. C. S. in 1869 and came out successful. He was posted as Assistant Magistrate of Sylhet in September 1871 and he came back to India just a few weeks after the death of his father.

AS AN EDUCATIONIST

As Providence would have it Sir Surendranath did not remain long in the Indian Civil Service. He was born to lead the National Movement in India. His services being dispensed with in the Indian Civil Service Sir Surendranath entered the educational sphere. In 1876 he was appointed Professor of English Literature in the Metropolitan Institution and in 1881 he also joined the staff of the Free Church College. In 1882, he started a school of his own with about a hundred students on the roll. In the space of seven years, the institution grew to gigantic proportions. It was converted into a College and named after that most loved of Indian Viceroy's—Lord Ripon. The Ripon College is one of the finest educational institutions in Bengal, even perhaps in all India, and owes its origin, development, and present commanding position, to the zeal and energy of a single Indian—Sir Surendranath.

AS A JOURNALIST

From an educationist Sir Surendranath became a journalist. He began his journalistic career by taking charge of the *Bengalee*, which had been started chiefly by the late lamented Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea, during the stormy days of the Lytton Viceroyalty. He threw himself heart and soul into the work.

It was very easy for a journalist trying to do his duty fearlessly in those days in India to find himself now and then in deep waters and Sir Surendranath was no exception to the rule. During the days of the "Ilbert Bill" controversy the *Bengalee* had distinguished itself by its fearless criticism of the bureaucracy and Anglo-Indians. These latter naturally harboured resentment against the offending editor, and were, perhaps, waiting for an opportunity to take vengeance. The opportunity soon came. In the year 1883, the *Bengalee* severely criticised the conduct of a Judge of the Calcutta.

* [We are indebted to "The Indian Nation Builders" published by Messrs Ganesh & Co., 15, Broadway, Madras; which has served as a useful guide in preparing the above sketch—Ed. I. O.]

High Court, who had in a case ordered the production of an idol in evidence. Sir Surendranath was prosecuted for contempt of Court and was sentenced by a majority of Judges to two months' imprisonment, though an apology was offered by Sir Surendranath.

During the exciting days of Lord Lytton, during the eventful days of Lord Ripon, during the memorable Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, during the Minto Viceroyalty with its reforms, repressions and the bomb, during all these days, the *Bengalee* has been second to none in educating, organising and moulding public opinion. Sir Surendranath Bannerjea was invited to represent India on the "Imperial Press Conference." A colonial delegate to the Conference was so impressed with Sir Surendranath's abilities that he told him that, if there were other men in India like Sir Surendranath, self-Government ought at once to be granted to India.

HIS POLITICAL CAREER

On the 26th July, 1876, the "Indian Association" of Calcutta was ushered into being, by the united efforts of Messrs. Surendranath, A. M. Bose and others. Sir Surendranath had long been its Secretary. There had been no political battle which the Association had fought, in which Sir Surendranath had not figured largely. He undertook tours on behalf of the Association and preached the gospel of constitutional agitation with all the fervour of an apostle.

TWICE AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS

Sir Surendranath was one of the shining lights of the Congress movement. His speeches from the Congress platform have sometimes had very remarkable results. At the fifth Congress, his stirring appeal for funds brought a prompt response in the shape of subscriptions amounting to Rs. 60,000. In pursuance of a resolution of the fifth Congress, a deputation was sent to England, Sir Surendranath being on it, to plead for the reform of the Legislative Councils. Sir Surendranath addressed many meetings and everywhere created a most favourable impression. An Englishman who was present at one of the meetings thus wrote of his oratory: "Experienced speakers in and out of Parliament found in the Babu a deal which recalled the sonorous thunders of a William Pitt, the dialectical skill of a Fox, the rich freshness of illustration of a Burke, and the keen wit of a Sheridan." Sir Surendranath's many services were recognised when he was called to the Presidential Chair of the eleventh Congress held at Poona, in 1825. Internal dissension was then busy in the Congress, but Sir Surendranath steered the national vessel clear of it all.

Of the address he delivered on the occasion, it is not possible to speak in terms of adequate praise. It occupied almost three hours in delivery, and was delivered without once referring to the written speech. The audience was throughout kept spell-bound. Sir Surendranath was a second time called to the Presidential Chair of the Congress held at Ahmedabad in 1902. His address on the occasion was a masterpiece which occupied two hours in delivery.

PARTITION OF BENGAL

A memorable chapter opens in the political career of Sir Surendranath, with the Partition of Bengal. He took the lead in organising the opposition to the measure. He stumped Bengal and addressed meetings after meetings in the Vernacular, and here it will be interesting to know that Sir Surendranath spoke almost as effectively in Bengalee as in English. When agitation proved fruitless, he unfurled the banner of boycott and carried it throughout the length and breadth of Bengal. Sir Surendranath held that Swadeshi and Boycott are inseparable, being the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

Sir Surendranath went to England in 1897, to give evidence before the Welby Commission. His evi-

dence has been much admired for the mastery of Indian political problems it displays. After the evidence was over, Sir Surendranath addressed many meetings in England, bringing honour not only to himself but also to his country.

Sir Surendranath has always taken a keen interest in municipal matters and was elected to the Calcutta Corporation in 1876. From that time he was one of the most active members of the Corporation for 23 years, till he resigned, in 1899, as a protest against the New Municipal Act passed in the teeth of determined opposition.

IN THE PRESENT DAY POLITICS

In the present day politics in India Sir Surendranath belonged to the Liberal Party. It was his firm belief that true Liberalism would culminate in the fulness of time in the establishment of Dominion Status for India.

Under the new Reform scheme Sir Surendranath was appointed Minister of Bengal in charge of Local Self-Government. During his Ministry one of his most important achievements was the passing of the New Municipal Bill under which the present Corporation is successfully working.

Sir Surendranath lived at Barakhpur, about eight miles north of Calcutta where he has his palatial home.

Whatever differences of opinion there may have been as to the political goal of India or the path to that goal every Indian is bound to recognise Sir Surendranath as one of the foremost and revered leaders of India. May his soul rest in peace.

In the course of an article in the *National Review* on the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Duke of Northumberland declares that Mr. Austen Chamberlain's recent speech at Geneva "marks the end of a chapter in the history of our post-war foreign policy." Its significance lies in the fact that the British Government for the first time makes it quite clear that it regards the Covenant as worthless for guaranteeing the peace of the world. He says:—

"The League has been put to the test and has failed. It was founded on the assumption that the interests of all nations are really identical. If this identity of interest really exists no great difficulty should have been found in inducing them to place their armaments at the disposal of the League. It has been found impossible to do simply because this identity of interest does not, in fact, exist. Two determined attempts were made to make the League a reality, and not only have they failed, but the British Government has said quite plainly that the peace of the world depends not upon the League, but upon a pact or combination of the Powers outside the League."

Natal Indian Congress

The Annual General Meeting of the Natal Indian Congress will be held at Mr. Rawat's Bjo, Victoria Street, Durban, on Sunday the 6th September, 1925, at 11 a.m. for the transaction of the following business:

Report and Financial Statement.
Election of Officials.

AMOD BAYAT,

President.

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE,

V. S. C. PATHER,

Hon. Secretaries.

N.B.—Your subscription of 2s. 6d. for the year 1925 will require to be paid before 24 hours of the meeting to enable you to vote at the meeting.

