

Indian Opinion

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MR. SASTRI'S EXHORTATION TO TRANSVAAL INDIANS

JUST before leaving for the Cape the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri delivered the following important speech before a large Indian audience in Johannesburg:—

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, this meeting is of great importance to the welfare of the Indian community, not only in the Transvaal but throughout the Union of South Africa. I desire to occupy a few minutes of your time to-night in explaining certain parts of the Capetown Agreement about which, I understand, there is much misunderstanding here. I have at several places made clear to audiences the terms of that Agreement, but have never had such a chance in the Transvaal, and as I get it for the first time now I do hope you will listen to me with some attention while I endeavour to remove some of the misconceptions which, I am given to understand, are agitating the minds of many among you. There are, it appeared to me from conversations that I have had with your leaders, three important points upon which a few words may well be said. I will take them not in the order of importance but in the order of unimportance.

Entry of Minor Children

Firstly, there is the regulation newly made with regard to the entry of minor children. It has now been decreed, as you know, that no minor children can be brought into the Union unless they are accompanied by their mothers. To this, I understand, there is a certain amount of objection. If the objection merely is that it takes away a right enjoyed it is a true objection. But we have to consider why the rule was made, and whether the reason for it was good and sufficient. To condemn anything new it is not enough to say it is bad, for we first of all must be able to say and prove that it is a wrong. When we were in Capetown figures were placed before us which showed clearly that a large majority—nine-tenths of the children brought into this country were not accompanied by their mothers. It was explained to us that in some cases the children were not those of the fathers who claimed them. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the rule giving to domiciled parents leave to bring in their wives and minor children was made for the purpose of enabling people settled in this country to live happy and clean family lives. (Hear, hear). I say that with some assurance, because I know why that rule was made not only with reference to South Africa but with reference to all Dominions. We brought up repeatedly complaints on behalf of Indians overseas that the prohibition of their being joined by their wives and families was having disastrous effects upon their family lives; that it was cruel, by any arrangement whatsoever, to prevent the families from living in union. It was in response to our repeated requests, so motivated, that the Imperial Conference decided that in all Dominions domiciled parents should be allowed to bring in their children. Now, if it was proved—as it was abundantly proved at Capetown to us—that children were brought in without their mothers, or with very few of them—it was clear that the concession obtained was not used for the purpose for which it was intended, but merely for the purpose of enabling people to bring

in children and create for them a trade domicile while the family domicile still continued in India. Now, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to point out that when anything we do does not achieve the object intended, but some other object however good that may be it is a subject of legitimate complaint, and we felt bound at Capetown to provide some remedy and none seemed appropriate except this one. It may be that in the case of many among you it is very difficult to bring out your wives. I quite realise that; nevertheless you must see the point of view of the people of this country. We have got to satisfy them in some ways, and this was one of the ways in which we thought that, agreeable to our original purpose, we could meet their wishes. I don't think, personally, that it is right on our part to complain against an arrangement which now in its modified form secures the object which we attained in the original form.

New Law of Domicile

The next subject of complaint is, I believe, in connection with the new law of domicile. On this point again there is a great deal of misunderstanding partly justified, I admit, because things have not been made clear, and partly also because of ignorance. I will try to make the matter clear to you. This new law making domicile forfeitable by three years' absence from the Union is nothing strange to the British Empire. As a matter of fact, such a law obtains in the Dominions. There was no such law before in South Africa, and they have now made it for the first time. There is, however, one difference between the domicile law in this country and the domicile law in the other Dominions. Domicile law in the other Dominions would compel people to return within one year, for their domicile is lost by one year's continuous absence. But in this country they have given you a three years' margin. Is that an improvement on the law of the other Dominions? Should we complain if the law is especially made for Europeans, as well as for Indians, for don't forget, this is a law of general application? Even a European, who is only domiciled in this country and is not a native of it, must return to the Union within three years of his absence. If he over stays the limit without the leave of the Minister of the Interior he loses his domicile—the very same as you will.

Now, my fellow-countrymen, let us be reasonable in our complaints. It is, no doubt, true that you lose a right which you hitherto have had. But consider your position in South Africa, and, especially, in the Transvaal. We are not placed here upon an equal footing with our white fellow-citizens. In almost every respect we are treated as inferior. If a law is made of common application to them and to us, though it might operate prejudicially to us Indians, so long as we are satisfied that it operates equally to the prejudice of the white citizens of this land it seems to me it is idle to rebel against such an arrangement.

Section 5

Now, to come to the third, and, perhaps, the most important point of all—Section 5, about which so much complaint is audible on all sides. What is this

section 5? Why was it enacted? First let me clear up a preliminary point. It seems to be a general impression among people in the Transvaal and round about that this provision was made by the Union Government, with the concurrence of the Indian Delegation headed by my good friend, Sir Mohammed Habibulla. Now, let me make it absolutely clear to you that that is not a fact. Somebody made a mistake about it originally, and it is that mistake that has given rise to this impression. This matter did not come before the Capetown conference at all. It appears now that one or two among us knew of it, but it was because they were alarmed of it mostly—not that it came before us in a regular form for us to consider at all. In fact, I read it in the newspapers for the first time, and didn't quite understand how it came into the Bill at all. Well, that is, however, a technical matter. No great importance should be attached to that aspect of the question, but we must now look at the merits before we venture to pass judgment. Now, let us see, first of all, why section 5 was passed by the Union Government. It would appear, as is well known to you in the Transvaal, that by a decision of the Supreme Court here that the Executive were unable to cancel registration certificates which had been obtained, and could be proved to have been obtained, upon false representations. The law, however, was not so interpreted by other Supreme Courts in the land, so, after a time, your Supreme Courts were themselves at variance over this matter of great importance. Any Government, in such circumstances, would bring in a law to make the matter uniform throughout the country. We have no right to blame a Government which tries to make its laws on such an essential point uniform throughout their dominion. Moreover, it is not only uniformity that they sought. They sought also, it seems to me, one of the essential conditions of all legislation. Consider this: Imagine yourselves for a moment to have come back to India, to have settled down there as people living in your own country, in complete happiness with your neighbours, desirous of nothing but the advancement of the general population and not concerned over much with your own individual interests which were not in any jeopardy at all. Now, would you, or would you not, allow that civilised Government, when fraud had been proved, to put things right? Is a man to be allowed to enjoy the fruits of fraudulent transaction? No government in the world would tolerate that state of things. If, therefore, the Union Government decided that they would have a law, operating uniformly throughout the Union so that certificates obtained on fraudulent representations should be cancellable. It seems to me, that on the face of it it is not a law-making attempt to which we can as reasonable subject take exception.

But, then, you would be all quite justified in saying: "We have been here some time; we are settled here; we are loyal; we abide by the law of the land; our breach of law was only in the first instance; we are good citizens; we have built up our business and established business connections and, that being so, is it fair, is it righteous, is it expedient on the part of Government to proclaim now that we had no right to come here and no right to remain?" That is a perfectly legitimate position to take up. Now, that position was taken up by your champions—the men of the South African Indian Congress, aided by representatives whom you sent of your own free will and choice to join them in Capetown. They made a gallant attempt, I must say, to have an amendment put in the Bill which would have the effect of preventing retrospective action being taken under the section, but, believe me, they failed through no fault of their own. It was pointed out to them—and here I asked you to remember the exceedingly parlous situation in which you always are amidst a popula-

tion whose fundamental feelings are opposed to your continuance here, so just think seriously of that—it was pointed out to your leaders that if an amendment barring retrospective action were to be brought forward as part of the Bill it was fairly certain—why it was absolutely certain—that the anti-Asiatic feeling would rise up in a body in the Assembly and prevent that amendment being passed. That, I think, is perfectly clear to everyone. That amendment had no chance whatever of passing. But more than that. A positive evil would have arisen, for if the amendment had been submitted to the opinion of the House, and it had been rejected—as most certainly it would have been—it would no longer be possible for the Minister of the Interior to help you, as he now can and proposes to do, administratively. (Hear, hear, and applause).

Now, what was there to do? As sensible people, negotiating a very delicate matter with a powerful Government, your representatives, it seems to me, chose the wisest course, and asked the Minister of the Interior privately, and through Mr. Patrick Duncan in Parliament, to give some satisfaction in the minds of those who were terribly—and very naturally—alarmed by the inclusion of Section 5. The Minister of the Interior, as you all know, gave an assurance that he could condone these false certificates provided the people in the country gave him an assurance, firstly, that they would stand by the Capetown agreement and support it loyally, and, secondly that they would no longer encourage or countenance or support, by legal or other processes, these false transactions. That, I maintain, was a perfectly fair and honourable promise to make. (Hear, hear).

The Work of Congress

But why do you blame the Congress for this compromise? I really cannot understand it. Congress could not have done any more, take that from me. None of you, I tell you—not twenty of you, even if you were the wisest in the land—could have done any better. Section 5 was there in the Bill, and, in the circumstances, the only thing possible was to obtain from the Minister his assurance in return for the assurance that you yourselves were to give. I cannot for the life of me see how any reasonable man can get up and say that by Section 5 Congress punished the people of the Transvaal. No, a thousand times no. Congress, ladies and gentlemen, did the right thing. It stood by you through thick and thin, it obtained for you the only concession that was possible, and if you are wise, believe me, you would lose no time in getting this assurance from the Minister of the Interior.

Because you are disorganised, because you are unable to understand your true interests, because even when you understand them you have not the courage to follow the right course—it is because of this that this vital matter is being delayed and prosecutions are being started in the Cape, Natal and the Transvaal, and the community lies under a nightmare of indiscriminating deportations numbering, perhaps, hundreds. Are you wise in allowing this state of affairs to continue? Must you not demand, if you know how to protect your interests, that this assurance be given in your behalf in exchange for that promised by the Minister? I know, ladies and gentlemen, that you have no newspapers, and that you cannot ventilate this matter as you should. I know also that you are not in the habit of holding public meetings and getting your views published, but are you not in the habit of meeting frequently? Do you not discuss this matter over and over again? Why, I ask you, do you not take the necessary actions? (Hear, hear). You all come and ask me

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Notes and News

OUR readers will be deeply grieved to learn of the grave loss sustained by Mr. V. S. C. Pather, the hon. jt. Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress, by the death of his dear mother last Saturday night at the age of fifty-eight after a prolonged illness. We extend to Mr. Pather and his brothers and other members of his family our deepest sympathy in his irreparable loss.

The funeral of Mr. Pather's late mother took place on Sunday at 4-30 p.m. which was attended, notwithstanding the wet weather, by a large number of representative Indians. Among the many wreaths sent were included one from the South African Indian Congress and one from the Natal Indian Congress.

We welcome Dr. R. M. Nanji who has returned to Durban from India last Wednesday per the *s. s. Karoa*. The present residence of Dr. Nanji is at 19 First Avenue.

The Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri left Johannesburg for the Cape last Sunday. He broke his journey at Kimberley where he received a great welcome in the City Hall from the European and Indian community. In the course of his remarks Mr. Sastri is reported to have said, Kimberley had no peculiar Indian problem. He understood that the 200 Indians resident there were living in comfortable circumstances. Referring to the agreement between India and the Union, Mr. Sastri said, "I feel it my duty to repeat what I have several times said, that your Government has shown statesmanship and courage of the highest order."

Speaking recently at Pretoria on the Church in India, Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Calcutta, said there were half a million members of the English Church there, of which 72 per cent. were Indians, 20 per cent. Europeans and 8 per cent. Anglo-Indians, that is, persons of mixed descent. The population in India was 321,000,000, and in his own diocese there was a population of 85,000,000.

A correspondent from Estcourt draws our attention to one fact in connection with taxation derived from Indians unfairly that has been overlooked by the Natal Indian Congress in the statement submitted by them to the recent Taxation Enquiry Commission. That is dealing with the exorbitant railage charged on food-stuffs used by Indians. Following are some of the items which speak for themselves:—

Railage on Flour from Durban to Estcourt for 100 lbs. bag 6½d (this is consumed mostly by Europeans).
Railage on Tamarind to Estcourt on 100 lbs. is 4s. 2d. (entirely consumed by Indians).
Railage on Oil 90 lbs. case 4s.
" " Condiments 100 lbs. 3s. 7d.
" " Oil and Condiments together per 100 lbs. 4s. 10d. and so on.

The fact to be noted is the marked difference in the railage of Flour which is consumed by Europeans mostly and other groceries consumed by Indians only. Thus in this direction too the Indian bear inadequately the burden of taxation.

On the occasion of the opening of the fifth session of the Union Parliament on the 15th instant the Governor General in his speech referring to Cape-town Agreement said:

"Steps have been taken to bring into operation the agreement arrived at between the Union Government and the Government of India. My Ministers

feel satisfied that the policy of mutual goodwill and co-operation in the solution of a common problem, which has thus been initiated, is already having results beneficial to South Africa. This policy has been furthered by the appointment in the Union of an Agent-General of the Government of India.

The Protector of Indian Immigrants at Durban states that there is at present a record of Indians in the country awaiting repatriation. There are 445 application to be dealt with, and although figures have been gradually mounting during the past three months, they have never before reached this number. The steamer *Umsinga* which sails for Madras shortly will carry 160 repatriates, and the *Umsolosi* next month will take 200.

It was a red letter day for the Indian community says a Volksrust correspondent of the *Natal Advertiser* when they opened the new school built by the voluntary contributions from the community. The Rev. de Wet, chairman of the local school committee, welcomed the assembly, and the magistrate congratulated the Indian community on its perseverance. Mr. Knauer, M. P. C. (Mayor), expressed the hope that the Indians would profit by the mistakes of the Europeans in a very narrow curriculum in education, and provide such a variety as would lead to useful results after school days.

MR. SASTRI'S APPEAL TO TRANSVAALERS

JUST before leaving the Transvaal for the Cape the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri made a lengthy speech before an Indian audience in Johannesburg, a report of which is published elsewhere in the issue, in which he has lucidly explained the terms of the Capetown Agreement about which there was some misunderstanding prevailing especially in the Transvaal. Mr. Sastri also took the opportunity of making a stirring appeal to our Transvaal friends to unite and join hands with the Congress. Mr. Sastri's appeal was such that it should go home to every Indian in the Transvaal. If it has not gone home it will indeed be a sorry day not only for the Transvaal Indians but for Indians throughout the Union for by Transvaal standing aside they are not hampering their own cause but the cause of the whole Community.

We are glad to note, however, from news we have received from the Transvaal that there is a changed atmosphere at last among our friends there. They are beginning to realise the necessity of working unitedly and speaking with one voice, and steps are being taken once again to come under the banner of the Congress. A mass meeting we understand, has been called for the purpose on Sunday October 30.

We do not wish to challenge the right of the Transvaal Indians to secede from the Congress, nor their right to make their own representations and to work out their own salvation in their own way. It was, as Mr. Sastri has very rightly pointed out, perfectly legitimate for them to do. But in a common cause to have two voices of the same kind shows lack of discipline on our part and places those to whom representations are made in an embarrassing position. We may have our internal differences and grievances but they are trifles in face of greater dangers that hang over our heads and which require our immediate attention. It is lack of understanding on our part to sulk over a few officials who we may find objectionable. The power to keep them or to remove them lies in us. The officials are appointed by the Congress, are not to dictate to the Congress but to be dictated by the Congress. And if an official is found wanting in his duty he can be replaced by another. But this can be done when the Congress stands united.

It is not Mr. Sastri's business in his capacity as Agent of the Government of India to entreat us to be united. This is a thing for us to look to. Mr. Sastri has more important engagements. And when he comes forward to interest himself in these matters we indeed owe a deep debt of gratitude to him. Mr. Sastri not only has entreated our Transvaal friends to unite but has even been generous enough to promise to assist in settling their internal differences with the Congress. This should certainly satisfy our brethren in the Transvaal.

While congratulating them on the step they are proposing to take to join hands with the Congress we would like to make just a few observations with regard to the Sunday meeting. Let calmness prevail in that meeting. Let not sectional feelings rise in that meeting, as Colonial-borns, Mahomedans, Patidars, etc. There can be but one political organisation representing Indians as a whole. We have to stand as Indians first and Indians last to face a common enemy. Let not seeking of offices be the all important business of the meeting. Let that be decided calmly by the meeting, above all let wise counsel prevail and may Heaven guide them to do the right thing.

WELCOME TO METROPOLITAN OF INDIA

WE accord a hearty welcome to the Metropolitan of India, the Right Rev. Dr. Foss Westcott, Bishop of Calcutta who arrives in Durban on Monday. The Metropolitan has been taking a keen interest in the Indian question in South Africa and during the critical period which led to the sitting of the recent Round Table Conference the Rev. C. F. Andrews was in close touch with him and kept him informed of all the developments. It was his desire, however, to gain a first-hand knowledge of the whole question and that is what has brought the Right Rev. Dr. Westcott here. The Indian community throughout South Africa is deeply grateful to the Metropolitan for the concern he has shown in their question and for having sacrificed some of his most valuable time in the interests of their cause.

While wishing the Metropolitan every success in his noble mission we sincerely hope that his efforts will bear good fruits to the satisfaction of himself as well as of the people concerned.

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what about this section 5, sir; are we all going to be deported? Knowing full well all the time that it is not in my power, but in your own—in the power of each one of you—to get this thing done—to give this assurance.

But you will not do it. You don't know how to do it, and when it is pointed out to you how to go about it you raise one hundred little objections and you simply will not go forward. How difficult you make it for others to help you! How very, very difficult indeed! I feel for you, really. Sometimes I am disposed to shed internal tears on your account. You stand divided. What a tragedy! We have enough quarrels in India, have we not? Why should we quarrel here, living in terrible dangers and difficulties? Should we not hug one another to our bosoms instead of letting things, as in the Transvaal, go to the dogs, because we cannot have our own little ways and power?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I say wake up, for the time has come. Even if you do all you can today it would be some time before you obtain this assurance. Think of what you have got to do. You were asked by the Minister of the Interior to give an assurance. That is easily said, but which of us is to give it? The Minister of the Interior, I tell you—whatever his original attitude to the Indian community may have been—has no desire except to play fair with you (Hear, hear, and applause). He stands firmly by the agreement, and by the terms he made in Parliament. I know his mind, because I have spoken to him, and to others as well.

The Transvaal's Secession

It would appear that before I came to this country—it does not make any difference whether I was here or elsewhere, and I am half ashamed to mention this fact—a certain thing happened here. It occurred

in the month of May when you assembled in a mass meeting. I suppose great numbers of you were here at the time—and resolved for some reasons unknown to me, and undiscoverable by me even today, that your political society—the Transvaal British Indian Association—withdraws from the South African Indian Congress. (A voice: "Not the Colonial-borns.") Well, I understand it was a mass meeting at which this resolution was passed and, within a few days of the adoption of it, it was communicated by the Executive Committee to the Minister of the Interior. He was informed that the Transvaal British Indian Association had become an independent body, and that he was to deal with it with reference to all subjects connected with this Province, in so far as the Indian community there was concerned. The Executive Committee asked for an interview with the Minister, and in two days' time there came by telegraph an answer to that. Now, please, listen to me, for I am going to tell you two facts not hitherto known to you. In two days' time came a telegram from the Minister of the Interior, saying that he very much regretted the step the Transvaal British Indian Association had taken, because, in his opinion, it was injurious to their welfare, and that he was not prepared to receive a deputation from the Association.

Now, that should have put any people on their guard. As soon as it was known that the Indian Association in the Transvaal had just disowned Congress, which had done so much to bring about the Capetown Agreement, as soon as it was known that such an Association was not going to obtain official recognition from the Department what would sensible people have done? If they were careful, not of their little dignity but of the interests of the Indian community in the Transvaal—(loud applause)—they would then and there have rectified their blunder, but they did not do it. Four months have now passed, and prosecutions have been started in the Cape, Natal and also here—four precious months have gone and now you see what the present state of affairs is. Still, this fact is not generally known to you. And there is another which it is my misfortune to have to tell you also. Quite recently, it would appear, the British Indian Association in this Province sent to the Minister of the Interior a request that he would tell them in what form exactly the assurance should be given before he, in return, would assure them that there would be no retrospective effect given to Section 5. It was, of course, perfectly legitimate for them to have done so, because they had seceded from Congress. Well, the answer came—at any rate it was sent—and it was to this effect:

The Minister of the Interior would be very glad to be assured by any influential friends regarding any matter of public importance, but he had for some time dealt with the South African Indian Congress and he felt he would deal in the future with them, as he considered it would be to the advantage of everybody if the Government of the Union treated with one recognised body. He, therefore, begged the British Indian Association of this Province to address him through the South African Indian Congress. (Loud applause).

I am sorry I have for the first time to announce that fact to you, but there you are. It is now clear to you, ladies and gentlemen,—and if I have not made it clear why nothing in the world will ever make it so—that your interest and those of your fellow-countrymen here require that as soon as possible your Association should declare its willingness to become a part of the South African Indian Congress. (Loud applause). I certainly cannot see any other solution—any other way out of the difficulty.

The first important thing for you to do is to obtain this assurance from the Minister, but in order

to secure that you will have to give a reciprocal assurance. The word of the present Transvaal British Indian Association has been pronounced to be inadequate, and you have been told to come to the Department through the South African Indian Congress. Ladies and gentlemen, only one thing has got to be done. There is no occasion for deliberation or hesitation or compromise or negotiation. What has got to be done, tell me? Are you going to parley with this Government; are you strong enough to dictate your terms to Dr. Malan and Gen. Hertzog? Do you think that what has not been completed during these four months is going to be achieved within the next fortnight by the Transvaal British Indian Association? And, then, what is the thing which they seem so unwilling to do? Is it sinful to join your countrymen in another Province? Is it sinful, I ask, to do that? ("No, no.")

They tell me now, gentlemen, that Congress has been most perverse in the past. We don't trust Congress, the officials are disagreeable fellows, they don't treat us properly, they say. All this may be true! I have no knowledge whatever of the past relations between you and the South African Indian Congress. I have no right, therefore, to defend the Congress and its officials, but I ask you to change your mental attitude towards it. You may be right. I believe, however, that you are very wrong in your attitude, but still, you may be right. Even if you are in the right as to the nature of Congress, just answer this question: Are you going to refuse to deal with them and allow the Transvaal people to be oppressed by the daily and nightly fear of deportation? ("No, no.") Are you going to obtain this assurance? I say if you are sensible people get the assurance, and make no doubt about it. Give the people of the Transvaal, the Cape and Natal time to draw their breath, and when a satisfactory state of affairs obtains then, if you please, quarrel as much as you will with the South African Indian Congress. I will watch the game, if you allow me into your deliberations. You tell me your grievances against Kaje and Sorabjee and the other fellows, and I promise you, much as I love them, if you bring home any charge to them I will see that justice is done. (Hear, hear and applause). If they have defects of temper, and now and again use language which no benefactor would use, tell me all about it. I have some influence over these young people, and I will see that no affront is given to you at all. Take me into your confidence, and let us settle our quarrels with the South African Indian Congress at leisure, for there is time for that. No danger will befall you if you wait for a month or so for the settlement of your internal grievances, but the great danger hanging over your heads must be averted by means of reunion with Congress. (Hear, hear). Do that first. "Get that done first and foremost," and then, if you so please, let us sit down for a week and indulge in mutual abuse and recriminations to our hearts' content, because while we are safe that does not matter. When, however, the enemy is knocking at the gate, when there is a prospect of your being separated from your children and asked to go back across the seas, when you are face to face with that danger, it does not matter whether Mr. Kaje or Mr. Camay rules, but what matters is the obtaining of this assurance—let me repeat that a hundred times over—from the Minister of the Interior by you giving the assurance that is asked of you.

The Indian Delegation

Ladies and gentlemen, having said so much on these points, I think I ought to say a few words about some other complaints I have heard. Quite recently some gentlemen from the Transvaal belonging to the British Indian Association came to see me. Their complaint against the agreement and

against the Congress took a form which I found somewhat difficult to understand—complaints about Section 5, the new domicile law and the entry of minor children. After all these things had been got over they told me: "We people in the Transvaal cannot purchase land in our own name; we cannot build houses in our name; there is a Gold Law of 1885 which must be repealed; Congress has done nothing in this direction and, therefore, we are very angry." Now, gentlemen of the Transvaal, you are no children. But tell me from your knowledge of the conditions in the Transvaal whether it is easy for the Congress, assuming that its powers were a hundred times greater, to have these grievances redressed? Why did not the Capetown Conference do so? What did the Indian Delegation—Mr. Habibullah and company do—do? They were here for four weeks. Yes, we were here for four weeks, undoubtedly. But what did we come here for? Believe me, we came here with the main object of inducing this Government to drop the disastrous Bill which they had put before the Assembly. That Bill threatened you with segregation and disabilities of a very severe type. It was to get rid of that Bill that we came here. (Hear, hear.) If we gained, besides getting rid of that Bill, something more that is a matter to be thankful for. I remember a story which I used to hear when I was a little fellow. A young man was appointed clerk under a European master. He was rather a countryside young man, and not particularly clever in the ways of the world, so his mother thought she would give him some advice. She said: "My young man, you get a small salary now, and we are a large family. You must try and get a larger salary as soon as possible." "How am I to get it?" asked the boy, and the mother replied: "Wait till your master laughs." Before a week had past the boy put up a draft before his master, and it was full of mistakes. The master was a kind-hearted man, and instead of giving him a box on the ear, he took the paper and smiled at the absurdities. His smile broadened into a laugh so the boy thought it was a nice opportunity for his purpose. "Master," he said, "my mother told me to ask at this supreme moment for an increase in salary." My dear countrymen, Mr. Habibullah and I and the other people who came here would be just as stupid as that boy if merely because we got the Bill abandoned we ventured further and asked that the repeal of Act 3 of 1885 be undertaken, and that the Indians of the Transvaal should be at once endowed with the power to acquire land and build houses as they pleased in their own names. Would they not have laughed at us? Is that a thing that we should undertake at this time? Must not we make our present position as secure as we can before we do anything else?

It sometimes strikes me that I have not left India at all. When I see the mistakes you make, when I see the mistakes you want your leaders to commit, I still think I am in India, where to-day, after thousands of years, Hindus and Mahomedans still shed each other's blood and refuse to come together for the redemption of their common mother. (A voice: "Shame.") Aye, my friends, you don't seem to me to be much better. If your quarrels are not between Hindus and Mahomedans they are between Natal and the Transvaal, the Transvaal British Indian Association and the South African Indian Congress and Kaje and Camay (laughter). Are we right in letting this state of things continue when danger presses? Come, wake up, be men in your time. Think of your families and the troubles that await them. Get the thing done before anything else, and then sit down and have your quarrels, as many as you like, and I undertake, as I have already indicated, that when you come to your reckoning with the Congress I will look carefully

into every point of difference and see that you come together on an honourable compromise. (Applause).

And one word more before I resume my seat. You will bear with me for a moment, however long my subject may have been. One word to the members of the Transvaal British Indian Association, and that is one of entreaty and humble request. They may have good reasons for the course they have taken. I will not venture to question that, but I ask them to remember that it is not their own personal pride which is the important thing but the interests of the people of the Transvaal (loud applause) whose representatives they are. (Renewed applause). They have made a mistake, but it is a bona fide mistake. Which of us does not make a mistake? Politicians and governments make mistakes, don't they? The Transvaal British Indian Association, perhaps, made a mistake, but I implore them not to persist in their present course, but to make it possible for the mistake to be rectified. Let them do it now in a regular and constitutional manner. Get this wrong step reversed, go back to Congress and, if you will, reform it. Why not? After all it is a simple matter of copybook wisdom. Anybody will tell you that when there are 170,000 people, 5,000 or 6,000 miles from their own country, living in another country most of whose people don't like them, don't want them, but want to expel them if possible—these 170,000 people should gang together like one man. (Loud applause). Is that not elementary wisdom?

Why should anyone stand in the way of unity, and when unity is broken why should anyone bar the way to reunion? In the midst of dangers—terrible dangers—to continue in this course is not fulfilling the trust given to you. I don't want 'no,' I have not come here for the purpose of dividing Transvaaler and Transvaaler, but I want the whole of the Indian community of the Union of South Africa to come together like one man. Am I likely to enjoy a spectacle of a few Transvaalers fighting their brethren in the same Province? That is by no means my object, I assure you. I want you to forget your differences, for you to come together and consider this matter very carefully, act not dis-unitedly but unitedly, and thus see that the interests of your fellow-countrymen are put beyond any further peril. (Loud and continued applause.)

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]
Part III. Chapter XIII.

IN INDIA

So I sailed for home, Mauritius was one of the ports of call, and as the boat made a long halt there I went ashore and fairly acquainted myself with the local conditions. I was for a night the guest of Sir Charles Bruce, the Governor of the Colony.

On arrival in India I spent some time in going about the country. It was the year 1901 when the Congress met at Calcutta under the Presidentship of Mr. (now Sir) Dinshaw Wacha. And of course I attended it. It was my first experience of the Congress. From Bombay I travelled in the same train as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. For I had to speak to him about the conditions in South Africa I knew the kingly style in which he lived. He had engaged a special saloon for himself and I had orders to take my opportunity by travelling in the saloon for one stage. So I went to the saloon and reported myself at the appointed station. There were in the saloon, besides him, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, and Mr. (now Sir) Chimanlal Setalvad. They were discussing politics. As soon as Sir Pherozeshah saw me

he said, 'Gandhi, it seems nothing can be done for you. Of course we will pass the resolution you want. But what rights have we in our own country? I believe that so long as we have no power in our own country you cannot fare better in the Colonies.'

I was taken aback. Sir Chimanlal seemed to concur in the view. Sir Dinshaw cast a pathetic look at me.

I tried to plead with Sir Pherozezshah, but it was out of the question for one like me to prevail upon the uncrowned king of Bombay. I contented myself with the fact that I would be allowed to move my resolution.

'You will of course show me the Resolution,' said Sir Dinshaw to cheer me up. I thanked him, and left them at the station where the train stopped next.

So we reached Calcutta. The President was taken to his camp with great *clat* by the Reception Committee, I asked a volunteer as to where I was to go. He took me to the Ripon College where a number of delegates had been put up. Fortune favoured me. Lokamanya was also put up in the same block as I. I have a recollection that he came a day later.

And as was *natura*, Lokamanya would never be without his *darbar*. Were I a painter, I could paint him as I saw him seated on his bed—so vivid is the whole thing in my memory. Of the numberless people that called on him, I can recollect to-day only one, namely, the late Babu Motilal Ghose, Editor of *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika*. Their loud laugh and their talks about the wrong-doings of the ruling race cannot be forgotten.

But I propose to examine in some detail the appointments in this camp. The volunteers were clashing against one another. You asked one of them to do something. He delegated it to another, and he to a third, and so on; and the delegates were neither here nor there.

I made friends with a few volunteers. I told them some things about South Africa and they felt somewhat ashamed. I tried to bring home to them the secret of service. They seemed to understand, but service is no mushroom growth. It presupposes the will first, and then experience. There was no lack of will on the part of those good simple-hearted youngmen but experience they had none. The Congress would meet three days every year and then go to sleep. What training can one have out of a three days' show once a year? And the delegates were all of a piece with the volunteers. They had no better or longer training. They would do nothing themselves, 'Volunteer, do this thing,' 'Volunteer, do that thing,' were their constant orders.

Even here I was face to face with untouchability in a fair measure. The Tamilian kitchen was far and away from the rest. To the Tamil delegates even the sight of others whilst they were dining meant pollution. So a kitchen had specially to be made for them in the college compound, walled in by thatch. It was full of smoke which could choke you. It was a kitchen, dining room, washroom, all in one—a close safe with no outlet. To me this looked like travesty of *Varnashramadharma*. If, I said to myself, there was such untouchability as between the delegates of the Congress, one could but imagine the extent to which it existed amongst their constituents. I heaved a sigh at the thought.

There was no limit to insanitation. There were pools of water everywhere. Latrines there were few, and their stink still oppresses me. I pointed it out to the volunteers. They said point blank: 'That is not our work, it is the scavenger's work.' I asked for a broom. The man stared at me in wonder. I procured a broom and cleaned the latrine. But ~~that was for myself.~~ The rush was so great, and

the latrines were so few that they needed to be cleaned every time they were used and that was more than I could do. So I had to content myself with simply ministering to myself. And the others did not seem to mind the stench and the dirt.

But that was not all. Some of the delegates did not scruple to use the verandah outside their rooms for calls of nature at night. In the morning I pointed out the spots to the volunteers. No one was ready to undertake the cleaning and I found no one to share the honour of doing it with me. Conditions have since considerably improved, but even to-day thoughtless delegates are not wanting who disfigure the Congress camp by committing nuisance wherever they choose, and all the volunteers are not always ready to remove it.

I saw that if the Congress session were to be prolonged conditions were quite favourable for the outbreak of an epidemic.

The "Mercury" on the Liquor Bill

In the course of a leading article on the liquor Bill, in its issue of October 17, the *Natal Mercury* says:—

The provisions of the Bill dealing with the non-European population are not distinctly controversial, but some of them are neither just nor practical. The Bill will generally prevent the employment of Natives and Indians on licensed premises, the only exception being that Natives may be employed for cleaning purposes, and Indians may be generally employed in Natal on payment by the licensee of double the ordinary licence. These prohibitions go altogether too far. There would be wide approval of a provision which prevented the employment of Natives in the handling of liquor or in a bar, but that a Native should be prevented from carrying out the duties, say, of kitchen boy on premises which are licensed is unjust and absurd. Even more unjust is the proposal to restrict the employment of Indian waiters, the majority of whom have spent the whole of their lives at this work. It is not a very appropriate pendant to the agreement with India, which Ministers referred to with so much unction in the Governor-General's speech. If enforced one obvious result will be that the Indian waiters will be compelled to offer their services at low rates to tea rooms, and will thus enter into competition with the European girls there employed. And the double licence proposal is also unfair, as it gives the owner of the large establishment an advantage as against the smaller man. The cost of the double licence spread over a staff of fifty is not serious; if the staff numbers only two or three it is a serious item indeed. One other feature of this part of the Bill may have very great effect upon the liquor trade in Natal. The Government it will be noted, proposes to take to itself the right to establish wine and beer shops for Asiatics and Coloured persons, and further prevents the supply to them at ordinary establishments save in the Cape and Natal. The Licensing Boards in these Provinces, which will consist entirely of Government nominees, are, however, given the right to impose restrictions, short of absolute prohibition, on the sale of liquor to these classes by the licensed victualler. There is apparently, therefore, to be an attempt to make the supply of liquor to these people a Government monopoly. We are not prepared to say that such a policy has not its advantages, but if a monopoly is aimed at it should be frankly acknowledged, and those interests which are affected should receive fair compensation.

The Liquor Bill

(Specially Contributed to INDIAN OPINION)

There cannot be the slightest doubt that Sec. 104 of the new Liquor Bill, corresponding to Sec. 107 of the former Bill, has the sole object of throwing out of employment the thousands of Indians (we shall not confine ourselves to the Indian case) and find employment for poor whites. The Minister of Justice, in reply to the debate on the second reading of the former Bill, no doubt, said, "I see nothing wrong in principle in a state of affairs that those people who are protected, who are not allowed to buy drink on these premises, should not be allowed to do any work that they choose to do on these premises." But that deceived no one. Col. D. Reitz had said, "In regard to clause 107, no natives on licensed premises, I doubt whether the Minister was wholly frank with us last night, I have been told in the lobbies and elsewhere that it emanated from the Labour Party and is an instalment of the white labour policy." Whereupon the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs enquired, "Do you object to it?" "No," assured the gallant Colonel. If further proof was necessary, Mr. Kentridge has provided it in ample measure. "The hon. member for Port Elizabeth (Central), Col. D. Reitz, twitted the Minister and the Government with having taken this provision over from the Labour Party, but we have no desire to evade responsibility in the matter." We congratulate the Minister on having carried out the principle for which I believe both sections of the Raot stand, that is, the principle of extending avenues of employment for white people in every direction. If still further proof was necessary, the section of the Bill itself supplies it. Sub-section (3) permits the continual employment of Asiatics in Natal provided the Licensing Board authorised such a course, in which the licensing fees shall be doubled. Sub-section (4) permits the employment of Natives for cleansing work. It is impossible to understand how the doubling of the licensing fees will save the Asiatic from drink or the permission to do cleansing but not other work will save the Native. In the latter case, it is a concession to the white man's prestige; for he should not be asked to do menial and degrading work of scrubbing and cleaning. The Native must do that even if by so doing he gets access to liquor. With regards the Asiatics in Natal, what deterred the Minister from a more thoroughgoing policy was the numbers involved. In reply to Mr. Nel's anxious query as to why Asiatics in Natal were exempted, the Minister replied, "I suppose because they are so many of them there." He was, however, most willing to oblige Mr. Nel, for he continued, "I am quite prepared to extend the provision regarding Asiatics in Natal; I think that will be better." In vain Mr. Maurice Alexander pleaded for considerations of humanity. The enactment of that section would throw out of employment and into the streets many thousands of Indians in the Union; most of them were born in the Union, and knew no other land; they were trained to the professions of cooks and waiters and knew no other trade; few other trades were open to them. Over the then Transvaal law prohibited them from having excess to drink but did not prohibit them the profession of waiters and cooks. In vain was it urged by other members in the Assembly that there were no qualified whites to take the place of the displaced Indians; that the service in the hotels would go up in cost but inferior in quality, and that many hotels would become insolvent. Col. Sir David Harris described in moving terms the pathetic condition of the Indians affected by the Bill. "Why abolish Indian waiters? The majority of these were born in South Africa; they are sober, efficient, civil and obliging and have done nothing else during their life-time. If this Bill became law and these men are deprived of their employment the only thing that will be left for them will be the occupation of digging their own graves."

Nothing moved, the Minister of Justice—justice

indeed!—has come up with that section again in the present draft, notwithstanding that in the meantime we have had the Round Table Conference and the Capetown Agreement, the spirit of which the section violates most outrageously. It was this very Government of which Mr. Tielman Roos is and has been a member, that solemnly undertook to uplift the permanent Indian population in this country. The Indians affected by this section of the Liquor Bill are among the permanent population of this country. As we have said above, many of these for two generations or more, have been in this land; they are the poorer section of the Indians and as such they have not the means to visit India frequently and keep in touch with people there; many of them have forgotten their places in India, have no friends or relations there, are strangers to their Indian languages and habits and customs, and would be perfect strangers, and unhappy at that, in India. Assisted emigration is no salvation to them. It is a curious way of uplifting them by throwing them out of employment almost out of hand, some of them after a whole life time spent in that profession and incapable of taking up another, even if facilities for such were available. It is cruel—cruel beyond words.

In the speech from the Throne His Excellency the Governor-General said on the 14th inst. "My Ministers feel satisfied that the policy of mutual goodwill and co-operation in the solution of a common problem, which has been initiated, is already having results beneficial to South Africa." The Government of India, and the South African Indians have played the game and loyally co-operated in carrying out the Agreement, it will not cheer them to know that the Union Government proposes to co-operate on this side by throwing on the streets over 5,000 Indians. Considerations of humanity, of honour and of solemn obligation must restrain the Government from following a course which will involve cruel and unmerited hardships on innocent people here, will evoke bitter disappointment and consternation in India, and blacken the character of the Union Government. We beg the Government to pause and consider, and drop the obnoxious section. And so before the inevitable agitation over the section snaps asunder the good relation that happily are growing up between the two countries, before the minds of the people are soured and embittered.

The Indians who will be displaced by this section are not those against whom it may be alleged that they compete, and compete unfairly, with Europeans. Europeans do not care to do the work that these Indians have been doing. The other day an experiment was tried to train white cooks and waiters. Only 9 persons applied and very few of them made good. It cannot, therefore, be urged that Indian competition was driving out the whites.

Should the Labour Party feel that the paucity of white waiters and cooks is due to the low wages that Indians accept, we are quite willing that the Wages Board should fix the standard wage the same for white and Indian. And though that will prejudicially affect some of the Indians, we are prepared to put up with it. Indians will make good by their efficiency, courtesy and good service. In fact, we know that some hotel proprietors would be willing to resign their Indian employees even at a white standard wage.

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