

INDIAN OPINION

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1. NO. 78

GEORGETOWN, B.G., SATURDAY OCTOBER. 27. 1945. ONE PENNY

INDIAN OPINION: Items of news interest and Literary contributions must be addressed to P. O. Box 43, Georgetown, B. G. Features and other items appearing in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board. The Editorial column reflects the policy of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Copies—one penny.

LOCAL

Annual Subscription—Posted 1.50

FOREIGN

Annual Subscription—Posted \$200.

CROWN COLONY GOVERNMENT

Sir Gordon Lethem, Governor of British Guiana, made certain caustic comments at a Thanksgiving Service which was held on Sunday last under the auspices of the Hindu Religious Society, at their Temple in Georgetown.

In the presence of a large audience composed of certain prominent Indians, Sir Gordon Lethem stated:

"In these last few months, I have seen things going back and the hopes I had formed of them, and that was largely due to the East Indian Community. I would not, say all, but some, I see malice, personal malice, racial malice coming out, and mostly from East Indians. Day after day I have received written communications coming to my office, and when I read them, I say what manner of people is this?"

As an experienced Administrator, His Excellency should enquire of himself again, what is the reason for all the correspondence that have been sent to him. Is he personally responsible for some of them?

Answering Attacks by the Governor on the Indian Community

To:

His Excellency The Governor
Sir Gordon Lethem K. C. M. G.

May it please your Excellency,

As the King's Representative in British Guiana, you are expected to govern His Majesty's subjects without discrimination, or partiality of any kind. Your public utterances at public places mirror your mind and give the public an idea of the trend of your thought. Criticisms are healthy if they are constructive, but when criticism degenerates into meddling abuse it must be curbed. For reasons best known to yourself you have at nearly every public Indian Function seized the opportunity to emit sufficient venom to do harm to a large section of the population, who are loyal

subjects of His Majesty the King. Their pitiable condition is no concern of the British Guiana Government, and when a few local Indians try to better themselves to better the fate of their countrymen living in barracks on sugar estates and earning dog's wages let alone the conditions under which they live, you place them gently in the category of agitators and they become the target of every government Official.

Here are a few of your utterances:

1. "I have been the more distressed to see too often as it has seemed to me in some of my experience in country-districts a people in whom very little indeed is to be found of that steady mental balance which one can address the appeal of reason and considered argument."

(continued on Page 2)

We ourselves receive various kinds of correspondence and space does not permit us to publish them. We interest these things to mean grave dissatisfaction among the majority of our people, particularly those who have no confidence in the Government.

A Declaration was made by the Caribbean Labour Conference at Barbados in September as follows:—

"It is the considered opinion of this Conference that the Educational systems at present in being in these territories are fundamentally opposed to this objective, since they tend towards the perpetuation of the existing snobbery, based on wealth and race and continuation of the hatred, ill-will, distrust and jealousy prevalent everywhere among the inhabitants, rather than to the development of a community whose members are conscious of

their mutual rights and responsibilities."

Sir Gordon Lethem should make an opportunity to reply to this charge on Crown Colony Administration.

To sum up, there can be no doubt that the Governor and Government are dissatisfied regarding the general conduct of the East Indian Community. The mass of Community is also dissatisfied.

What then are our people to do? We have received numerous letters and verbal requests that Government be asked to make the necessary arrangements for our people to return to their homeland. Will Sir Gordon Lethem take active steps to see that the Indians leave British Guiana? Let us hope that he will, or cease to offer destructive criticisms.

ANSWERING ATTACKS BY THE GOVERNOR ON THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

(Continued from page 1)

2. "That East Indians who in two or three generations have raised themselves from the status of indentured labour to that of landlords, capitalists and industrialists are those who appear most to oppress their compatriots"

3. "You talk of Indians having built the Rice Industry by their tears and sweat. East Indians did not start the Industry here."

4. And now, "I see malice personal malice, racial malice coming out and mostly from Indians." What manner of people is this? Bad feeling and Bad blood.

These, your Excellency are strong statements, and I have found it difficult to find similar statements from past Governors who governed when the Indian Community was not in its present position. Within recent years there has been an awaking among Indians and quite a few responsible people are jealous of their progress. They have spared no efforts to poison the minds of Governors and Government Officials against the Indian section of the population. Has your Excellency been following the attitude of the local press towards Indians? Indians are disloyal—Indians are unreliable—Indians are Jews, and the latest menu is: Miscegenation as the only solution of the race problem. Ponder for a while on these charges which stand to the discredit of the British Guiana Government:

1. After 108 years service to keep the economic machine mobile, Indians continue to live in insanitary barracks, drink impure water and eat scanty food.

2. With a compulsory Education Ordinance, in operation, child labour is still encouraged.

3. Hindus & Muslims debarred by the Denominational System of control from taking up the Teaching Profession. Mr. Hammond supports Government Schools. But Government will not do anything.

4. Immigrants entitled by law to land or money in lieu of back passage denied this right by the Luckhoo-Laing Report when just next door in Surinam every Indian Immigrant has received the money to which he was legally entitled.

5. The illiterates of Trinidad and Jamaica given the right to vote but British-Guiana illiterates must wait until when, no one knows.

A motion was moved hinting that Downing Street should be asked to keep you in British Guiana for another decade, but I think in the matter of the Franchise you have, in your honest attempt to keep faith with your advisers, "done the illiterates of this colony in the eye" and set the stage for racial conflicts which will have far-reaching effects.

KUNZRU.

Governors Action Deplored

Sir Gordon Lethem Singles out India Community for attack in a speech at the Hindoo Religious Society

HIS EXCELLENCY'S APPRECIATION

His Excellency expressed gratitude for the cordial welcome extended to the other visitors and himself and sincere appreciation for the honour conferred on them by being garlanded.

After quoting two passages from the Holy Quoran, His Excellency said that he proposed to say a few words, some of which might perhaps be pleasing and others perhaps displeasing.

It was for the people of British Guiana to prove to the world at large that with varying races and conditions and in spite of many difficulties, they could pull together for the progress and betterment of their country. What they wished to see eventually was political self-government in British Guiana.

His Excellency declared that he had the greatest regard for the East Indian community in British Guiana for what they had done in the past for the country. He had the greatest sympathy for all the difficulties and handicaps they had encountered in the past and he also had the greatest sympathy for them in the just maintenance of their culture, their customs and their ways of life. Those things he had very much at heart.

When they looked back over the past year, they realised they had many good gifts from God. They had had first of all, Victory in May and again in August and peace had come to them at last. They had been talking about new drainage schemes for the country the building of new schools and land settlement and money for them all. Many decisions had been taken all with a view to pushing the colony forward.

RETARDING PROGRESS

And yet in some other ways in these

last few months," proceeded His Excellency. "I have seen things going back and the hopes I had formed of them. And that largely lies with the East Indian community. I would not say all, but some. I see malice, racial malice, personal malice coming out and mostly from the East Indian community. Day after day I receive it in written communication coming to me at my office, I read them and I say what manner of people is this? Is this the true feeling of these people or is it just a number of them who are putting the worst to us who are observers from outside?"

And I say to myself surely—surely not—that is not so of my friend Pundit Ramsaroop Maraj I have known him for nearly four years. I know what is his spirit and I want to believe that that is the spirit which is mostly common throughout the East Indian community. Can I believe that? Will you here and others of you use that influence for a decision of truth of this malice, bad blood and bad feelings of which I see so much in this country and which is going to stop your progress in this country.

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Receipts of padi will be restricted to quantities of 24 bags or more and if required, part delivery will be given in lots of 12 bags or more.

The rate of storage to be charged will be 1c. per bag per month or part thereof payable at the time when delivery is taken, with all labour for receiving, stacking and delivering to be supplied by the owners of the padi.

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H. P. BAYLEY,
Secretary.

19th October, 1945.

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Does The British Government Still Consider Illiterates Slaves?

The Editor
Indian Opinion,

Sir,

Kindly allow me space in your columns to ask a few questions.

Does Government still want the illiterates to subscribe to taxation so as to raise revenue?

How can Democracy be spelt as it is now? Where would Christianity?

Who are the illiterates the Israelites in Bondage? and who are they?

What does the Labour Government mean capitalism or imperialism?

Isn't Democracy here confused with Hypocrisy?

Does it not sound realistic, mixed up with a good amount of diplomacy?

Does not the British Government still consider the illiterates slaves?

Is christianity only by word, or by Deed?

Are those who can exercise the vote blind to see an upside down Country?

Does it not smell Dictatorship?

Let us answer these questions from our conscience as God made us.

Ramjeet Singh

Control Board Should Go

Pln. Albion,

Corentyne Coast,

Berbice.

Dear Editor,

Kindly give publication to this letter. Since so much has been written and said against the Control Board by many of our thinking Guianese, I think it is time enough for me to have my say concerning its unsystematic administration.

Many, and many were the time when some persons applying for import licences etc. which in some cases are granted or rejected. That is so for it all depends upon the necessity. Also you can see in some instances where you have one person who is given licence etc. regularly, why is this?

Is it because these people are lucky or are they friendly with the issuer etc.? This sort of business should vanish into thin air. We are democratic so each person should be allowed equal privileges, should this be desirable I think it is time that the Control Board should be investigated.

"ANON"

The Story Of A Rat Without A Tail

Mr. Peter Ruhoman Please Read This

The Editor
Indian Opinion
Sir,

Arising out of an article in the Chronicle of October 7th, entitled "Indians or Guianese" contributed by Peter Ruhoman reminds me of the story of the rat without a tail; and I am taking the liberty of telling it to your readers.

Once upon a time there was a rat that stole cheese regularly from a certain shop. The owner got tired, suffering losses so he decided to set a watch. As soon as it got dark Mr. Rat arrived on the scene and started to eat cheese, thereupon the shopkeeper made a dash with his cutlass on Mr. Rat and chopped off his tail.

Mr. Rat made good his escape but when he got among the other rats, he began to feel very much out of place without a tail.

He kept away from the other rats for a while then one day a brilliant idea occurred to him and Mr. Rat without a

tail decided to call a conference of all the rats to decide an important matter which had to do with the general welfare of all Rats.

At the appointed time a huge gathering of rats assembled. Mr. Rat with out a tail became chairman of the meeting and after a lot of talking told the assembly that he had called the meeting to tell them that the best thing for all the rats were that they should have all their tails cut off as the tail was a definite humbug and impediment to them. Mr. Rat without a tail argued strongly for his proposal. A long discussion ensued on the matter; one of the rats from the crowd who knew Mr. Rat without a tail eventually arose and asked to be heard; said he, I am ashamed of being present at a meeting of this sort, where the chairman advocating the cutting off of our tails, lost his tail while stealing cheese, I feel it is a disgrace to regard him as a rat, as he has lost his tail. All the rats were unanimous in decriing Mr. Rat without a tail who to save himself from a thorough beating abandoned the meeting and took to his heels. A Unanimous decision was thereupon reached among the rats to ostracise Mr. Rat without a tail and so Mr. Rat without a tail had to live as an out cast from then onwards. A further decision was reached at the said meeting that no invitation should be issued to Mr. Rat without a tail at functions of rats and that when Mr. Rat without a tail dies no rats with tails should attend his funeral.

Yours etc,
NATIONALIST

INDIA AND THE LABOR CABINET

(Continued from last week)

"It will be tragic if we are forced to tell the world after fighting a war for liberty and freedom that we are unable to solve the difficulties of India," stated A. Sloan, another Labor M.P.

P.G. Barstow, another Labor member of Parliament, forecast that independence for India would be achieved within the lifetime of Attlee's government, which will be normally five years.

Herbert Matthews, however, in a dispatch to the New York Times, noted that these prognostications "do not find hopeful echoes among officials charged with Indian affairs with whom the writer has spoken in recent days."

"Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, Matthews remarked, "made no pronouncement about India in his speech on foreign affairs;" and the Government's pronouncement in the King's speech... merely repeated the general desire to lead India to freedom."

"At the Blackpool Labor conference last May Mr. Bevin significantly asked 'our Indian friends if we get a Labor Government, not to put more pressure on us than you did upon other parties.' He like other Labor ministers in Winston Churchill's Coalition Government supported the Wavell plan that fell through. In every respect Mr. Bevin is now showing that continuity of foreign policy is his keynote.

Lord Wavell was last in England four months ago when he sought permission to offer his plan to Indian leaders. When at the Simla conference in June Mohammed Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League disagreed with the basis of representation and refused to participate, the Viceroy promised to consider what further steps could be taken.

(India today)

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Sugrim Singh
(Chairman Organising Committee)
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THE INDIAN OPINION printed and published every Saturday at the Bharat Printing and Publishing Company at lot 11A Queen Street Georgetown Demerara by CHARLES EDWARD PACKWOOD for Mr. JENARINE SINGH, President of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

SATURDAY, 27th OCTOBER, 1945.