

# Indian Opinion

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## POSITION OF INDIANS IN THE EMPIRE

### MR. SASTRI'S ELOQUENT SPEECH AT JOHANNESBURG

**A** POWERFUL and dignified appeal to uphold their part in the undertaking which, in return for Indians giving up the right of free movement within the British Empire, enjoined the raising to full citizenship of Indians legally within each Dominion, was made to the thousands of Europeans and Indians who gathered in the City Hall, Johannesburg, on the night of the 13th instant to hear the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P. C., Agent-General in the Union for India.

The Mayor of Johannesburg (Mr. W. H. Port), presided. He said Mr. Sastri was one of the greatest and most altruistic patriots of any country in the world. "There has been an apparent change in the Indian position in the Union of late, and that has been almost entirely due to the devoted work of Mr. Sastri," said Mr. Port. (Applause.) "Let me say to Indians in the Union, however, that if they want the position to still further better itself they must follow their illustrious countryman's advice and play the game."

#### Ticklish Subject

"I am very thankful to you, Mr. Mayor," said Mr. Sastri who was greeted by applause, "for advising my countrymen to listen to my advice—where, I dare say, I deserve to be listened to. There is before us, at the moment, a somewhat ticklish subject, the condonation of illicit entrance, upon which I am sorry to say some of my countrymen do not see eye to eye with me. I have been trying to make them understand the real nature of the scheme and to appreciate the good intentions and generosity of the Union Government in offering them, what I believe to be, on the whole, a fair and equitable plan of condonation.

#### Main Objection

"Among many of the objections raised is one that goes to the very root of the position of the Indians within the British Empire. It has been mentioned more than once in somewhat important circles in this country, but I happen to know that it lies at the back of the minds of many of my countrymen. The objection is somewhat like this: Indians are British subjects. As such they have all the rights and privileges that subjects of Great Britain, and the white inhabitants of the British Empire, possess. The European British subjects, it will be conceded, enjoy the privileges of free movement and free residence anywhere within the Empire. The local laws, in some Dominions, may give the Government power to restrict entry of European British subjects. It is largely a power held in theory and is seldom brought into exercise, so as to make European people believe that they have this much cherished right to free movement.

#### Slur Upon The Nation

"It is otherwise with the Indian subjects. They are not looked upon by the British Dominions as

welcome immigrants. Restrictions are placed upon their every movement so that at present it is no exaggeration to say that they are debarred from emigrating from India into any part of the British Empire. This cannot but be felt by the greater part of the Indian people as a slur upon their nation, and an attack on their national integrity."

In South Africa the Indian had special reason to feel hurt at the immigration restrictions, and here their feelings were aggravated by the memory of the bitter struggles through which they had to pass. They were apt to say here that, even though they may have entered this country by stealth they were only exercising a right of which they had been deprived from exercising by force. They did not feel that in making an illicit entry into the Union they had been doing any moral or political wrong, although by arbitrary local law their entry was prohibited.

#### So-called Grievance

He appealed to his countrymen to remember two very important things before allowing themselves to be carried too far by contemplation of this so-called grievance. It was not for people who had come here by the back door to say that they did so in the exercise of a right. If they were exercising a right they ought to have come by the open door, announcing their arrival at the ports, and their challenging the propriety of the local laws. If they came here illegally and were afterwards called to account, it was a strange proceeding to set up the claim of the exercise of their rights as British subjects.

#### Preservation of Civilized Standards

Besides this consideration there was another no less convincing. When the local laws, prohibiting the immigration of Indians, were passed, it was not without consultation all round. These laws were considered necessary for the preservation of civilized standards in the Dominions. This consideration brought forward repeatedly at the Imperial Conferences led to an understanding between representatives of India and the Dominions, by which it was recognised that the Dominions and India also should have the right, if thought necessary, to exclude any people, whether belonging to the British Empire or not, whose entry was regarded as undesirable or unsuitable to their civilisation. The immigration laws that had been passed as a consequence had been in operation for years. It was true that India alone had not passed such laws, but by the reciprocal nature of the resolution she was able to do so even to-morrow. The fact that the Dominions had exercised their right before India did not render them open to reproach.

#### International Honour

"I would therefore exhort my countrymen," went on Mr. Sastri, "to look at this matter from the point of view of international honour, of inter-Dominion honour, of honour between India and the Dominions. Let us carry out the understanding which, in the

face of the British Parliament and Cabinet, we voluntarily entered into. We have no right to reopen that question, certainly not in connection with the measure taken by the Union Government to condone illicit entrance into this country.

### Understanding with Consent

"Do not deceive yourselves by the plea that this understanding was arrived at by the Indian Government without the consent of the people, or by the Indian Government, acting under improper pressure. That would be far from just. For really and truly this understanding, hindering the free right of movement within the British Empire, was the result in the first instance, in Indian history, of the compromise to which Mahatma Gandhi himself was a party in this country." (Applause).

Mr. Gandhi had found it necessary, after a prolonged bitter struggle, to give up his right, for he discovered from the attitude of the Europeans here that there was some reason behind their persistent representations. He had yielded to the pressure of circumstances, but also persuading himself that after all there was something behind the solid wall of opposition to free immigration from India, not only to South Africa, but to Australia, Canada and New Zealand also. The attitude which repeated itself in all these Dominions could not be set down to sheer cussedness.

It was not for them, after so many years of acquiescence in the policy, to raise this issue again. It had been settled for all practical purposes between India and the Dominions and assented to by the British Parliament.

### Reopening Suicidal

"It seems to me that we would be acting suicidally in reopening this question. I give you a solemn warning in the name of the Indian Government, in the name of Mahatma Gandhi and in the names of others of our great countrymen, whose names, if I mentioned them, you would rise up to greet. I call upon you in all their names—do not think of this aspect of the question or let your minds be swayed by this sense of grievance."

### Appeal to Europeans

Mr. Sastri now addressed himself to his European hearers in particular. He never ceased to urge his fellow-countrymen to reconcile themselves to the position, he said. When in 1914 Mr. Gandhi concluded the compact with General Smuts his countrymen in India were sore at heart that the struggle, which had redounded so much to their honour, should have ended in utter discomfiture and resulted in the deprivation of their right of free movement, and their consignment to a position of subordination, in which very often they were called aliens. In the Great War many Indians had laid down their lives, and had given rice and other food in abundance, which, if kept in India, might have saved the lives of many people who died in India during the influenza epidemic. Yet the Indians were called aliens. This could not easily be forgotten.

### Serious Loss of Prestige

"My countrymen would be right to forget it altogether," said Mr. Sastri, "provided that on the part of the Dominions some recognition was given to the fact that this understanding arrived at in London has put us indeed into a position of inequality and compelled us to suffer what we consider a serious loss of prestige from the political point of view.

"To-day, what is the result of this agreement? People who are not within the British Empire, and are not British subjects, and who are regarded as no more civilised than ourselves, are admitted freely into the British Dominions. The status of British

subjects in connection with us is a penalty, therefore, and not a privilege.

"It is not a pleasant thought, but it lies within the power of the European people here to dull the edge of this grievous sword."

### Reward of Submission

"When we were asked to submit to this necessity, when we were repeatedly pressed in London to give up this claim of unrestricted immigration, because we were not wanted in certain parts of the Empire, what were we told at the same time? We were told, especially by the South African representatives, again and again, that if only we would quietly submit to this necessity, and give up what we regarded our right of free movement within the British Empire, if only we freed the white population of the Dominions of the fear of being swamped by millions and millions of people from other countries, if only we agreed to this, we were promised that the part of the population which still remained within the Dominions would be treated justly and fairly as British subjects, and that they would no longer be treated as subordinates, but would be raised to full citizen rights and be treated as British subjects should be anywhere in the British Empire.

### Fetters Further Tightened

"These restriction laws have been in operation for many years, you have been freed from your fears, but could it be justly said that you have taken any step to strike off the fetters which bind the Indians among you? Indeed, in this country, from time to time, legislation is proposed to still further bind Indians, long suffering subjects of His Majesty. I wish I could tell you of the anguish of heart among Indians, among the younger generation which has the ideals of youth, as they contemplate the position which has arisen. I tell you that the knowledge that they have given up their undoubted rights on a promise which has not been fulfilled is engendering a disastrous feeling among thinking Indians.

It does not bode well for the peace of the Empire and for the good understanding between the white and Indian inhabitants owing allegiance to a common flag.

### A Dominions Mission

"It is this consideration which I was commissioned by the Imperial Conference of 1921, this is the point of view which I was commissioned by the authorities of the Empire, to go out and speak about in the Dominions. Accordingly, in 1922, I visited all the Dominions except South Africa, and I may tell you now that Australia has admitted Indians in all respects to citizenship. New Zealand has done the same and so has Canada except in the province of British Columbia. It is only in South Africa that many grievances and disabilities are still existing in contravention of the promise your representatives made to us.

"After these years I am not coming here to make complaint. But I beg you to understand with sympathy the feelings of sorrow which we sometimes entertain upon this question. I ask you to help us to feel pride in our situation as British subjects, to help us to realise that we are consulting our own best interests by remaining loyal to the British Crown. We have to teach the young people of India to feel the same pride in the British Empire as you feel. How can we do so if you do not help us? It is this help which it is my duty on this occasion to solicit with all the earnestness of my heart."

The grievances which the Indian people now suffered in South Africa need not exist and should not exist, he declared.

"I appeal to you to change your hearts," said Mr. Sastri, "if not on the common grounds of humanity,

which should appeal throughout the world, but also on the common ground of citizenship of the British Empire. To some of you that may not sound a cogent reason, and so I would also appeal for great-hearted treatment and some recognition for the willingness with which we surrendered the right of free movement when you made the promise of fair, just and equitable treatment for those in the country.

"You who have an unassailable position throughout the world, I ask to treat us chivalrously and even generously. Remember the sacrifices we have made at your demand in the war, and that we yielded without question to help far beyond our resources. Remember that the Empire had stood for freedom. Britain has gone throughout the world freeing subject races from the bonds of slavery, while we, within the Empire, must be kept in a position of subordination.

"It seems to me that if only I make this appeal with sufficient frequency and sufficient conviction and earnestness, I should still strike a chord of sympathy within your breasts: for I know that you are just and generous in your heart of hearts and if you sometimes do the wrong thing in this matter it is because of small considerations of the moment which prevail when there is no one on the spot to draw your attention to the higher Imperial considerations and the higher grounds of justice and fair-play which for the moment are forgotten."

It would be wrong, even perfidious, for his people to try to re-open the question of free movement within the Empire and it was no less wrong for South Africa to allow the smaller grievances to continue when it had attained its own point of view that the country must be protected from the influx of millions of Indians.

"We are quite willing to sacrifice our rights and to recognise the necessity of protecting yourselves," concluded Mr. Sastri, "but in return, where you have allowed us to remain among you, give us fair-play and opportunities of civilised life. Give us facilities of trade and education. You cannot with propriety withhold these from us, who are, in common with you, subjects of the one Empire, and hold the same allegiance, and answer with you the call when danger threatened."

### The Dean Moves Vote of Thanks

The Dean of Johannesburg (the Very Rev. Dean Palmer) moved a vote of thanks.

"I speak with full deliberation," he said, "when I say that if ever a man was sent from God at the right time and to the right place, it was Mr. Sastri. He is an apostle of reconciliation. He has made India a reality to us."

Dean Palmer expressed regret that the Indian people were divided among themselves at this juncture, and appealed to them to close their ranks so that their many well-wishers in the Union could help them.

### Exempted Indians Must Make Provisional Applications

While going to press the following message was received for publication from the South African Indian Congress:—

"Educated Indians who are admitted in the Transvaal and granted letters of exemption must make provisional applications for condonation before September 30. Friends and relatives of those absent in India should advise them to apply by cable to "Comasia, Pretoria." Those who are similarly admitted in Natal and the Cape should do likewise.

## Notes and News

**D**URING his short stay in the Transvaal the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri has delivered several important speeches on the Indian question in which he has dealt with both the European as well as the Indian side of the question and appealed to both to do their duty. A large number of Europeans have had the opportunity of hearing Mr. Sastri and many of the thinking class of Europeans have been profoundly moved by the exposition of the question in its true light.

The most wonderful and memorable address delivered by Mr. Sastri was the one on "Indian Philosophy"—a subject on which he spoke for the first time in his life. This address was delivered on Wednesday night the 12th instant at the University of the Witwatersrand. Entrance tickets were sold to those wishing to listen to the address at 2/- which were all sold out two days before the date and on the last day entrance tickets were not available even at a fee of a guinea. For 90 minutes Mr. Sastri held the crowded audience spell-bound. We hope to publish this wonderful address in our next week's issue.

Mr. Sastri has left Johannesburg on Wednesday, Sept. 19, for Kimberley where he will stay till the 25th instant when he goes, accompanied by his Secretaries Messrs. Tyson and Rao on a visit to the Victoria Falls. On his way back, namely, on Oct. 3, he will visit Salisbury and lay the foundation stone of the Indian community's High School and Hostel there—an institution which the Indians are themselves erecting for the education of Indian children in Rhodesia. Mr. Sastri gets back to Johannesburg on Oct. 6 and hopes to be in Maritzburg on Oct. 13 and Durban about Oct. 15. The Agent will then go by boat to the Cape. Mr. G. S. Ricketts will be staying in Pretoria in the absence of Mr. Sastri at the Victoria Falls.

The *Natal Witness* publishes in its issue of Sept. 19, an article by Mr. Morgan Evans, Deputy-Mayor of Klerksdorp, condemning Mr. Sastri and all his work. The article was sent to our contemporary some time ago but it did not think it advisable to give publicity to the writer's "obviously fanatical views." "In view of the activities of the Deputy-Mayor on Saturday, however," says our contemporary, "we have come to the conclusion that the opposition to Mr. Sastri at Klerksdorp begins and ends with Mr. Morgan Evans, even though, he declares, not too convincingly, that the blame rests with "some white youths" to whom this form of hoodliganism makes an inevitable appeal." In the circumstances the paper publishes the article and in doing so says:

"We are aware that we give to Mr. Morgan Evans a publicity to which the weight of his opinions does not entitle him. On the other hand it may be just as well that Mr. Sastri and the general public should have a clear insight into the mentality, which inspired, even if it did not instigate, the Klerksdorp outrage."

The assisted emigration scheme is working successfully as the following figures would show:—

Since January of the present year, 2,357 Indians of both sexes and all ages have taken advantage of the Union Government's assisted emigration scheme. Each month, without fail, a vessel leaves Durban Harbour carrying often as many as 350 men, women and children bound for new homes in various parts of India. Under the old scheme a repatriated Indian forfeited all rights to return to the Union, but an attractive feature of the new scheme, as far as prospective emigrants are concerned, is that they are

free to return after one year has expired from the time of their departure from the Union, and before the expiration of three years. The chief obstacle to their return, however, is the condition that they must reimburse the Union Government in full for all expense incurred in their repatriation, including travelling expenses and bonus. Since the introduction of the new scheme the number of Indians repatriated has increased appreciably, and only two applications for return are known to have been made. In the seven months prior to the introduction of the new scheme, 1,320 persons were repatriated to India, this number comprising 660 men, 280 women and 377 children. In the five months following the introduction of the scheme, 1,655 Indians left Durban in batches of about 250, the total comprising 725 men, 331 women and 599 children, while in the past eight months 985 men, 466 women and 906 children, totalling 2,357 souls in all, have proceeded to India.

A Reuter's message from Springs (Transvaal), states:—

Mr. Sastri was warmly welcomed at Springs last Monday night by a large gathering of Europeans and Indians. He made a stirring appeal to all concerned to regard the Capetown agreement from a broad viewpoint. Indians were at present, went on Mr. Sastri, a menace to the white standard, but the whites must bring them along the right road so that they would no longer be a menace to Europeans' standard of life.

In deference to the wishes of Mr. Sastri, the South African Indian Congress do not propose holding a "Sastri Day" on September 22, when resolutions were to be passed, asking the Indian Agent-General to extend his stay in the Union.

A deputation consisting of executive members of the South African Indian Congress interviewed the Secretary of the Minister of the Interior in connection with the condonation scheme at Pretoria last Monday. Members from Durban were Messrs. S. Rustonjee, A. Christopher, and A. I. Kajeé who returned to Durban on Tuesday.

## A Final Appeal

### To Indians In The Union

Those of our brethren who have obtained Registration or Domicile certificates through false statements made by themselves or on their behalf should no longer delay in applying for protection certificates. 30th September being the last date for such applications to be received there are left only a few days before them. They should, therefore, no longer hesitate. For neither the officials of the Congress nor the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri will be in a position to render any assistance to any person who may have illegally entered the Union and has failed to apply for a protection certificate before the 1st October.

This is, therefore, a FINAL APPEAL by the Congress to those of our brethren who have not yet done so to avail themselves of the opportunity within the few days they have before them of rectifying their position and thus protecting their rights in this country.

P. K. DESAI }  
I. I. HAZAREE } *Hon. Gen. Secretaries.*  
S. A. I. Congress.

### "MANY HAPPY RETURNS"

THE Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, whose portrait we present to our readers as a supplement to this issue, will be celebrating his sixtieth birthday at Kimberley to-morrow, Saturday the 22nd instant. It was intended by the Congress to celebrate Mr. Sastri's birthday publicly and to offer prayers for the continuance of his presence in this country for a longer period. But in deference to his wishes the idea of public demonstrations has been abandoned.

Mr. Sastri ranks amongst the first and foremost of the leaders of India. There are few who have sacrificed as he has for his country. "He surrendered the good things of the world," wrote a contemporary of him, "in days when sacrifice was unknown and certainly when it was not fashionable. That his life of self-abnegation led to political fame is an accident. It was not a calculated result, much less was it aimed at or desired." All those who have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Sastri will indeed bear witness to the truth of this statement. By his eloquence and his winning personality Mr. Sastri has charmed the people wherever he has been. He has put the case of India and of Indians in the Colonies before the world as lucidly and convincingly as no one has ever done. What we have heard and read about his activities in other parts of the world we are now witnessing with our own eyes in South Africa.

Mr. Sastri will be leaving the shores of South Africa in the beginning of next year. We profoundly regret his forthcoming departure, but he can no longer be persuaded to prolong his stay. We realised what a great sacrifice it was to him when he took up the burden for one year and it really ill-becomes us to persuade him for our own selfish reasons to bear the burden any longer.

There are malcontents among us who try to minimise the magnitude of Mr. Sastri's labours because he has not been able to get for them all they would like to have. Well, Mr. Sastri has never claimed to have super-human powers. He is human and he has got for his countrymen all that was humanly possible in the circumstances. It would indeed be idle for us not to accept willingly what we get because we cannot immediately have all we desire. All who do not realise the worth of Mr. Sastri will, we have no doubt, realise it when he is gone. When Mr. Sastri leaves this country he will leave it richer in mind and in spirit than it ever was. We wish Mr. Sastri long life to reap the fruits of his labour and health and strength to continue his noble and patriotic services. We have no doubt we have the whole-hearted support of the Indian community throughout the Union in these good wishes.

### ✓ BLESSING IN DISGUISE

THE outstanding topic of the week is the Klerksdorp incident. We are only thankful, and in that we have no doubt we are voicing the sentiments not, perhaps, only of the whole Indian community but of the majority of the people of South Africa, irrespective of class or colour, that no personal injury was caused to Mr. Sastri. Had he been injured it would have been a serious thing in view of his very delicate health. Another pleasing factor is that no one else was hurt to speak of in the meeting which Mr. Sastri was addressing. The incident, therefore, is not one over which many tears of blood need be shed. The perpetrators of the deed must have been shocked at the result of their misbehaviour, for it was quite contrary to their expectations. They must be hanging their heads down in shame; not because they are sorry for what they had intended to do, nor even, because they did not succeed in their manoeuvre but because the outcome of their stupid action has been one which they had little expected, much less desired. Whatever punishment they may be deserving from mortals they have already been punished by that Immortal and Unseen One. They have by their wicked deed proved who the agitators

and the noisy ones are and who are not, in a manner it could never have otherwise been proved. The Indian community is certainly possessed with that common sense as not to attach any political significance to this incident or to judge the whole European community by the foolish action of the few hooligans. Such are to be found in every country and in every community, however civilised, but it would not be wise to judge the whole community by them. One thing has been proved to the hilt by this unpleasant incident and that is the very high esteem in which Mr. Sastri is held in this country not only by his own countrymen but by a large number of Europeans. The overwhelming messages of sympathy received by Mr. Sastri, from all round and the expression of it by the press is evidence of that fact. This is for his person which in itself is no small achievement to the Indian community; but the sympathy that he has been able to command for our cause in this country is also very great. All this was there, no doubt, but it had never hitherto been given expression to openly in such a manner and that is owing to the Klerksdorp incident which to that extent has come about indeed as a blessing in disguise.

### ✓ Unwelcome Reception To Mr. Sastri

#### Hooliganism At Klerksdorp

The exciting topic of the week is the display of hooliganism at a meeting addressed at Klerksdorp last Saturday night by Mr. Sastri, Agent of the Government of India in the Union. The following account of the happening is given by Reuter:—

On Saturday evening, Mr. Sastri and his staff attended a banquet at Klerksdorp. The Mayor of Klerksdorp presided, and there were 138 European guests, including Major Maquassi, the Police Commissioner of the district, the resident magistrate, and other leading people of the town and surrounding area.

#### Deputy-Mayor Leads

During the banquet it was noticed that Mr. Morgan Evans, the deputy-Mayor of Klerksdorp, was driving a motor-car about the town. The car bore several inscriptions, including the following: "Are you helping the Indian uplift movement? That road lies across the hope of the children of South Africa. Are you? Curse you!"

After the banquet the guests moved from the "Tiroli Hotel to the Railway Institute Hall. Here it was found that the doors had been broken in and that a score of

Teacher.—Parse the sentence 'Tom married Jane.'  
 Boy.—Tom's a noun; because he's the name of some-  
 thing; married's a verb; because it joins Tom and  
 Jane; Jane's a verb; because she governs the noun.

By two wings a man is lifted up from things  
 earthly; namely, by simplicity and purity. Simpli-  
 city ought to be in the intention; purity in the  
 affection.—Thomas à Kempis

men were occupying seats reserved for the banquet guests. As the platform party entered, booing and hooting began, until Mr. Jooste pleaded for order, saying that Klerksdorp must not be the only town in the Transvaal that misbehaved itself when Mr. Sastri visited it.

Mr. Sastri then began to speak on the Indo-Union agreement and its effects, dealing incidentally with the word "Coolie" that had appeared on handbills on Friday.

"You must not call my people coolies," he said. "They are not, for 'coolie' means a person who sells his body for physical labour, and the word is insulting to our people."

After the speech had continued for about nine minutes, Mr. Morgan Evans stood up. "We have not come here to listen," he said. There were cries of "sit down," and Mr. Jooste again began to plead for order, when suddenly the lights were switched off. Women started screaming, and the audience began to make for the doors, some women being knocked to the ground during the confusion. Suddenly a glass vessel fell just next to the platform, and the contents were splashed about. A match was lit and a fire flared up where the bomb fell.

Men rushed with overcoats to put out the flames by smothering them. This took some minutes to effect. Meanwhile strong biting fumes began to penetrate the hall, affecting the throats of all those in it. Men and women were coughing continually; several women fainted, and later a woman and a child had to be removed to the hospital for treatment to the throat and lungs, which had been affected by the chemical fumes.

### Disturbers Disappear

Police were rushed to the hall, but before they arrived the disturbers had disappeared. Before the lights came on again or the police arrived, many members of the audience began shouting, "Go on Mr. Sastri. We are here."

Mr. Sastri advanced to the centre of the platform and said, "Yes, I am here, and I will go on."

At this, rotten eggs began to be thrown at him. None, however, hit anyone, although the walls and platform were bespattered with eggs.

Mr. Jooste then called to the audience to adjourn to an open space outside. This was done, and Mr. Sastri resumed his address.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "as I was saying before, the venue of this meeting was altered from indoors to the open air," and so took up the thread of the speech. His voice was noticeably affected by the gas for the first few minutes, but later the effect apparently passed away. Mr. Sastri continued his speech for almost an hour.

At its conclusion Mr. Jooste and Mr. Naser spoke of the events of the meeting, and apologised for the conduct of those responsible. Their remarks were sympathetically received by the audience, which cheered Mr. Sastri.

### At the Hotel

At the conclusion of the meeting it was found that there was a crowd still outside the Tivoli Hotel. Mr. Sastri immediately retired to bed.

A sergeant remained on duty in the lounge of the hotel until after dawn, and a cordon of police was drawn around the block in which the hotel is situated.

Just before midnight a further sensation was caused by the statement that two men who had entered the hotel and engaged a room had been found to have in their possession a tin of petrol. It had been freely talked of in the crowd outside the hotel that an attempt would be made to burn it down if Mr. Sastri did not leave Klerksdorp on Saturday night.

It was also stated that an attempt would be made on Saturday night to burn the three cars in which Mr. Sastri, his staff and entourage had travelled to Klerksdorp, but that this was frustrated by the vigilance of the police, who had set a guard on the garage before the disturbers could approach it. The police guard on Mr. Sastri continued until he left Klerksdorp at 9.45 on Sunday morning.

Mr. Sastri arrived in Johannesburg on Sunday evening

and immediately attended a dinner at Mr. M. D. Desai's residence, at which the guests were Johannesburg Indians interested in social and political work.

### Rescue Work by Magistrate

In the course of an interview Mr. E. Mall, treasurer of the S. A. I. Congress, who was an eye witness, told a press representative that: "When I tell you that the Indian population of Klerksdorp numbers 36 you will appreciate the fact that the audience was mainly composed of Europeans, men, women and children."

"As soon as we saw the burst of flame running along the matting we jumped from the platform and extinguished it with our overcoats, Mr. Dick, the Magistrate, being particularly active in that connection. It was he, I believe, who carried out the European lady who had fainted, and he certainly worked hard to allay the danger that threatened."

"Mr. Sastri remained superbly calm, but on account of the fact that the hall was reeking with this malodorous stuff it was deemed desirable to continue the meeting in the open air. Mr. Sastri's throat was badly affected by the acid, but I believe Mr. Dick suffered worse than anyone else, because he kept close to the place where the bomb fell. It was obvious that Mr. Sastri was affected by the fumes, for when he resumed his speech in the open he was quite hoarse."

"When the party returned to the hotel the secretary of the local branch of the South African Party called on Mr. Tyson, expressed regret at the scandalous conduct which had characterised the meeting, and offered to give any assistance that might be required by Mr. Sastri's staff."

### Widespread Feeling Of Indignation

#### Mr. Dufican

Mr. Patrick Dufican, M. L. A., said: "I view this outrage on Mr. Sastri with absolute disgust, a feeling which I feel certain is shared by the vast majority of Europeans in this country. The only effect which this outrageous demonstration can have is lowering the prestige of Europeans, not only in the Union of South Africa, but far outside it. I am ashamed of those who were responsible for it."

#### The Mayor

The Mayor of Klerksdorp stated that he was disgusted at the disgraceful display of boogymen at the meeting on Saturday night. Speaking as a Nationalist, he said every right-minded member of his party would condemn such behaviour.

He reiterated that both himself and Mr. Sastri were advised that trouble was brewing, but neither attached much importance to the warning.

#### The Deputy Mayor

Mr. Morgan Evans, the Deputy Mayor, said that a protest on Friday's emergency meeting was conveyed to the Mayor, expressing that meeting's condemnation of Dr. Malan's pro-Asiatic legislation. The events at Saturday's lecture were no doubt to be attributed in a measure to the Mayor's refusal to withdraw from an active part in the proceedings as its chairman.

Some white youths in the town were greatly embittered by the Mayor's attitude, and a crowd of young men congregated outside the hotel while the banquet was in progress, parading banners inscribed "Are you helping the Indian uplift movement? That road lies across the hope of the children of South Africa."

#### General Regret

The incident excited tremendous regret throughout the country. From various parts of the Union telegraphic messages were received by the headquarters of the South African Indian Congress, several Europeans who had expressed sorrow at the untoward and unseemly occurrence paying tribute to the statesmanship and scholarly attainments of Mr. Sastri.



One well known European declared that Mr. Sastri's dignity and restraint must have put to shame those who boast of their superior civilisation and status in the country, which has reason to feel ashamed of them as citizens.

Prominent members of the European community spoke highly of the magnificent work which Mr. Sastri had accomplished in the Union, and emphasised that he can rest assured of the respect and confidence of the white population, whose views are not to be misrepresented or nullified by a few irresponsibles.

### Mr Sastri Interviewed

Mr. Sastri, interviewed on Monday, declined to make any reference whatever to the incident. He looked remarkably well and chatted gaily with the interviewer. When asked if he suffered any ill-effects from the gas bomb, he replied, "I am addressing a meeting in Springs to-night."

### Messages From Government

#### Dr. Malan

Dr. Malan, the Minister of the Interior, dispatched the following telegram to Mr. Sastri:—

"I have just seen a newspaper report of the occurrences at Klerksdorp last Saturday night, and hasten to express on behalf of my colleagues and myself deep regret and pain at what has happened. I sincerely trust that no harm has resulted to your person. Official information is being obtained, and I shall immediately communicate the same to the Prime Minister, now absent on tour."

Mr. Sastri's reply was as follows:—

"Grateful thanks. There was no danger. Feeling perfectly cheerful. Please do not attach any importance to the incident."

#### The Premier's Message

The Prime Minister addressed the following telegram to Mr. Sastri on Tuesday:—

"I have just heard with deep regret and concern, of the dastardly outrage perpetrated on you at Klerksdorp. I cannot express condemnation of the cowardly conduct of these hooligans too strongly, and need hardly assure you of my intense indignation at what took place. I only trust that you have sustained no personal injuries. Please accept my heartfelt apologies as well as the regret of the people of the Union for this unwarrantable insult to you and to your country."

#### Mr. Sastri's Reply

Mr. Sastri wired the following reply to the message received from General Hertzog:—

"Deeply touched by the terms of your telegram. Please accept my most grateful thanks. Incident altogether slight. Pray don't attach much importance. I have cabled the Government of India not to be alarmed at all."

#### Minister of Finance

Mr. Havenga, speaking at Smithfield on Tuesday, is reported to have thanked the chairman of the meeting for his reference to the "unpleasant" incident at Klerksdorp. Every right-minded South African, he said, must deplore it. He noticed in the Press that Dr. Malan had expressed regret on behalf of the Government at what had occurred. "I now wish to associate myself with the action of my colleague, and hope that the Government of India will accept the Government's expression of regret."

The chairman at Mr. Havenga's meeting had referred to the incident and said they in Smithfield desired to express their disgust that such an ugly thing should have been done to the Agent-General of India. "We in Smithfield," he said, "do not approve of such things."

#### Empire Group Message

The executive of the Empire Group, Durban, have telegraphed the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri in the following terms:—

"The Empire Group, in expressing disgust at the Klerks-

dorp incident, are confident that the action of the few responsible for the outrage is resented and repudiated by the bulk of South African opinion.

### Message to Government of India

The Union Government has, through the Officer Administering the Government, dispatched a message to the Government of India. The message recapitulates the happenings at the meeting addressed by Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, and then reads:—

"His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa hastens to express to the Government of India its profound regret at this deplorable incident as they have already done to Mr. Sastri personally, and to assure the Government of India that every step will be taken to bring the perpetrators of this outrage to justice. The Government of the Union are gratified that Mr. Sastri received no injuries to his person."

### Hundreds of Messages

All day on Tuesday the staff of Mr. Sastri were kept busy in Johannesburg handling telegrams deprecating the Klerksdorp affair and sympathising with Mr. Sastri in having been subjected to such outrageous conduct. Again on Wednesday morning, the stream of telegrams commenced, the total of which, it is reported, ran into many hundreds. Messages have come from every corner of the Union, despatched by both Europeans and Indians.

The affront offered to Mr. Sastri has found no divisions of any kind among his compatriots in the Union. They have allowed no differences among them from joining in expressions of condemnation of Saturday's events and of commiserations with Mr. Sastri.

### Press Comment On Klerksdorp Outrage

In a leader dealing with the Klerksdorp affair on Saturday, the *Star* (Johannesburg), points out that it is one of the elementary rules of public life that anyone with the position of ambassador—which is what Mr. Sastri is, in fact—should be treated with even more courtesy than is accorded to other distinguished visitors.

"It is only natural therefore," says the paper, "that the unfortunate behaviour of a number of people at Klerksdorp on Saturday, has been roundly condemned by the Minister of Interior and deplored by everyone anxious to preserve the good name of the Union."

"Mr. Sastri has told the Government that he attaches no importance to the incident, but there is no saying to what extent it may be magnified in India, where the somewhat delicate relations with the Union have been materially improved since Mr. Sastri came here as its representative."

"From a purely South African point of view it is humiliating to find that Europeans—some of them in positions which should produce a sense of responsibility—should behave in the manner described. An apology by the Deputy-Mayor of Klerksdorp to Mr. Sastri and to our Government would not mend matters much, but it is certainly due; and if thinking people in the town which has hitherto had a high reputation will meet and repudiate the proceedings on Saturday, they would not be doing more than the occasion requires."

#### 'The Rand Daily Mail'

The *Rand Daily Mail* concludes a leading article on the same subject with the words: "The episode of Klerksdorp is a bitter humiliation under which the whole of South Africa must bow its head in shame."

#### 'Natal Witness'

The *Natal Witness* writes:—"It is to be regretted that Mr. Sastri, in the closing stages of his term as Indian Agent-General to the Union, should have been subjected to a display of hooliganism such as was staged at Klerksdorp on Saturday..... The incident placed

an indignity upon the Agent-General which the people of South Africa will unite in resenting. Mr. Sastri came to South Africa with a great reputation. That reputation he has enhanced by the straightforward and honourable manner in which he has advanced the cause of his countrymen in South Africa. Quite apart from the official position which he holds in the Union, Mr. Sastri, during the time he has been here, has gained both the respect and the admiration of all sections of the community. It is therefore hardly a matter for surprise that the Klerksdorp incident has created something akin to a sensation in the country.

"We do not for one moment believe that this incident will have any effect upon the good feeling now existing between the Indian Government and the Government of South Africa. Mr. Sastri will already have taken precautions to prevent any such misfortune. On the other hand the affair may be expected to react unfavourably upon public opinion in India.

"Fortunately, as far as this country is concerned the outrage has merely gone to emphasise the great esteem in which Mr. Sastri is held by all parties and the friendly disposition of the Union towards the cause he so ably advocates.

"Mr. Sastri has said that he proposes to return to India at the end of January; nor is it likely that he will be prevailed upon to prolong his stay. His departure will be regretted, not only by his own people, whose lot has been greatly improved by his presence in South Africa, but by the mass of people in the Union irrespective of nationality or party. If the Klerksdorp outrage has been instrumental in conveying to Mr. Sastri the true measure of public appreciation of his services, then it has achieved a purpose out of all proportion to its initial importance. None the less the incident is to be bitterly deplored."

### 'Natal Advertiser'

"In a leader the *Natal Advertiser* writes:—"All people, whatever their race or colour, who possess civilised minds will deplore with deep feeling the abominable outrage directed against Mr. Sastri at Klerksdorp on Saturday night."

After repudiating in strong terms the tactics adopted by the hooligans the paper writes:—

"Martyrdom is the food that unpopularity thrives on. Rotten eggs and stink bombs do not hinder the Indian cause. They help it. The hooligans of Klerksdorp did not win on Saturday. Mr. Sastri won. To-day, metaphorically if not actually, South Africa—with its sovereign status and its excessive national self-consciousness—is busy apologising to India for the savagery and intolerance of its own white inhabitants towards a cultured and dignified gentleman who, before now, has adorned the most exclusive diplomatic and social circles of Europe. This is the pass to which our people have been brought by their own fellows! This is the sort of figure South Africa is being made to cut in the eyes of the world! This is the fruit of that sturdy plant of European self-consciousness that wants always to keep the nigger in his place, and the Indian in his, and to see that both places are always at an untouchable distance from the perfumed elegance of a sahib race!

"We feel angry about this outrage, not merely because of the buffoonery of the Klerksdorp degenerates, or the studied affront to a man who, in an especial sense, is the guest of South Africa. Our anger gathers heat when we reflect that it is often from the doctrines and teachings of men who ought to know better that the hooligans draw their main inspiration. Yesterday, for instance, a letter appeared in our columns signed "Rhadamanthus," a letter bearing on the surface the ordinary marks of a measure of European education and mental acumen, but breathing an obscurantism towards the Indian problem,

and, above all, the mission of Mr. Sastri that utterly denied even a *prima facie* presentment of the Indian case. We do not want to quote our correspondent's arguments, for even where they can be followed they call for little answer. Our object in publishing such a letter at all is merely to show from time to time what are the almost invincible difficulties in the way of anything like a sane presentation of the Indian problem. There are, unhappily, plenty of people like "Rhadamanthus" and holding kindred views to his; and those moving in their little orbit or acknowledging their mental ascendancy become, in time, disciples and zealots of the very race antipathy they profess to deplore in the Asiatic. They preach and think in terms of repression all the while. They call the Indian a parasite while they sit and chew the vegetables his industry has grown, or enjoy the amenities his manual toil in the canefields has made possible to the European overlord, or profit by the brown man's cheapness in a score of the meaner offices of the white man's existence in Natal. They curse the Asiatic for being cheap and nasty, and directly it is proposed that the Indian shall be washed and educated so that he shall no longer be as cheap as heretofore, our Rhadamanthuses grow nervous lest the emancipated Asiatic should worm his way still further into European strongholds. Hate, disdain and fear are the threefold emotions of our Rhadamanthuses towards Mr. Sastri's countrymen; and the logical mind halts limpingly behind these tornado gusts of prejudice that seem without beginning and without end. In the meantime, while Rhadamanthus and his echo sit in superior and aloof judgment in their cloistered and academic detachment in Durban at the very seat of the great problem, is it to be wondered at that the nasty-minded illiterates of Klerksdorp give mouth like howling curs when a great man tries to put the case with convincing advocacy for a depressed people struggling to break the bonds of an age-old mental and economic repression?"

## European Press On Condonation

### "A Gift Horse"

In the course of a leading article under the above caption the *Natal Mercury* in its issue of September 14 writes:—

"We frankly hope to see the overwhelming majority of those who have illicitly entered the country take advantage of the offer. This is not because we think it particularly desirable that the population of South Africa should include a large Indian element, but because if the position of those here is regularised it will remove one of the last causes of irritation between India and South Africa. India has accepted the position that there shall be no further Indian immigration into South Africa; South Africa has proposed that all Indians who entered the country before July 5, 1924, by whatever means, shall be confirmed in the right to remain here, provided they conform to certain formalities. It will be altogether to the advantage of both countries if the Indian population in South Africa, as a body, know that their position, so far as their right to remain in the country is concerned, is secure."

".....In the past negotiations between the Union Government and the representatives of the Indians may have been characterised by a good deal of finesse, but whatever else can be said about the Capetown Agreement, its very nature prevents either party to it subsequently snatching any sort of

Character is what men and women think of us, but being resolved in a just cause. Plutarch.

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advantage by reason of an unexpected interpretation of some part of its text. In addition, the condonation permit, which is to be issued to all who are qualified to receive it, is unequivocal enough. It is true that its first clause reads: "The permit is valid until it is cancelled by the Minister."..... But the permit also contains an undertaking by the Minister not to cancel the document "unless the holder is, subsequent to July 5, 1924, convicted of one of a number of serious offences, which are set out in the Acts of 1913 and 1927." Thus the law-abiding Indian, having purged his original offence of illicit entry to the country, is perfectly safe. And if this is not sufficient, Mr. Sastri holds the written and official assurance of Dr. Malan—the exact terms of the letter are public property—that if, contrary to legal advice, it is found that the condonation permit does not safeguard the rights of the holder, then he is "quite prepared to introduce amending legislation to make the permit efficacious."

To-day the Indians affected have less than three weeks in which to make their applications, and doubtless in a good many instances time will be required to provide evidence satisfactory to the Department that the applicant concerned was in the country before July 5, 1924. As Mr. Sastri told an audience of Transvaal Indians a day or two ago, they could wait a day or two before coming to a decision, but they could not afford to wait longer. And we would add—and we are sure that Mr. Sastri will agree with us—that having come to a wise decision to apply for a regularisation of their position they will be altogether foolish if they are other than entirely frank with the authorities. If—and they can easily satisfy themselves on the point—they are entitled to receive a permit, they will be merely creating obstacles in the way of its issue if they make a statement in support of the application which is not entirely in accordance with facts. The condonation scheme was designed to clear up finally what may be described as the untidy end of the Indians' position in South Africa. If it fails neither the Union Government nor Mr. Sastri will bear any share of the blame: the consequences will rest entirely upon those sections of the Indian population who by their action have definitely "looked a gift horse in the mouth."

### "Indians Must Think Quickly"

Thus the *Rand Daily Mail* under the above caption: It is somewhat difficult to understand the attitude of those Indians who have entered South Africa illegally and would now reject the condonation scheme. Apparently there are some thousands of them in the Transvaal alone, but up to the present only one hundred and twenty have obtained protection certificates. Acting under unsound advice, the others are hesitating whether they should legitimatise their position. The speech delivered by the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri on Sunday should help them to make up their minds. If it does not, they are clearly lost.

No one has done more for the Indian community in South Africa than Mr. Sastri. The better relations which exist between Europeans and Indians to-day are largely due to his personality, his tact, and his sustained efforts. For his fellow-countrymen now to disregard his counsel would, from their point of view, be the height of folly. It is no use their waiting for further concessions from the Government. As a matter of fact, the Government, in putting forward the condonation scheme, has taken a step which would scarcely be approved by

many of its followers. "If the Indians refuse it," says Mr. Sastri, "there may be rejoicing in many white homes." That statement need not be doubted. There *would* be rejoicing, for rejection would necessarily be followed by deportation.

Indians who have come here in contravention of the law cannot reasonably expect a freer pardon than the Government has offered. If it is spurned and Mr. Sastri's warning ignored, only one course is open to them—the settlement of their South African affairs in preparation for a return to India. The alternative has been put to them very plainly by their greatest friend in this country. They must now decide, and decide quickly. The sands are running out and it is mere waste of time to consult the astrologers. The matter is one in which the stars cannot help them.

### "Mr. Sastri's Appeal"

In the course of a leading article under the above heading *The Star* (Johannesburg), writes:—

"It will be a matter of sincere regret in South Africa and far beyond that the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Agent-General in the Union for the Government of India, is terminating his period of official work in this country, and will probably be leaving for India no later than January next. During his stay here Mr. Sastri has done even more than was expected from a statesman of his outstanding mark to promote the smooth operation of the agreement concluded between the Governments of India and of South Africa as to the future position of the Indians resident in the Union and to direct in the paths of reason and justice public opinion amongst Europeans and Indians alike. In doing this he has borne the brunt of difficulties and opposition, the existence of which is all too well known. This has not discouraged him in his unremitting labours for the welfare of his people, and for the direction of thought and action along those lines of fairness and toleration which alone can make for progress and unity, whether in South Africa or in India."

The article concludes by saying: "For the sake of a better feeling in South Africa and of a more fair-minded regard for the execution of all the obligations implied in the agreement come to between our own and the Indian Government, it is to be hoped that those Indians who are now rejecting the generous offer of the Union Government of condonation for having entered the country illegally in recent years will take Mr. Sastri's advice, cease their militant gestures of "non-co-operation" and accept the offer that has been made to them of registering as legitimate residents, an offer which expires at the end of this month."

## Technical Training To Indians

### The Duty of The Labour Party

In the course of his address to a public meeting in Johannesburg last week on the conditions of trade union organisations in India—a portion of which dealing with the labour conditions of Indians in South Africa was reproduced in our last week's issue—the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri promised with regard to Indian tailors in the Union being asked to work the same hours as the Europeans, that he would direct the attention of the Congress to the matter and, in addition, request his successor to see that it was attended to.

Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy.—Emerson.

"Courtesy to the very poor is a sign that sympathy for others is Divine."

As to the Indian community's effort to have youths admitted to trades through the apprenticeship scheme, Mr. Sastri explained that attempts had been made to have Indian youths apprenticed in the various trades, but whether it was owing to defects in the law, or the way the law was administered, they did not succeed. They had approached the Technical College authorities in Durban and asked if Indian students would be admitted to the classes there, but that was ruled out summarily. When they had inquired what provision could be made in that connection they were informed that if it were possible to hold separate classes that might be considered, because no European youth would sit in the same form as an Indian.

"We were quite agreeable," emphasised Mr. Sastri, "to that being done, but the question was how to find additional accommodation. In addition, the teachers would require to be paid extra for their extra services. The teachers themselves might not be willing to give instruction to Indian students. I was informed by one who knew that of the teachers in the college not more than two or three would be willing to teach our boys. This matter came up for consideration before the Cape Conference, and we asked that the Union Government should afford facilities for technical instruction to our youths and conference resolved that an effort be made in that direction. Dr. Malan, who is in charge of this subject has addressed a letter to the technical education authorities in the various provinces asking whether they would be able to make provision, and so far he has received no encouraging answer from any of them. I have fully realised the difficulty: it is not merely money, it is racial prejudice, there is no doubt about that. (Applause.) I am not one of those who are ready to blame you or the Government for backwardness in overcoming these difficulties. It is very difficult to overcome them, but I think I am justified in coming to the Labour Party and asking them to help us in this matter. (Applause.) While I am prepared to excuse the Government and the general public for being backward in this matter, I find it difficult to sit quiet when labourers themselves set up difficulties arising from race or colour. The Labour movement in every part of the world claims that it applies the principles of Christianity to its work. (Hear, hear.) It seems to me that I am justified in coming to you, and pleading that you help us in overcoming these scruples arising from social or racial prejudices." (Applause.)

When Mr. Fordham had inquired if Mr. Sastri had had any difficulty in approaching either the industrial or political sections of the Labour movement in this country, he expressed the hope that Mr. Sastri would not return to India, and there inform the public—the same as the Rev. Mr. Andrews had done—that he had experienced the greatest difficulty in this connection.

Mr. Sastri: I am willing to give credit cent for cent where it is due. (Applause.) I am not going to say in India anything that I have not felt. I am not justified, being the representative of one Government with another Government, in passing criticism upon the way in which my representations have been received by any section of the people, or any branch of the Government, but I think I may say this, without indulging in the specially characteristic weakness of the ambassador, that wherever I have been under compulsion to make representations of a serious character I have met with the greatest courtesy and the greatest sympathy. No one has turned me back for listening to me, or for as much as could be said to an earnest public worker. (Loud applause.)—*The Star.*

## Mr. Sastri On The Colour Question

### Address To Coloured People

A message of hope in the future of the coloured people of South Africa was the theme of an address by the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivas Sastri, P.C., given in the Pilkington Hall, on Friday, 7th instant, to a public meeting called by the Transvaal African Teachers' Association.

Mr. Sastri condemned barriers that divided peoples into sections and castes. "How are these barriers to be broken?" he asked. "Too many of us are filled with pride of race. In India we generally classify pride under many heads, such as wealth, strength, birth and so on. But we put down pride of colour as about the worst and most baseless of all forms of pride.

"It is one thing to condemn this form of self-gratification, but another thing to remove it from our hearts. For a long time yet in our history pride of race and pride of colour are going to affect the relations of the various communities and poison the springs of the common life which we take from Him who made us, and make the task more difficult for those who wish to reform human nature and human institutions.

### Social Pride

"There is no poison so harmful to our nature as this poison of social pride. It appears to me that if ever there is going to be a cure for this great evil it must be through our educational institutions."

### Equality

Among the six classes of India, said the speaker, the third wanted to be made equal with those above, but forgot that those beneath had as strong a right to equality. "Don't always say," he urged his audience, "that you want to be made equal with the Europeans. Say so by all means, but remember also that you cannot remain in a privileged position, as against the classes below you. If you forget that, your attempts are bound to recoil upon you, your fetters will only be made faster upon your bodies."

No educational system that was wisely ordered should tolerate these class distinctions, urged the speaker. In India the educational system established by the English for all classes of Indian peoples was greatly helping to break down the barriers of class. In South Africa, however, the educational system was working against the coloured people instead of helping them. He urged the coloured people to look up, not to give way to despair; and to teach their children hope. "You cannot be long kept down," he said: "The Indian community cannot be long kept down: Already many influential white people are taking up the cause of the natives. Their influence is going to tell in the long run. If the position of the natives improves, you are going to share in it. You are surely not going to be left behind." (Applause).—*Rand Daily Mail.*

## To Let