

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

NOTWITHSTANDING the strongest protest throughout the country by the Indian community, the European Press and the Church, Mr. Tielman Roos has got his Liquor Bill through the second reading as it stood. Mr. Sastri has had an interview with the Minister of Justice but the result of his representations is not yet known. Meanwhile the Bill is gaining headway in the Committee stage. While these lines are being penned Clause 41 of the Bill has been reached. It is reported that the Minister has not drafted any amendment to the Colour Bar Clause but has qualified the subsequent clause which prohibited the entry of Natives or Asiatics into the restricted portion (i.e., the bar and such other rooms or portions of the premises as may in any particular case be determined by the Board) of licensed premises, by providing that it shall not apply to any Asiatic or Native who is required to enter for the purpose of performing any service on which he may be lawfully employed. This qualification, however, does not in any way relieve the present situation. Nothing short of the deletion of the Colour Bar Clause will satisfy us and it is our fervent prayer that sanity will prevail even at this last hour and the fateful clause will receive the death it deserves.

Giving an address recently at Greytown on behalf of the South African Temperance Alliance on the Liquor Bill, the Rev. Brandon Laight referred to the white labour clause and said: Indians being forbidden to enter bars was an unfair proposition. These people who had been the mainstay of the liquor trade had always been very law-abiding, and out of the 465 convictions for illicit liquor selling only 24 had been Indians. Mr. Sastri in all his speeches had made special reference to the integrity, liberality and fairness of the British Empire. Was this a sample? From an economic view this was not policy and no nation could accept such a thing without hitting back.

If what the Rev. Brandon Laight is reported to have said is true, that Indians have been the mainstay of the liquor trade, it is indeed a sad reflection on the community. We would be the last to wish such a state of affairs. That they have not indulged in illicit liquor selling to the extent that other sections of the community have, stands to their credit, and it is sincerely to be hoped that even the small black mark that stands against them will be cleared. We do not in any way desire to encourage liquor traffic amongst Indians and, in so far as restrictions in that respect go, we are not opposed to Mr. Roos' Bill. But the Bill goes a step further. It seeks to deprive a large number of Indians simply because they are Indians of a legitimate calling which they have been honestly pursuing for years and which is the only means of their livelihood. It is that sting in the Bill that we wish to be removed.

We heartily welcome Mr. Omar Hajee Amod Johari who has arrived at Durban last Wednesday from India with Mrs. Omar and family. Apart from being one of the prominent Indian merchants Mr. Omar has played no small part in the public life of the Indian community. He is, besides, one of the Trustees of the Phoenix Settle-

ment of which this journal is an outcome. Mr. Omar was received at the Point by prominent members of the Indian community including the officials of the South African and the Natal Indian Congress and a welcome reception was given in his honour the same evening at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall.

“BEWARE, LEST FROM THE DEAD IT SHOULD ARISE AGAIN!”

Is the Class Areas Bill really dead? In spirit, that is, as well as in letter? The Transvaal Indian community is beginning seriously to ask itself the question, and not without reason. Indeed, recent events of grave and far-reaching importance to that section of the Indian population compel self-questioning of a far deeper and more searching character, amounting to nothing less than a grave suspicion that the “Gentleman's Agreement,” far from insuring the Transvaal community against further oppression and anxiety, will have opened a way for the entry of disaster greater than any previously experienced.

What are the facts that would appear to warrant such pessimism? Well, there are several ominous and ugly portents indicating that the Government or the Administration or both have, in spite of the hand-shaking and the peace-talk, never relinquished the idea of getting rid of Indians by making their position in the Union untenable. Of these the most serious and the farthest-reaching has openly manifested itself only during the last few weeks, and that, in a subtle and consequently more significant fashion.

For twenty years Secs. 130 and 131 of the Gold Law (Act 35 of 1908) have for all practical purposes remained inoperative. Briefly summarised, these two sections prohibit non-Europeans, save as servants of Europeans, from acquiring rights of tenure in Johannesburg, Boksburg and Krugersdorp.

Read together with the Townships Amendment Act (34 of 1908) the nett

effect is to preclude non-Europeans, e.g. Indians, from trading or residing in either of the above proclaimed areas.

For eleven years after the enactment of these two statutes—they were granted Imperial sanction in spite of the strongest protests—the sword they constituted hung over the community's head. The threat was there, but the sword only hung; it did not fall. Then, in 1919 the Indian community's persistent agitation resulted in an amending Act that relieved from the operation of the disabling sections of the 1908 Law, licensees who had licences on the 1st May 1919 and their successors in title, in respect of the same townships in which they had then held such licences. This modification naturally failed to satisfy the Indian community. True, and to their shame be it said, a certain proportion of the more self-fish Indian traders, congratulated themselves upon being favoured at the expense of competitors whose licences would be lost, but the general feeling was one of resolute opposition and determination to passively resist its enforcement. Again, for all practical purposes, the law remained inoperative. Here and there action was taken by private township owners (who had embodied similar restrictive clauses in the title deeds granted to purchasers) in case where purchasers had leased to Indians, but the Government appeared to be content to let "sleeping dogs lie."

A passing word of explanation at this juncture may not be out of place. Broadly, all traders are under statutory obligation to take out a Government licence which is issued to applicants against payment of the amount of the tax which is based upon the nature of the business conducted and the proved or estimated amount of turnover.

Prior to the enactment of the General Dealers' Control Ordinance of 1926—a Transvaal Provincial measure—the Town Council of, say, Johannesburg, possessed no control whatever in regard to licences, whether original or renewals, with the exception of those applied for by purveyors of food-stuffs and others of a special nature. In respect of these a certificate granted by the Council had to be obtained in addition to the Government revenue licence as a

condition precedent to the lawful conduct of such business. General Dealers simply applied to the Government revenue officer, paid the appropriate amount of the tax, got the licence and carried on. Asiatics had, of course, to produce their registration certificates. The General Dealers Control Ordinance conferred upon the Municipality a certain measure of control in respect of General Dealers. This class of traders had now also to obtain the approval of the Town Council and in addition to the Revenue Licence to secure the Council's certificate as a condition precedent to the issue of the former. The Ordinance empowers the Town Council to refuse a certificate to General Dealers on three grounds or on either of them, the unsuitability of the applicant, or of the premises, or of the neighbourhood. Applied equitably and impartially no exception could, of course, be taken to the Ordinance on principle; and it is but due to the Town Council of Johannesburg to admit that, in somewhat sharp contrast to certain other Municipal bodies, it has hitherto generally exercised its powers free from racial and colour bias or prejudice, for which reason the startling attitude, during the last three weeks of the Council's Committee appointed to consider General Dealers' applications towards Asiatic applicants, becomes the more mysterious. Quite a number of Indian applicants whose claims are otherwise unexceptionable have been notified that the Council objects to issue certificates to them for the reason that they fall under the class restrictions imposed by the Gold Law. This means that Indian General Dealers who cannot prove that they themselves carried on the business for which the certificates were sought on the 1st May, 1919, or that they are successors in title to predecessors who did then carry on such a business, are to be precluded from continuing to trade even though they may have been established 8 or nearly 9 years in the same premises! What motive, what explanation is to be sought for the Council's all-of-a-sudden zeal for the application of the Gold Law? Is it spontaneous? Most unlikely. Indeed, almost certainly not. Is it then inspired? Almost certainly yes! By whom or from what

quarter? Ah! There's the rub! Circumstantial evidence amounts, oftentimes, to very convincing proof. Is there such evidence available in the matter under consideration? Fortunately, or unfortunately, according as one regards it, there is. In spite of official assurances to the contrary the Government, the community has strong reasons to believe, contemplates an elaborate and extensive programme of "smelling out" of Transvaal Indians whose residential qualifications can possibly be called into question. Such a campaign if ruthlessly pursued would undoubtedly result in a very considerable number of expulsions from this Province and possibly from the Union. Experience has taught Indian immigrants how impossible it may be made for them to satisfy the exacting demands for proofs insisted upon by unsympathetic officials whose first and last object is to admit none who can possibly be excluded and expel whoever may be discovered and shewn to be expellable. Is there no connecting link between this suspected programme to reduce the Transvaal Indian population and the sudden resuscitation of the Gold Law in its application to Indian General Dealers? Nor is this quite all. It must not be forgotten that the Gold Law and Townships Amendment Act read together virtually make it illegal for Indians to reside as well as to occupy for purposes of trade, stands within the proclaimed areas, save, of course, in bazaars or locations specially set apart for them. Is this card also to make its appearance when the game has progressed far enough for it to be played?

Congratulations followed the abandonment of the Class Areas Bill, but if the portents above referred to are not wholly imaginary, the Indian delegation that "came, saw and conquered," the individual gentlemen who so self-sacrificing wrought for our salvation, not to speak of the Indian community itself, have all been the victims of a stupendous but grim joke. Unless we "watch out" the Transvaal may yet have its Class Areas Act, without the label, but none the less effective. "Kill out desire," taught the ancient wise ones, "but if thou slay it, beware lest from the dead it should arise again." It hardly looks as if the desire for our undoing has really died after all.

Education For Indians

Same Facilities As For Other Races Motion Passed By City Parliament

At a recently held weekly meeting of the Mock Parliament at Christie's reception hall, Maritzburg, Mr. V. S. Sastri, P.C., Agent-General for the Government of India, led the discussion on a resolution bearing upon the question of Indian education within South Africa. As the question is shortly to be the subject of an investigation by the Provincial Commission, much interest attaches to it at the present time.

The resolution proposed by Mr. Sastri was as follows:—"That it is desirable and necessary to extend to the members of the Indian community all the facilities for education which are available in the Province."

Mr. Sastri delivered a brilliant address, and the attendance was easily the largest for a very considerable time, and included a number of Indians. The Agent-General was accompanied by Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon, the Educational Inspectress for India.

At five minutes before the time advertised for the commencement of the proceedings, the hall was full to overflowing, and this despite the fact that the heat was almost unbearable.

Miss Marjorie Flemming heartily welcomed Mr. Sastri to the meeting, and this was supported by Mr. Dennis Fagan.

Mr. Sastri thanked the "House" for affording him the opportunity of addressing it. He hoped that in view of the forthcoming sitting of the Educational Commission, the debate would be the means of clearing up certain questions. He pointed out that the resolution which had been drawn up was of a general nature, because it was necessary first to consider the facts under which the resolution had to be considered.

Position in Natal

The facilities for Indian education in South Africa were very meagre, and in a document of some importance had been described as "grave." The attitude of Natal in regard to Indian education ran counter to the policy of Administration. Under the Capetown Agreement it was common ground that Indians in this country should be assimilated to Western civilisation. Educational standards in India had been left behind, and it was thus no use pointing the finger of scorn at India for the slight educational progress in that country.

It was necessary to find how the standard of education in India compared with the educational standards in this country. The Indian was barred out—he was not admitted to the universities, or to any places where medical and legal education was available. Some might ask—What is the good of giving people education for which they were not fitted? This view, although sincerely held by many people, was falsified by conditions in India, where educational facilities had been extended to the poorest and most oppressed people.

Although indentured Indians in the Union had shown no receptivity for education, their children and their children's children showed themselves capable of assimilating higher knowledge. The bulk of the evidence was in favour of the proposition that the average Indian would profit from higher education.

He had been struck by the fact that racial bias which stands between Indian children and education was of recent origin. It was during the past 18 or 19 years that this had come about. People said: "If Indians are to be educated, where are we to find the money?" (Cries of "That's the question.") It was not a question for the Indians to answer. The

Indian community was taxed directly and indirectly, and if it was considered it was not taxed sufficiently, that could be adjusted. It was not fair that Indians should be asked to find the extra money.

Would Solve Indian Problem

Those responsible for control of affairs in this country seemed to fear that if Indians received higher education conditions would be rendered difficult for Europeans. He pitied and despised the policy of those who said there should be three grades of citizenship. Indians were citizens of South Africa, and should receive the same facilities as other sections of the community.

It seemed to him that the Province should extend the same facilities to Indians, but this might not be the proposition he would advance to the Commission, but the ideal should always be kept in view. The extension of educational facilities to Indians would contribute to the solution of the Indian problem.

Miss Marjorie Flemming (Prime Minister) said she was sure many had listened to Mr. Sastri with interest, and also with shame that more had not been done for Indians. Lack of education lay at the bottom of all evils. Miss Flemming admitted she was not enamoured of the educational system, as it did not teach people to think for themselves as they should do. Still it was better than nothing, and the facilities should be extended to Indians.

Mr. Denis Fragan (Leader of the Opposition) said he regretted that Mr. Sastri should have chosen to draft so general a resolution. The Opposition would have preferred him to come more closely to grips with the question. Miss Flemming had stated that they must experience a feeling of shame that more had not been done for Indians. He and his followers experienced no such feeling of shame, as shame connoted that they had deliberately failed in their duty towards Indians. They would not make promises which they feared they would not be able to carry out.

Mr. Rogers said the resolution was drafted in terms which were difficult to dispute. He did not consider that education would lessen colour prejudice. In America the negroes were now educated, but was there any less colour prejudice in America? He did not consider there was. Neither did he think it would have any effect on economic conditions.

Civilisations in Collision

Mr. W. E. J. Hallet said the difficulty was not race prejudice, but that in this country we had two civilisations in collision. Mr. Sastri had said South Africa would not retain more Indians than it could assimilate, but that was not the point as far as Natal was concerned.

Mrs. Smalridge supported Mr. Sastri. Lack of education, she declared, had caused the world's greatest revolutions.

Mr. W. Cox said if South Africa was giving Indians a better standard of education than they were receiving in India, then there was no reason why South Africans should hang their heads in shame. If the Capetown Agreement was an honest one, Indians should be given the right to migrate to other Provinces. Without this, conditions in Natal would become terribly complicated in ten years' time.

Mr. Kiehn, the expert from the Department of Education in India, said it was the duty of the State to provide equal educational facilities for all its subjects.

Miss McKenzie said that the Indian community should have representatives in the House of Assembly.

Mr. L. H. Greene said that the Indians had saved the farmers, and were still saving them, and now had a strong hold on the country. Indians had been

taught to invest and to accumulate money, and had obtained a power which was scarcely realised.

In order to show that education was not a solution of the Indian problem, Mr. Greene read a newspaper cutting stating that among applicants for the post of ticket collector in Lahore there were 300 Indians who possessed University degrees.

Mr. Sastri Replies

In reply to the discussion, Mr. Sastri said he did not advocate that Indians and Europeans should sit side by side in the schools. He was in perfect sympathy with the suggestion that Indians should be allowed admittance to other Provinces. No reform movement was ever successful unless it had met with the type of opposition that had been raised by the Opposition that night. The people who had enjoyed higher education were those who objected to it being given to others.

"What is wealth?" asked Mr. Sastri. "It is a burden and encumbrance, is it not?"

"No," shouted a loud voice.

"I am not at all impressed by the argument that education is not good for everybody," continued Mr. Sastri. Education is considered as the fundamental right of the citizens in most countries. You have no right to ask to what community a child belongs when the question of education arises. Every child is entitled to the education for which it is fitted. In India no distinction is made between one community and another, provided the fundamental qualities exist in the subject, and among these fundamental qualities neither colour or birth is taken into consideration.

"I hope that in this country these distinctions, which India is fast dropping, will never be brought forward. I certainly do not plead for the elimination of all racial barriers, and I do not urge that blood should mix, but I am pleading against the erection of barriers by the Government. Caste is being broken down in India, but here it is maintained by the Government laws, which sanctify it."

"Offence is the last thing in my mind," said Mr. Sastri at the conclusion of his earnest plea.

The motion proposed by Mr. Sastri was carried, and Miss Flemming moved and Mr. Fragan seconded a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Sastri.

Opening Ceremony of The Hindu Tamil Institute

Mr. Sastri's Speech on Vernacular Education

There was a big attendance at the Hindu Tamil Institute, Durban, on Friday, January 27 last, when the official opening was performed by the Agent for the Government of India, Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.

Mr. Sastri unlocked the door in Cross Street and later addressed the gathering in the public hall upstairs. Mr. V. S. C. Pather presided and at the outset proposed prayer. Mr. Sastri was then garlanded by an Indian girl.

Mr. Sastri in his interesting speech said:—"It gives me great pleasure this morning to open this nice little building, and I now declare it open. I understand that this has cost in all, building and furniture, a sum of £2,500. It has all been subscribed by the Tamil community who are, you will admit, not amongst the richest of the Indian population.

"The fact that they have, out of their restricted means, found that large amount of money for the purpose is a testimony to the regard they have for the traditions and literature of India. I welcome it for it is an indication more welcome to me than some of you think, that they have not forgotten the land that gave them birth or the traditions of which they are the inheritors. It makes me very glad to

think that this very large sum has been found in order to preserve what they regard in the civilisation which they have brought over with them.

"I believe that one of the purposes of this institution is to teach Tamil to the children of the community. This is a very laudable object and one which it is impossible to over-estimate. I would say a word of praise for the efforts they have made to see that their children who here attend English schools are provided with the opportunity of learning their mother-tongue.

"Love of the mother-tongue is scarcely less powerful in the human breast than love of the mother-country, and he who ignores that feeling or despises it makes a terrible mistake. One of the few means left to us to preserve our ancient culture is the study of our own language and literature.

"Educationalists will admit to the full the value of employing their mother-tongue as a means of teaching. Whether we study it as a language for its own sake or whether we use it as a medium of instruction the time spent in so doing can never be said to be time lost. In fact the hours spent will repay themselves several hundred times, for every teacher will admit that instruction conveyed in the mother-tongue is much more beneficial than education conveyed in a foreign tongue.

"In Kimberley recently where we held a great Conference the question of vernacular education was discussed with a fair degree of warmth. The result of that Conference was published in the papers. Most of you are aware of the direction it took. It chanced that I took part in the discussion and what I said at the time has led to much misunderstanding and exposed me to criticism in this city which Indians admit to be their chief stronghold.

"I do not wish to be misunderstood again. There is nothing I said at Kimberley that I wish to retract or repeat, for every word I said came not from convictions of yesterday or the day before, but of a lifetime. Still in order to clear the ground and put myself right with my own countrymen and countrywomen, it may be necessary for me to say a little more on the subject.

"That you who have come from another country desire to give your children the best possible education according to your means, goes without saying. Education has two main objects. It fits us for life and it likewise teaches us to respect the past. These two objects you have kept in view and I wish to praise you for your insight and wisdom. You send your children to the English schools where they receive an education in the ordinary way, but you realise at the same time that their culture as Indians would not be complete unless they received a certain grounding in their own language and literature.

"Therefore, at much cost to yourselves, you have built at the various towns institutions at which the children may receive this Indian culture. That is as it should be, but when you go from this stage of thought to another and ask that the children be taught in Tamil and that other vernacular languages be made part of the curriculum then you must consider whether it is practicable.

"So far as I am concerned, believe me, if you or I could persuade the authorities to find funds for vernacular teaching in the ordinary curriculum, no one would be more pleased than I. (Applause).

"My point is, however, that you must not place your children at any disadvantage. You love your children and you are prepared to undergo sacrifices for them; all that is to your credit, but the means we take to express our regard for them may not always be wise. In the strange conditions which we find in South Africa it is no wonder that there are many of our people who make mistakes.

"You must not overtax your children and compel them to learn more than it is possible for them to learn. They have to live their lives here and com-

pete with the European children. To take any time from them over and above the ordinary school time, is to place them at a disadvantage. It would be amply repaid—this extra exertion, provided that schools were built and suitable teachers were provided and suitable text-books. I take it that the wise ones among you pay attention to these matters but history is marked with misjudged efforts in the ways of improvements and reformations.

"I will not venture to dogmatise in a land where I am a comparative stranger but because I have been a teacher most of my life and because I am filled with the anxiety for your children's welfare it will not come amiss if I say one word.

"There is nothing in my heart, either implied or expressed against an institution such as this. I welcome it.

"For example, children come here and learn after their ordinary schooling and I could not wish for them a more handsome institution. Then the next matter to consider is the school text books and teachers. It is not for me ignorant as I am of the conditions of these matters to say anything but I do hope that everyone among you makes himself responsible for these matters. I draw attention to them because I know how easy it is to start out upon such a venture with high and admirable motives and find in the final result that little has been achieved.

"In an analogous direction I have known teachers of children—most enthusiastic advocates and wax most eloquent over the scholar of the Indian religion. But what do you find when you visit the schools? These advocates who have discovered the eternal varieties of the Hindu religion are but scantily equipped for the task they have taken up.

"A few verses of Sanskrit are recited mechanically without knowledge of what they portend. Even the teachers themselves are comparatively ignorant of what they are trying to teach, and the children do not entertain the same respect for them and grow up with little knowledge of their religion. How much have I seen of this? My heart is sunk when I contemplate how small is the real achievement in this direction.

"I will willingly admit that in India there are schools and colleges where good work is done but in most places there is much noise and little done. If that be the case then with regard to religious instruction which I value more than anything else I at least should not be surprised if in the much smaller matter of vernacular education there be a certain amount of misjudgment.

"The children are our greatest wealth—I do not mean the wealth of the purses—the greatest wealth of the community and we must do nothing to squander or reduce its value. It therefore behoves us to see in regard to this institution that teachers are appointed who fully understand what they teach and that the text books are carefully selected for the subjects. It will also be necessary for some of you to visit this place frequently and see that the high aims are being fulfilled.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, with these cautions and provisos I have no hesitation in wishing the institution every success. Those who, like me, have to take part in the work of the Education Commission have a task to perform. I am not one of those who think that the general voice of the people is necessarily the voice of wisdom and truth. Everyone who takes part in public affairs comes to a time when he has to speak what he thinks and speak in the voice he thinks will please the multitude.

"The multitude is often wrong and he betrays their confidence if he mouths platitudes rather than vent his own opinion. I have learned a higher duty and I will speak what occurs to me to be the correct thing but I know that no one, statesman, scientist, educationalist, judge, ever does his best work when he is always speaking to please the crowd.

ing to work for a people we must take advantage of their feelings and wishes. Take for example the subject of hygiene in which we are all very much interested.

"We know that no improvement will take place unless the people are properly instructed and they are so educated that they will co-operate. How often have these great enthusiasms in India failed? Men who prepare admirable programmes fail because they do not adopt these to the wishes of the people for whose benefit they were legislating. I will not make that fundamental mistake.

"Where our wishes run determinedly in one direction we must recognise the fact and bow to it. I think I have said quite enough to indicate my point of view. I would ask you to see that your children are not placed at a disadvantage in regard to the ordinary curriculum.

"I am very pleased to be amongst you and I declare this nice building open for the purpose of Tamil study. I commend the public spirit of those who made this enterprise possible and congratulate them on the successful termination of their labours. I am very pleased that some are here who will add more. To Mr. V. S. C. Pather and Mr. P. R. Pather I offer my sincere felicitations and hope that every one of their labours will be crowned with complete success."

Protest Meetings Against Liquor Bill

At a recently held mass meeting of the Transvaal Indian Congress at Johannesburg the following resolutions were passed:—

"That this meeting of the Transvaal Indian Congress here assembled records its emphatic protest against the terms of Clause 104 of the Liquor Bill. In the considered opinion of this representative gathering the clause in question is a gross attack upon the natural liberties of an important section of the community. If passed into law it will principally affect Indians who are born, educated and trained in the Union of South Africa."

Proposed by the Rev. Sigamoney, seconded by Mr. N. R. Patel, and supported by Mr. S. M. Desai.

"That this meeting views with grave alarm the inclusion of this section and finds it impossible to reconcile the policy it would appear to embody with the agreement resulting from the Round Table Conference and the friendly relations the community was given to understand had resulted. That this meeting regrets to observe that at so early a stage after the Conference a measure such as this should have been introduced arousing suspicion in the minds of the community reflecting upon the Government's good faith and the community's confidence in their fulfilment of promises made. This meeting observes with great regret and disappointment the support given to this piece of class legislation by the labour members and finally urges the Government and all members of the Assembly and Senate seriously to reconsider this obnoxious clause and the grave consequences that may follow its becoming law."

Proposed by Mr. P. K. Desai, seconded by Mr. S. R. Sarfoodin and supported by Mr. Rassool Patel.

Among the speakers besides the Chairman Mr. M. D. Bharochi were included Messrs. David Ernest, I. I. Hazaree, Mavjee Premjee and D. M. Nursoo.

At Maritzburg

The following resolution was passed at a mass

meeting held at Maritzburg on Jan 31st under the auspices of Natal Indian Congress local branch;—

"This mass meeting of the Indians of Pietermaritzburg and District, held under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress (Maritzburg Branch) strongly protests against that part of the Liquor Bill, which unjustifiably seeks to throw out of employment thousands of Indians employed in hotels, bars, breweries and the like, and hereby declares in the strongest language its firm conviction that the provisions of the Bill affecting the rights of Indians violate the terms of the Cape-town Agreement solemnly entered into between the Union and Indian Governments for a solution of the Indian problem, thus treating it as a scrap of paper.

Proposed by Rev. A. J. Choonoo, seconded by Mr. S. R. Naidoo and supported by Mr. D. Anthony.

Life-Sketch of the Late Hakim Ajmal Khan

We are indebted to Mr. C. F. Andrews and the *Bombay Chronicle* for the following short life-sketch of the late Hakim Ajmal Khan, who died at Rampur near Delhi on the morning of the 29th of December last. Details about his death are given by the Associated Press as follows:—Hakim Sahib felt a little unwell the night previous to his death, but played billiards and talked to the Nawab Sahib of Rampur till 2 in the morning. Thereafter the Nawab retired, and Hakimjee felt worse, and called for a doctor. Neither the doctor arrived nor the warm water brought in time as he passed away soon after. His body was taken to Delhi in Nawab Sahib's car and all the stores of Hindus and Mahomedans were closed as a mark of respect to the deceased.

The chief ancestor of the family, to which Messihulmulk Hakim Mahomed Ajmal Khan belonged, and from whom he derived his origin, were residents of Kashgar, the famous city of Turkestan in Central Asia. The ancestor, who came to India held a leading place in the service of the Emperor Babar. When the King invaded India, this ancestor was given the command of one thousand horsemen, and was a close companion in all the Emperor's adventures. The family, to which Hakim Ajmal Khan belonged has produced a long line of physicians.

The reputation of the family for medicine reached its highest point under Hakim Shariff Khan, who was the honoured grandfather of Hakim Ajmal Khan himself. Hakim Shariff Khan had written before his death a large number of treatises on medicine.

Hakim Mahmud Khan was the father of Hakim Ajmal Khan. He lived to a great age and died in his 74th year. As in the case of Hakim Shariff Khan, he had a very large medical practice in Delhi itself and in the whole of the North of India. People came to consult him from all parts. His house in Delhi was famous for its open-hearted hospitality. During his days, the School of Unani Medicine at Delhi became celebrated, not merely in Delhi itself, but in all the Middle-East and Near East,—as far as Constantinople and Cairo in one direction and as far as Bokhara in another.

At Hakim Sahib's hospital every type and religion were represented and Hakimjee made no difference whatsoever between rich and poor, Hindu and Mussalman; all were treated alike and a large number of the Hindu poor received free treatment.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was educated in his youth in

all the Islamic branches of learning. His literary education was completed under different teachers. It consisted of Persian and Arabic Grammar, the study of the Quran, Logic, Physics, Literature, Astronomy, Mathematics, Islamic traditions. He was not taught English. He had however picked up a good working knowledge of the language from his journeyings abroad. His knowledge of Urdu literature was extensive, and it was always a pleasure to hear him speak in the Urdu language.

His knowledge of medicine began from a very early age under his father. But the chief store of his medical knowledge he received from his elder brothers, especially his elder brother Hakim Abdul Majid Khan. It is probably true to say that his own medical reputation had exceeded that of any of his predecessors. The fame of Tibbiya Medical School never stood so high in the estimation of countries abroad as in the days of Hakim Ajmal Khan.

Hakim Sahib's first travel abroad was to Mesopotamia in 1904 and his tour was an extensive one. He visited Basra, Osair, Kat-ul-Amara, Bagdad, Zulkifi, Kufa Najaf-i-Ashraf and Karbala-i-Mulia. In addition to many visits to pilgrim shrines, he consulted libraries in those cities and met and conversed with experts of every science, especially that of medicine. His whole journey lasted three months. He was greatly interested in the indigenous schools where education was given to the children. The new type of school which was introduced by the late Sultan, Abdul Hamid Khan, gave him many suggestions, some of which he utilized later. He returned to Delhi in May 1904.

Hakim's Visit to Europe

Hakim Sahib visited Europe in 1911 when an event of great importance happened in his own life. The journey in Europe lasted three months, and he returned to India in the autumn of the same year. He reached London on June 7, and through the intervention of Sir Theodore Morison, he was able to visit all the leading hospitals and medical colleges of London. He also spent many hours in the Libraries of India Office and the British Museum. From London he went to Oxford and Cambridge.

On his way back to India Hakim Ajmal Khan made a tour of the continent. In Paris, owing to the good offices of certain friends he was able to see thoroughly the famous State Hospital and also to visit historical places. He felt greatly drawn towards the French people. From Paris he went on to Berlin, where he again made every enquiry into hospital arrangements with a view to his own proposed College in Delhi. The Oriental Library was also open to him for consultation. At Vienna he followed the same course of enquiry.

Hakim Ajmal Khan was not merely famous for his medical skill, but also for his writings on medicine. He had written many treatises which had become popular among which the best known are an 'Introduction to Medical Terms,' and 'A Taun' or 'The Plague.'

Upholder of Hindu-Muslim Unity

For very many years Hakim Ajmal Khan, following the tradition of his family had been taking interest in public affairs. But, up to the time of his visit to Europe his interests were almost entirely confined to his own community though all the while he had been on friendly terms with others.

On his return from Europe a new idea came into prominence. He saw that the question of Hindu-Muslim Unity was of supreme importance and he became its ardent upholder. Up to the year 1918, however, he had taken but little part in the active political life of the country. He had worked patiently and quietly for the M. A. O. College, Aligarh, and for the formation of a Muslim University. He had also been a member of the Muslim League and had been elected a Vice-President. He had

warmly welcomed what might be called the Hindu-Muslim Entente and had done his utmost to bring it about. But it was not till the year 1918 that he actually became prominent in politics. In December of that year a memorable Congress was held at Delhi, and Hakim Ajmal Khan accepted the responsible post of Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Congress at Delhi was exceptionally large in its numbers, and his work as Chairman of the Reception Committee was extremely arduous.

After the Congress was over, Hakim Ajmal Khan had settled down to his regular work of healing the sick and looking after the hospital patients and the medical students, and encouraging the growth of medical knowledge among Indian women by his Tibbiya Medical School. Suddenly, into the midst of these quiet activities came the outbreak in the Punjab, in April 1919. It was then that the Hakim Sahib proved the true greatness of his character. Night and day he laboured for peace among the common people; and it was only through his intervention, along with Swami Shradhdhananda, that peace was maintained, and the city of Delhi, which he loved so well, was saved from Martial Law. Then came later the disclosure of the terrible things that had actually been done in Amritsar and Lahore and other places under the stress of Martial Law. The Hakim Sahib had written to Mr. C. F. Andrews: "My political ideas were wholly changed by the iniquitous deeds of the present bureaucracy in India during the Martial Law days in the Punjab in the year 1919." This sentence was literally true.

Later, in the year 1920, came the further knowledge of broken pledges, when the Treaty of Sevres was signed on behalf of the Indian Government and with the Indian Government's consent. From that time forward the Hakim Sahib became a staunch supporter of Mahatma Gandhi; and when Mr. C. R. Das was arrested on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress in 1921, he accepted the post of President which was unanimously offered to him, and thus crowned the whole work of his own life in the cause of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Since the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and his imprisonment, the leadership of the whole movement, for the time being had practically devolved upon him, and in spite of failing health and a weakened physical constitution he had done his very utmost to fulfil the work. In all that arduous undertaking, he had the devoted sympathy and support of Dr. M. A. Ansari, who had been all through his translator into English, as well as active helper in organisation. The friendship between Dr. Ansari and the Hakim Sahib had been very close indeed, and it had become closer than ever during the latter years.

His Letter to Mahatmaji

The spirit of Hakim Ajmal Khan is seen most simply expressed in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi when Mahatmaji was arrested and placed in Sabar-mati jail in 1922. "I can feel happy," he wrote, "at your arrest only when I find that as a mark of profound respect, which it has for you the country takes still greater interest in the national movement than it did when you were free. It gives me infinite pleasure to see that the country observed perfect peace. This is a clear sign of the spread of the spirit of non-violence in the country, which is essential for our success as pure air is necessary for life. I have no doubt that the secret of the progress of our country lies in the unity of the Hindus, the Mussalmans and other races of India. Such a unity should not be based on policy, for that in my opinion would be only a kind of armistice. But I clearly see that the two great communities are coming closer together every day, and although the number of men, whose hearts are entirely free from any sectarian prejudices, may not be very great, I feel convinced that the country has found the road

to real unity and will advance on it with steady steps towards its goal. So highly do I prize this unity, that if the country gave up all other activities and achieved that alone, I would consider the Khilafat and Swaraj questions automatically solved to our satisfaction. For the achievement of our objects is so intimately connected with this unity, that to me the two appear identical. The question then, naturally arises, how are we to achieve this living and lasting unity? We can achieve it only by the sincerity and purity of our hearts. Not until every one of us has driven selfishness out of his mind, will our country succeed in achieving its objects."

The ending of this letter shows, along with the passage already quoted, the true spirit of the Hakim Sahib.

"In the end," he wrote, "I join you in your prayers and wish to assure you that though my failing health will not enable me to be of great service to my country, it will be my earnest endeavour to discharge my duties until Mr. C. R. Das is once more among us. May God help us in the sacred work, which you and the country have undertaken for truth and justice."

"Messihul-Mulk"

The motto of Hakim Sahib's life was "Afyalul-ashgal-i-Khidmattunas" "Noblest of occupations is the service of humanity." It required only to spend a morning at Sherif Manzil, Hakimji's house, Delhi, and one could realise how Hakimji translated these words into action. Whenever he happened to be in Delhi his house was literally besieged by hundreds of men and women to get medical advice. From early morning Hakim Sahib had daily to spend several hours in examining the patients. The interesting thing about his medical advice was that it was offered free not only to poor people but even to rich men if they preferred to go to his house. It has been a family tradition with Hakimji's family to offer medical advice free of charge to everybody who goes to Delhi even if he happened to be a ruling prince.

Hakimji adhered to this principle till his death. He had received the family title of "Hazikul-Mulk" from Government, but in the beginning of the Non-co-operation movement Hakim Sahib gave it up. Consequently, he received the more fitting title "Messihul-Mulk", from his people.

As a representative of the Unani system of medicine he naturally gave his early thoughts to the development of this science. His father, the late Hakim Mahmud Ali Khan had started a school in Delhi for medical education. Hakim Ajmal Khan tried throughout his life to develop this school into a great centre where a proper education of both the Eastern systems of medicine, viz., the Ayurvedic and the Unani could be given. He succeeded in turning that small school into the now famous Ayurvedic Tibbi College of Delhi. This College has got now its own buildings and nearly 500 students both Hindus and Muslims, hailing from different parts of India, receive medical education in this institution. It will come as a great surprise to many that the famous Hindustani Dawakhana of Delhi established by Hakim Sahib gives about Rs 125,000 every year to the institution out of its profits.

Hakim Sahib and National Education

From the early days of the Non-co-operation movement Hakim Sahib took very keen interest in national education. He was the Chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia—the National Muslim University started in October 1920 in Aligarh. Since the institution was shifted to Delhi in June 1925, Hakimji devoted practically all his time and energies to the progress of this institution. His love for the institution was so great that he even over-

ceaseless efforts for its progress were a source of inspiration to the young men who have taken up the cause of spreading national education among the Muslims.

Recently, Hakimji had been to Bombay to receive the Afghan King. Even after the latter's departure from Bombay, Hakimji stayed in Bombay for three or four days more and collected funds for the institution from his friends.

The Tibbi College and Jamia Millia Islamia stand to-day as living monuments of his undying fame.

Klerksdorp Indian Refused Trading Licence

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

This year at Klerksdorp the certificate for a general dealer to one Mohamed Ebrahim Asvat has been refused by the local Licensing Board apparently for some cause known to themselves. Mohamed Ebrahim Asvat has been a resident of Klerksdorp for at least 30 years and trader here without the least thing against his character. During the year 1923 he left for India, giving his power of attorney to a certain gentleman. During his absence, his licence was applied for and obtained from year to year until the year 1926 when, although application was duly made, but through some cause or other his licence was not taken out for the year 1926. During 1927 Asvat returned and immediately applied for a certificate to the local Board and he even went and paid to the Receiver of Revenue all his arrear licence fees as also his Poll-Tax fee including fine. The building in which he sought to have a licence was duly passed by the Municipal Inspector, and he was actually trading already on the strength that his position was not such as to warrant his deprivation of a certificate. Yet during the sitting of the Board this year, he has been refused the necessary certificate. Curiously enough the premises in which Asvat sought to have a trading licence or a renewal of his licence belong to him.

The anomaly of it is that Asvat cannot now trade in his own property. Asvat is invoking the aid of the Higher Court in the hope of getting redress. This is the extremely interesting position of the Indians in the Transvaal.

[It is understood that many licences have been similarly refused in Johannesburg and other places in the Transvaal, details of which are not yet in our hands.—ED. I.O.]

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