

Indian Opinion

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ESSENCE OF THE AGREEMENT

MR. SASTRI'S SPEECH AT THE ROTARY CLUB

THE Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri delivered the following speech at the Durban Rotary Club on Friday March 30:—

This is the second occasion within six months that I have had the privilege of addressing rotarians of Durban. I greatly appreciate the honour and trust you will forgive me if I have to open the subject of Indian affairs, which is of practical importance to us all, to you no less than to me. The agreement about which I am to speak to-day was concluded somewhat over a year ago. It has been in operation for only two months. Its essence can be stated in two words—repatriation and upliftment, the sending away of such members of the Indian community as will reduce their numbers to what I have already called 'managable proportions' on one hand, and on the other of helping the rest—those who remain here—to become a useful and permanent part of the population of this country. These are the two aims the agreement kept before it. As to the first the repatriation scheme has now been improved and these improvements are so great that they by themselves justify the agreement because we no longer call it repatriation but assisted emigration. Some time ago the Minister of the Interior spoke in Parliament about the way in which this part of the agreement was working. He expressed great satisfaction. As a matter of fact the new terms under which people are taken away to India came into operation only in August of last year but even so the figures of those who have been returned to India are so striking that the Minister was quite right in expressing his gratification. To give you an idea of how this part of the agreement is working I will give you the figures. In the first part of last year the scheme was not in operation but knowing that the scheme would begin to work the number of those who went back from January to June was 1320. In the latter part, from July to December the number rose to 1655. But it is the figures for this year that are the most striking. During the three months January to March there have gone back 1008 Indians and there is no sign of slackening. On the other hand there are more people waiting on the lists than can be shipped back to India.

These figures show results which even the most sceptically minded will admit to be satisfactory. I have only to say under this head that the Government of India are doing their very best to see that those who go back are looked after so that very encouraging accounts will come back to their friends and kinsmen here. To assure you how the Government of India undertook this part of their duty the Commissioner of Asiatic Affairs, Mr. Venn, is now on a visit to India and I believe that when he comes back he will express his satisfaction at the way in which repatriates are being looked after.

In the second part of my address—upliftment—I hope that those Indians who are to remain here will be helped to achieve such a condition that they will no longer be a menace to the people but on the other hand be a useful section of the community

and perhaps reflect no discredit upon those among whom they live.

But upliftment needs not only wise brains, but efficient organisation and a great deal of money. It is not wise to expect quick results. But it is necessary on the other hand to see that no time is lost and that the best minds in the country are set to work to see that this part of the agreement is in operation as well.

For nothing is more clear than this, that even if assisted emigration works to the top of its abilities there will be still left on your hands a section of the community relative to your own people that you cannot afford to let them remain where they are now. In point of view of education, status of life and in every conceivable point they are not now as they might well be. It seems to me that it is not sufficiently realised here that the Indians who are here though they may not be brought from amongst the best section of Indians are not such as are hopeless. From them a good deal more may be drawn for the benefit of the entire community than is now being drawn and I entreat you to bear in mind that if treated with sympathy and consideration they are certain in the course of a few years not only to do credit to themselves but to be of a certain amount of use to the community here. You may not all appreciate this point of view for I do not think that everyone knows the Indian very well. You know him occasionally by sight but you know him more by prejudiced reports you hear. For I have no hesitation in saying that the Indians are held in far less esteem than they deserve to be. Even his virtues are set down as vices and placed to his discredit. This is however the result of a point of view which it is to be hoped will change. One of the ways according to the agreement upliftment to be applied to the Indian community is to improve the condition of their education. That condition is described in the Capetown Agreement as 'guava' and there is no doubt it merits that approbrious epithet. There is going to sit in Maritzburg within the next few days a Commission which will conduct an inquiry into this subject and it will not be fitting for me to anticipate the results of their labours or in any way embarrass their activity. But there is one point of view I must bring before you to-day. The question of education lies at the very root of all other aspects of this grave problem. If you educate a people you provide them with the best means of looking after themselves. Illiteracy is in every conceivable way, literally and economically, a real menace. The Indians must be said to-day to be an illiterate community. Some of you forget that point of view and say this is the state of things in India. I do not deny it. I do not wish for a moment to deny it, but that is not the right way to look at it. If that were the right way we might all give way to despair at once. What you should have before your minds is: 'These Indians are going to remain here, how are we going to keep them?' For they will soon be your own people. There is to-day more than two-

thirds of the Indian population who are colonial-born, who do not know India and who are fast forgetting their own language. In ten years' time the whole of the Indian population here will be part of the country—born here and brought up amongst you. Towards them your duty must be of a far different character to those who have just come here and may go back. It is therefore essential that you examine their South African point of view and not their Indian point of view. We in India have failed because of our point of view and partly because of financial reasons. But you must think of the problem from your own standpoint. A large section of your permanent people remaining sunk in illiteracy is to you unbearable. There is no reason why you should have this problem on your hands if it is possible for you to rectify things. Conditions in India are rotten but they should not be rotten here. Speaking to you as the Agent for the Government of India I must ask you that in your interests and in the interests of your children the continued existence of an illiterate, uneducated people living cheaply on the very margin of existence and possibly sinking even below that level, the continued existence of such a people is a thing you cannot contemplate with equanimity. It is from that point of view that we urge again and yet again to give the matter your attention. You may say, 'we will give them suitable education but what shall it be?' Now, what it shall be is laid down in the agreement.

That portion of the agreement says "The Union Government—and I may say that 'Government' means every part of the Union and not merely one part—believes in and adheres to the principle that it is its duty and the duty of every civilised government to uplift every section of its permanent population and that the duty of every civilised government is to devise ways and means of uplifting every section of every population." Further it is realised that, "in respect of education and other facilities that part of the Indian population that will remain in this country is part of the permanent people and they cannot be allowed to lag behind any other section." Now, gentlemen, that is the language employed in the agreement. You see how far it goes. It does not shrink from the position that you must place the Indian community if possible upon the level of the other communities resident in this country. There is another way to look at it. If this is too much then you may say: 'It is no good. What type of education is the Indian to receive?' But it is no use considering what other people do. But rather say 'what can we do?' If you look at it from that point of view the problem is not very difficult. I can assure you that anyone that is daily with the Indian children will not hesitate to say that the capacity to receive education and benefit by it of an Indian lad is not less than the capacity of a European lad. I have spoken to your educationalists and they say that the schools they have visited for Indians are not in any respect inferior to the schools reserved for Europeans. They are inferior in respect of everything which the Government provides but in the matter of brains and in the power of submitting to discipline the one set of schools is in no way inferior to the other. On the other hand in some peculiar ways the Indian is quicker to receive. If that be the case there is no doubt whatever of his capacity and this should be more fully recognised than hitherto.

The next point is where the money is to come from for this. Now look at this from the general point of view, for if the Indian population is to be reduced to manageable proportions then the question of where the money is to come from need not arise. It is a question for the statesmen. The money has got to be found. Where it can be taken from to the best advantage is not a question for me—an outsider—to discuss but I will say that the

money for Indian education does not seem to come from the people of this town. It is financed by a stipend of £5 per head of the Indian population and whether in Government schools or aided schools £5 is the annual subsidy. It may be that this will not be enough.

There again I can say little. It is the peculiar province of the Commission which is due to sit at Maritzburg. But there are those who allege that the whole of the £5 is not even spent on Indian education. But on European education a good deal more is spent than even the Government allowance. This amount is taken from the general resources of this province to support one branch of education. Many people to whom I have spoken and who are out of sympathy with Indian education have asked 'why should I pay for the support of Indian children?' Now, I have already said that the Indian problem is to be regarded as your own and you can look upon it with no degree of equanimity. Gentlemen, in your position who have votes and power to determine the nature of your government, once you realise fully that you must not treat the Indian population as alien but as part and parcel of your own population, you will not disparage them. Once you realise that point of view you will say 'yes, we accept them, the burden and responsibility, but where is the money coming from?' The resources of this province such as they are do not seem to be quite adequate for this purpose and it may be necessary to press the Union Government to increase the subsidy. In respect of European children the subsidy is fifteen guineas. There is no apparent reason why Indian children should take only £5 to educate. I will indicate one respect where this disparagement no longer holds. There is no arrangement in Natal for the training of Indian teachers. They are not trained. In their spare time these teachers go to some place where lectures on education are given and at the end of a year of such casual training sit for an examination. I have been repeatedly told by the superintendent of education that there is a most urgent need for quarters for the training of Indian teachers for there is much more required for teachers than for the upbringing of pupils. No money, however, has been set aside for that purpose. It will be necessary to impress upon the Union Government the necessity for a fixed subsidy and there should be no disparagement between European and Indian teachers' training facilities. A sum must be set aside quite adequate for the purpose in view.

One more point. There is a belief that the Indian community is not sufficiently taxed. If this is so then your system of taxation must be revised, if you have allowed one section of the community to escape entirely by means of bringing them in your financial acts. It astonished me to be told that this was so, for I remembered that while the Indian community have no votes the European community hold the votes and shape the Government. It will not be believed in any part of the world that the vassals have escaped taxation and that the burden has been borne by the masters. However we will not shirk the issue but please remember that this is a different question altogether. Taxation must stand upon its own footing. If a particular community enjoys an advantage over others it is not fair to argue with that community. Both things are in your complete control.

And now, rotarians of Durban, I have enjoyed much of your hospitality. You have given me consideration and courtesy beyond what I believe I am entitled to and I am very much in your debt. When I first came to this country everybody said I was undertaking a hopeless task. One or two said "Mr. Sastri, you are welcome but let me tell you that your task is almost impossible for you are up against a dead wall." There are some here that I see now

who told me so and I came over in that belief myself.

But there is Higher Power than we that determines these things. It has pleased that Higher Power that we need not despair and there is a brighter aspect to Indian affairs. I do not claim any glory for a very large number of favourable circumstances has conspired to bring this about. But they are unwise who name a problem as insoluble, either in the field of politics or any other aspect of human affairs. Never is there reason for entire despair. I am reminded in these words by a few lines I once read in Lorna Doone :

"Despair was never so deep in being
as in seeming,
'Despair is hope, just dropped to sleep
for better chance of dreaming.' ✓

East African Indian National Congress

(Continued from page 91)

Native Labour

Some of the objectionable methods employed by European settlers to make the Natives work for them are given below :—

1. Generally speaking natives are being systematically driven out of their land. What is known as the Reserves or Locations is not large enough for their maintenance. The result is that for their very living they are obliged to go out and work for European farmers.
2. Breach of his contract by a native labourer is made a criminal offence. The offender is tracked down by the Police and every native labourer is compelled to carry with him identification papers which contain a record of his labour made by his employer.
3. The natives are subjected to direct taxation which they cannot pay unless they go out to work on the farms.
4. No encouragement or facilities are given to cultivate their own land and in practice native production is actively discouraged.
5. Use is made of Government Officials through native chiefs to apply pressure on natives to go out and work on European farms.

In 1925, Sir Edward Denham, Acting Governor of Kenya, made the following declaration :—

"There is the strongest possible moral obligation on the Government of the country to give the fullest assistance it can in securing to the European settler in this country the benefit of the developments which he has created to the lasting advantage of the Colony. I wish to make it perfectly clear that such is the policy of the administration, and that Government expects every administrative officer to give all possible encouragement to the labourer within their district to work on the lands which have been opened up by the settlers."—*The East African Standard*.

An Appeal to India

I think it is necessary, nay essential, for the Government of India to immediately appoint an agent, preferably an Indian of the standing and experience of Mr. Sastri to be stationed at Nairobi, to safeguard the growing interests of Indians in Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar. I would also draw the attention of the Government of India to the fact that thousands of acres of rich virgin country in Tanganyika Territory are awaiting development. There are plenty of people in India who would make very suitable colonists. East Africa has been considered and rightly so, to be the natural outlet

for the surplus population of India. In view of this fact I would request the Government and people of India to seriously consider the advisability of opening information Bureaus at Bombay, Lahore and Rajkot.

Local Government is maintaining an Information Bureau in London. It is only just that it should make a reasonable contribution for opening and maintaining a similar Bureau at one or two centres in India.

Medical Facilities for Indians

Nowhere in the whole of East Africa is there a Hospital where Indian patients could be admitted for treatment. The solitary exception is Kampala in Uganda where a mission Hospital for natives receives Indian indoor patients for treatment when there is room. Often Indians have to go as far as India for treatment of serious diseases, whilst efficient hospitals are maintained at government expense for Europeans.

In the name of humanity I appeal to the Governments of all the colonies and protectorates of East Africa to lose no time in providing suitable hospital accommodation for their Indian subjects and remove this blot on their administration.

Tanganyika and Uganda

The two sister communities of Europeans and Asiatics in the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika and the Protectorate of Uganda live side by side in peace and harmony. They prove that neither segregation nor reservation of any part of the country for any one community is necessary to avoid racial friction.

Legislative Councils have recently been established in both these countries but the Indian representation therein is not in proportion to Indian interests. I would therefore appeal to Sir Donald Cameron and Sir William Gower both of whom are able and farsighted administrators to set this matter right when the terms of the present councils come to an end.

Zanzibar

It is indeed a pleasure to record that the relations between Indians, Arabs and the Government of His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar are happy. Owing to the rapid development of various ports along the coast of East Africa, Zanzibar has lost her importance as a supplying base. Zanzibar had accumulated a large surplus but the ill conceived harbour works scheme has swallowed up most of it. Only a few years ago Indians filled with distinction important posts as heads of departments under the Zanzibar Government. But all that has changed now. In 1927 the Government of Zanzibar raised the salary of its European staff at an average of about 40 per cent with retrospective effect from 1926 and the salary of its Asiatic staff at an average of about 15 per cent. but without retrospective effect. After raising its own salary the same wise Government within a few months appointed a retrenchment committee whose recommendations have more or less ended in smoke. To meet this additional expenditure import duty has to be raised from 10 to 15 per cent. ad valorem in 1927.

The administration of Zanzibar is top-heavy and until the superfluous staff is got rid of revenue and expenditure will never balance.

Kenya

Recently an Ordinance was passed in Kenya which gives the police and the administrative authorities powers to refuse licence to possess arms to any person without assigning any reason. The practical result of this is that Europeans, as a matter of course, get licence to possess any arms they like whereas Indian applicants are almost invariably re-

fused. Unfortunately Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar are also imitating this policy.

Only recently some Indian shopkeepers in out-stations were brutally murdered by armed thieves who could not be traced. These poor Indians were done to death simply because without arms they could not defend themselves.

Indian traders in outlying districts without effective arms of defence are at a great disadvantage when dealing with lawless and armed thieves whose knowledge of the helplessness of their Indian victims tempts them to crimes of violence.

Publishers' Notice.

Owing to the holidays we have been obliged to hold over much of the important matter for next week.

પ્રકાર	પ્રિસ્ટી	દીકુ	મુસબમાન	પારસી	મુરોવિય	મુખરસ
	૧૪૨૬	૧૬૬૪	૧૪૪૬	૧૨૬૭	૬. ૪.	૩. ૪.
	એ. ૧૧	૨૪૫૦	૨૦૧૬	૬૬૩૧		
શુક્ર	૬	૫૬	૧	૧૪	૧	૬-૧૧
મંગળ	૧૭	"	૨	૧૫	૨	૬-૧૨
બુધ	૮	"	૩	૧૬	૩	૬-૧૩
ગુરુ	૯	"	૪	૧૭	૪	૬-૧૪
શુક્ર	૧૦	"	૫	૧૮	૫	૬-૧૫
શુક્ર	૧૧	"	૬	૧૯	૬	૬-૧૬
શુક્ર	૧૨	"	૭	૨૦	૭	૬-૧૭

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એ તમારે માટે કેટલું લાભકારક છે

કારણ કે જે કંપનીમાં તમે વિમો ઉતારાવેલો હોય તે તમારા કલેમો તાકીદે અને ઉદારતાથી ચુકવી આપે તેવી તમને ખાત્રી થવીજ જોઈએ.

તે ખાત્રી ચોકેશાયરના આંકડાઓ પરથી તમને મળે છે.

વિમો ઉતારાવેલી પ્રત્યેક વસ્તુને માટે તમને પુરેપુરું રક્ષણ આપવાની એ કંપનીની નીતી છે. અને તેને માટે સાધારણ પોલીસીના કરતા તમારે વધારે દર ભરવો પડશે નહિ.

જે વિમો ઉતારાવવો હોય તે

ચોકેશાયર ઇનશ્યોરન્સ કો.

લીમીટેડમાં ઉતારવો.

ખાસ એજન્ટ:

એસ લેવી,

૪૪ પ્રિન્સીપલ્સ સ્ટ્રીટ, જોહાનીસબર્ગ.

પોસ્ટલ પૅકેજ, ટેલિફોન ૧૦૫૩.

શીશ્નામું: જનરલ માઇનીંગ બીલ્ડિંગ્સ,

મૅન સ્ટ્રીટ, પોસ્ટલ ૨૭૫૫, જોહાનીસબર્ગ.