

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

GREAT anxiety is felt throughout the Empire over the bad turn the health of His Majesty the King has taken during the week. We heartily join in the universal prayer that he may speedily be restored to his normal health.

The South African Indian Congress has sent the following message to the Governor General at Cape Town:—

"The Indian community of South Africa pray to the Almighty and look forward with anxiety to the speedy recovery of His Majesty. Kindly convey through your office our message of sympathy to His Majesty."

In last week's issue we published a brief Reuter's message purporting the cable sent to India by the South African Indian Congress in connection with the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. We have now received the full text of the cable which is addressed to Doctor Ansari, President Indian National Congress, Delhi:—

"Indian community of South Africa deeply mourn untimely death Lala Lajpat Rai. In his death India sustained irreparable national loss. His death must inspire India to completely boycott Simon Commission and determination achieve entire independence. Please convey through your good office messages of sympathy to the bereaved family and to the people of India at large."

We regret the erroneous reference made in the above message to the boycott of the Simon Commission and the achievement of entire independence. Firstly it was out of place, for we are mourning the loss of Lalajee not because he was a boycotter of the Simon Commission or because he was an advocate of complete independence, which, in fact, he was not, for he stood for Dominion Status. We mourn the loss of Lalajee because of his great qualities—his fearlessness, his devotion to duty, and his burning patriotism. Secondly, we, in this country, being far away from our Motherland and not having first-hand knowledge of the doings in India, are not in a position, nor are we entitled, to dictate to the people in India as to what they should and what they should not do. Even if we were in a position, we do not think it is wise for us to express an opinion when there are better heads striving to take the right course. Our reference to entire independence is, furthermore, meaningless; for the majority of the responsible leaders in India have decided upon Dominion Status. It would have been wiser to avoid any reference to highly complicated political questions such as these. And there may be only a very few even in South Africa who do wish for India any other status but that enjoyed by the Dominions.

A deep sense of gratitude of the Indian community is due to the Greytown Municipality for the generous spirit it has shown in making a free grant of three acres of its land for the purpose of building a school

for Indians in that town whose foundation stone was laid by Mr. Sastri last Saturday. The comparison of the Durban Municipality with that of Greytown is not a very happy one. While the latter has made a free grant of three acres for only a school the former, after having considered most grudgingly the application of Mr. Sastri for five acres for the training College to be established at the expense of £20,000, has given only two acres and a half, and that too, on lease with humiliating conditions. The Town Council would have wished that even that would not have been accepted by Mr. Sastri but Mr. Sastri has accepted, in the interests of the community, even the few crumbs so grudgingly thrown at the community and that after taking the price for them; in the hope, no doubt, that better sense may prevail upon the Town Councillors at a later date. The Greytown Municipality has indeed set a noble example in regard to a sense of duty as city fathers to be followed not only by the Durban but other similar Municipalities.

The following are the students who have passed the second year first aid examination and who have been awarded voucher certificates:—Messrs. H. Maghrajh, C. R. George, R. Budree and Cooppan Somasundram, members of the First Indian Division of the St. John Ambulance Association (Natal). Those passed for the first year were Messrs. H. Done, H. J. Maghrajh, B. J. Chetty, H. Mahabeer, V. Thomas, C. Padiachy, M. Joseph, Kitty Samuels, Mahomed Moraseih, A. E. Mahomed, A. Dada, N. N. Perumal and V. T. Williams. The examination was held at Old St. Aidan's Boys School, Cross Street, on Thursday, the examiners being Dr. T. H. Galbraith (theory) and Mr. J. W. Campbell (secretary of the St. John Ambulance Association (practical)).

During this month 261 Indians are reported to have been repatriated under the assisted emigration scheme. Of the total 118 were men, 61 women and the rest children. Ten men were from the Transvaal and the Cape Colony. Over 300 more Indians are expected to depart before the middle of December.

Indian Trade Union Congress

The Trade Union Congress of Indian Workers organised by the officials of the Natal Indian Congress will be opened at the Town Hall on Saturday the 1st December 1928 at 7-30 p m. by the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C. Advocate Albert Christopher will preside.

The Registrar of Trade Unions, the Chief Inspector of Labour and the Divisional Inspector of Labour have been invited to be present.

The Congress will hold its remaining

sittings on Sunday December 2, at 2-30 pm.
at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall.

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE,
President.

A. I. KAJEE, } *Jt. Hon.*
P. R. PATHER, } *Secretaries*

TRADE UNION CONGRESS

THE Natal Indian Congress have organised the first Trade Union Congress of Indian Workers to be opened to-morrow evening at the Town Hall, Durban, by the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri. The very strange position of the trade union movement amongst Indians in South Africa is that while in other parts of the world such movements are inaugurated to fight against the capitalists, the movement in this country is not to fight the capitalists but their fellow European trade unionists. The latter have their own organisations, can establish their own standard of wage and that standard is imposed upon all races without distinction, but without the non-Europeans being admitted to their unions or given any representation. To give the position in a nutshell we will quote here the following from an article by an esteemed correspondent published elsewhere in this issue:—

“Indians are not admitted to trade unions, and trade unions are free, under the Industrial Conciliation Act, to insert clauses in industrial agreements prohibiting the employment of non-trade-unionists. The Printing industry has such a clause in its agreement, and such Indians as are now in the industry are there by virtue of exemptions granted and renewed at the pleasure of the industrial council. In the designated trades under the Apprenticeship Act there are no Indian representatives on the Apprenticeship Committees. These consist entirely of Europeans. The Apprenticeship Act stipulates minimum educational qualifications for apprentices, generally the VI Standard. While education is tight up to that standard compulsory for Europeans, it is not for Indians. They have not even adequate facilities on a voluntary basis. The Act further requires that apprentices should attend technical courses. Facilities are provided for such courses for Europeans but not for Indians. Juvenile Affairs Boards consist entirely of Europeans and cater only to European youth. Thus in the matter of equipping

oneself with skill and efficiency, the Indian is denied the chances that are pressed on Europeans. And yet the tendency for wage regulation has been to make wages uniform irrespective of race, and fix them high, so that only the most efficient are worth that wage. The only candidate eligible for that wage is the European, though theoretically it is open to all races.”

In the circumstances it is difficult to suggest what Indians could do, and whether the formation of separate trade unions is advisable and how it will benefit the Indian. If, supposing, separate unions were established, we do not see that that would help the Indians. For it is what the European trade unions will say that will count and it will be the European standard that will be established. A separate standard for the Indian will not be granted as it was clearly seen in regard to the determination of the shop assistants' wages. The Board distinctly stated that it could not differentiate between races however unequal their position may be. Nor, in our opinion, would it be wise to work on those lines. Under the Indo-Union Agreement the principle that Indians should adopt the European standard has been accepted and the Union Government have agreed to uplift the Indians to enable them to reach that standard. It would, therefore, be inconsistent on our part to press for a lower standard, and inconsistent on the part of the authorities to grant such a standard. We must be willing to adopt the European standard and we must be satisfied with a common standard of wage. We should not complain against it. But we must ask, in return, for equal opportunities. If equal opportunities are not granted, then it would only mean that the real complaint against the Indian is not against his undercutting the European but against his very existence and the object of the Industrial Conciliation and similar Acts is only to establish a white labour policy and to crush the Indian out of existence.

The Trade Union Congress may, therefore, decide upon a joint conference, as has been suggested by our correspondent in his article, of representatives of the European and Indian trade unions and other competent persons interested in the subject to explore all avenues for a solution of the problem; but they may not decide upon anything else but equality of opportunities under common unions.

Some Problems Connected With Trade Union

An esteemed correspondent in an article sent to us refers to certain problems in connection with the trade union movement which may be useful to the Trade Union Congress to be held during the week-end to consider:—

In the first instance, says the writer, trade unionism can, for all practical purposes, benefit only the semi-skilled and skilled labour; it will be long before unskilled labour could be organised on trade union lines. In the meanwhile some method must be found to ameliorate their conditions. Industrial policy in South Africa provides the Wage Board for the purpose. The Natal Indian Congress may well consider if, on behalf of the unskilled Indian labour, they should move the Wage Board. The Native unskilled workers in Bloemfontein have succeeded in referring their conditions of work to the Wage Board and have received some measure of amelioration.

Coming now to semi-skilled and skilled trades, Indians have many actual and potential grievances. Indians are not admitted to Trade Unions; and trade unions are free, under the Industrial Conciliation Act, to insert clauses in industrial agreements prohibiting the employment of non-trade unionists. The printing industry has such a clause in its agreement, and such Indians as are now in the industry are there by virtue of exemptions granted and renewed at the pleasure of the Industrial Council. In the designated trades under the Apprenticeship Act there are no Indian representatives on the Apprenticeship Committees. These consist entirely of Europeans from whom little sympathy can be expected for Indians, on account of colour prejudice and trade jealousy. The Apprenticeship Act stipulates minimum educational qualifications for apprentices, generally the VI standard. While education is right up to that standard compulsory for Europeans, it is not for Indians. They have not even adequate facilities on a voluntary basis. The Act further requires that apprentices should attend technical courses. Facilities are provided for such courses for Europeans but not for Indians. Juvenile Affairs Boards consist entirely of Europeans and cater only to European youth. Thus in the matter of equipping oneself with skill and efficiency, the Indian is denied the chances that are pressed on Europeans. And yet the tendency for wage regulation has been to make wages uniform irrespective of race, and fix them high, so that only the most efficient are worth that wage. The only candidate eligible for that wage is the European, though theoretically it is open to all races.

There can be no doubt that in getting rid of these handicaps and obstacles, organised action will be of great assistance. It is necessary that Indian workmen in all the trades should be organised, and these organisations should be federated into a trade union congress.

The next problem is the relation of Indian trade organisations with the European trade unions. The best relation which is most compatible with Labour principles all the world over, is of common unions, for Europeans and Indians to join the same union. But in South Africa, the European unionists oppose common unions and suggest parallel unions, though the law of the land does not permit it. Should Indians then consent to common unions wherever possible and parallel unions wherever necessary, or make a dead set against parallel unions?

It is worthwhile to understand the opposition of Europeans to common unions. It is partly social; they do not relish the idea of sitting side by side with Indians on a footing of equality. It has not

been done before. Partly, it is economic fear. They are afraid that pressure will be brought to bear to lower the wages to the non-European level; that the employers and non-Europeans will combine to overrule the European employees. In envisaging this situation the European workmen are thinking not merely of Indians but non-Europeans generally. The idea of parallel unions is put forward with the condition that the non-European union shall have on an industrial council representation smaller than their membership will warrant, and smaller than the European representation, so that European hegemony may not be imperilled. But whether in such occupations in which only Europeans and Indians are engaged and in which Indians are in a minority generally, the Europeans will take up a different attitude and admit Indians into their trade unions is more than one can say.

But even so, another problem, even more difficult, will remain unsolved. Supposing that European and Indians join a common union, what wages shall they agree on to press on the employers in making an industrial agreement? It would not be easy to defend a policy of differential wages to Europeans and Indians for the same job. The cheaper partner in the union will tend to displace the costlier one; and it would be impossible to get the latter to agree to the proposal. Moreover, under the Cape Town Agreement the policy of equal wage for equal work has been definitely accepted. What common wage shall the two partners agree on? If it be the European wage, the Indian will fear he will be eliminated from the trade; if Indian the European will fear the same fate. The search for a common wage which will be equally acceptable to both, it seems to me, is the real and at the same time the most difficult problem that has to be faced. I trust the Trade Union Congress will apply itself to this problem. It may perhaps be useful if a joint conference of representatives of the European and Indian trade unions and other competent persons interested in the subject is held to explore all avenues for a solution of the problem.

Mr. Sastri's Successor

In a leading article under the above heading the *Cape Times* dated Nov. 22 writes:—

No one who has followed the progress of Indian affairs in South Africa since the Capetown Agreement will feel any surprise that the Government of India has found the selection of a successor to Mr. Sastri very difficult. The position of the Indian Agent here is bound to be one of some delicacy, and his path is undoubtedly beset with many pitfalls. Mr. Sastri's watchful nimbleness in evading these has made his work appear much simpler than it really is. For this very reason, the prospect of taking over from him might well fill even the most venturesome with qualms. The work itself is difficult enough to do well; but to do it as well as Mr. Sastri may seem almost impossible. The name of Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi, on whom the choice has fallen, is new to most of us in South Africa, but the message from our Calcutta correspondent, which we publish elsewhere, shows that he is the possessor of many of the qualities that have lain at the root of the very remarkable success of Mr. Sastri's mission. The new appointment has evidently been made after the most careful consideration by the Indian Government, and it has the full concurrence of the Government of the Union. It has been well received by public opinion in India. And South Africa will, we are sure, extend to Sir Kurma Reddi a cordial and sincere welcome and will do its best, when he arrives in January, to render his task as little thank-

less as from the nature of the circumstances it can be. We also venture to suggest one way in which the Indian Government can facilitate the task of its new representative. Mr. Sastri, by virtue of a unique personality, has contrived to establish direct touch with a very large proportion of our population. By his lectures, his speeches, and his affable accessibility, he has definitely impressed himself on many thousands. To him such devices of contact as formal entertainment and official hospitality can hardly be essential. But the Indian Government would, we feel, do well to bear in mind that it would not be fair to all his successors to expect them to reach the same results by the same means. Mr. Sastri has been so much bigger than his post that few have noticed how small in itself the post is. We hope that no Indian Agent in South Africa will ever be smaller than his post. That Sir Kurma Reddi is nothing of the kind is already obvious, even from our present too meagre knowledge. Nevertheless, the Government of India will probably find it desirable on general grounds to enlarge the post and to match it somewhat more equally with the man.

New Indian School At Greytown

Foundation Stone Laid By Mr. Sastri

The Rt. Hon. V. S. S. Sastri, Agent of the Government of India, paid a visit to Greytown last Saturday, November 24, to lay the foundation stone of the new Indian School.

There were many visitors present at the ceremony including a large number of prominent Europeans.

The Mayor of Greytown (Mr. W. J. S. Newmarch), in the course of his speech stated that they all realised that no people can progress without education. Where, without education, he asked, would the nations of the earth be, and the Indians should realise that as citizens of this country they should use their wealth for the development of South Africa, which was a young country and needed all the money it could get for its own development.

Mr. Sastri then laid the stone and in the course of his remarks said that when he was here last he was told of the difficulties the Indian community were faced with in establishing a school, and after the labours of the Indian Education Commission the Government had given proof of their earnestness by taking over the school under its own control.

The Mayor had observed, went on Mr. Sastri, that education was all important and the time had gone when anyone would question the need for the benefit of education. The uneducated person was a positive danger to the State and there was no work in the world, however lowly, that with education one did not do it better. Even education was necessary for idle people, for without it they would also be helpless.

The Indian community here, asserted Mr. Sastri, was by no means idle. The Europeans found it impossible to keep them here uneducated. A consoling feature of the time was that that the Indians should come out their poverty and pay for their school.

The Mayor had appealed to the wealthy Indians to invest in this country. Mr. Sastri was by no means satisfied that most of them had not done so. He had lost no opportunity of using his influence in this direction. In fact that charge was, comparatively speaking, ill informed, as was abundantly

proved at the sitting of the Education Commission. It was then found that sacrifices had been made by Indians for the purpose of maintaining schools in their localities, and they were not receiving the the assistance which they deserved.

The Government, continued Mr. Sastri, has promised increased facilities.

"I am gratified," said Mr. Sastri, "to be here to acknowledge as an act of grace and helpfulness this gift of land belonging to the municipality. It is not always that municipalities come forward with such grants. It should be widely known that three acres of land has been given by the Municipality of Greytown for the erection of an Indian school. I have some experience of municipalities, and I would say that this example should be more widely known."

The Indian community was doubly fortunate, Mr. Sastri said, in having Captain Walker on one hand and Mr. Lakhi on the other. They would be proud to know that their fellow citizen, Mr. Lakhi, was the largest donor towards the erection of the Indian Training College at Durban. His contribution amounted to £750. He was going to persuade the other donors to call the library after Mr. Lakhi.

The Indian community of Greytown and the neighbourhood ought to be congratulated on having such friends. Higher education facilities would be soon offered at Durban, and it could no longer be said that Indian children had to be withdrawn from school after receiving primary education only. There was now a recognition for the desired for education of a high level.

"Mr. Mayor," Mr. Sastri proceeded, "I am happy to state that there is a newly awakened sense for education and a fair share of the wealth of the community is being devoted to education in South Africa."

"I join in the hope that South Africa will grow and prosper and attract many people not only by its wealth and prosperity but by the natural beauty which she possesses in abundant measure. I can recommend this land to tourists of all countries who have an appetite for natural beauty."

"In the fulness of time," stated Mr. Sastri in conclusion, "the Indian community will not be found wanting in its contribution towards the progress and welfare of the South African nation."

Mr. M. E. Lakhi, on behalf of the Indian School Advisory Board, welcomed Mr. Sastri and the visitors who were entered to tea after the ceremony.

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha

Mourns The Death Of Lalajee

A well attended meeting of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was held last Sunday at the Tamil Institute, Cross Street, Durban, to express their grief for the death of India's Nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai. Mr. S. L. Singh the president presided.

The chairman paid a glowing tribute to the late Lalajee for his noble services in the interests of India and the Indian people. Among the other speakers were included Messrs. A. Christopher, S. Jivanji, T. M. Naicker, P. R. Pather, J. B. Paravasee, Devchand and Pandit Bhawani Dayal.

The following resolution of condolence was passed, all standing:—

"That this meeting of Hindus hereby places on record its deep sense of sorrow and regret at the untimely demise of our revered leader, Lala Lajpat Rai, and joins with all India in mourning over this national loss."

Mr. Sastri At Grahamstown

Enthusiastic Welcome By Europeans And Indians

On his return journey from Capetown the Right Hon. Mr. Sastri paid a short visit to Grahamstown on November 16. Mr. Sastri, who was accompanied by his private secretary Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, was met by the Mayor (Mr. C. W. Bowles) in his robes of office, with the Deputy Mayor (Mr. Godlonton) and the Town Clerk, also by representatives of the Indian community. There were present the president and secretary of the East London British Indian Association, Messrs. S. Casoojee and A. M. Chetty, and the president and secretary of the Grahamstown British Indian Association, Messrs. V. N. Pillay and M. M. Gangit, together with their committee members. The District Commandant of Police, Capt. F. H. Kunhardt, was in attendance.

During the day Mr. Sastri was entertained at tea by the Mayor and was shown round the City Hall, afterwards proceeding to Rhodes University College, where he inspected the buildings. He subsequently had lunch with Sir John Adamson and members of the Council and Senate of the College, at the Hotel Goodwood. At 3 p.m. Mr. Sastri took tea with Mr. V. N. Pillay at the latter's residence, 23 High Street, and met members of the British Indian Association. At 4-15 p.m. Mr. Sastri took a motor drive round the Mountain.

The Evening Function

In the evening at 8 o'clock a meeting was held in the City Hall under the aegis of the Grahamstown British Indian Association. The Hall was crowded long before the time for Mr. Sastri's meeting and at a quarter to eight many people were being turned away from the doors. A large number found standing room along the side walls and some of the overflow of students actually sat on the floor near the platform. The total attendance must have numbered seven hundred.

The Mayor (Professor Bowles) was in the chair, supported by the Bishop of Grahamstown, the Mayoress, and a large number of leading citizens representative of many sections of the population, including the leaders of the Indian community.

The front of the stage was attractively adorned with palms and evergreens.

Mayor's Welcome

The Mayor said: I have very great pleasure in extending to Mr. Sastri a very cordial welcome both on behalf of the British Indian community and of the City of Grahamstown as a whole. I have, if I may be allowed a personal note, a peculiar personal pleasure in extending this welcome, for I find that like myself, Mr. Sastri began life as a schoolmaster; but there, I fear, all resemblance between us ceases. I have remained perforce a humble musket bearer in the professorial ranks, while Mr. Sastri has heard the call of public and international politics. Whether his personal happiness has been the greater by reason of his, I will not say defection, but transfer of allegiance, only he can say, but one thing there can be no doubt, that though education in India may have been the poorer, India as a whole and the Empire have been immeasurably the richer. I suppose that in all of us, particularly those who are tied to a desk and live their lives in obedience to a bell, there links a certain envy for the man whose work takes him across the world from one land to another:

Many times we do injury to a cause by dwelling upon

and indeed to represent one's country at the Imperial Conference in London, to pass on to Washington, from there to the League of Nations at Geneva, to Kenya and to be the Agent-General in South Africa, must, with all its opportunities of seeing the cities and knowing the minds of many men, be a wonderful and illuminating experience. In a few moments we are to have presented to us some of the fruits of this experience, and I am sure that we shall all follow Mr. Sastri's address with the closest attention and the deepest interest; we shall listen not only for the intellectual pleasures of hearing an address from one of the few great orators in the world to-day, but because we shall have the unique opportunity of hearing from a high authority something of the complex problems that face Indian and Imperial statesmen in dealing with that great country whose name is written so deeply in our own national history. No thinking man in South Africa can fail to be alive to these problems, whether they affect only our own domestic interests or the wider interests of the British Commonwealth of Nations. I regret, sir, that your stay in this town has been so short; we should have liked to show you something of our colleges and schools and something of the surrounding district. I hope that you will carry away with you pleasant memories of your brief stay here, and that you have found here a happy and contented community of your own people. (Applause)

The distinguished visitor and the Mayor were then garlanded with flowers, and a bouquet handed to the Mayoress, by two little Indian girls, namely, Miss Morgan and Miss Velloo.

Mr. V. N. Pillay (President of the Grahamstown British Indian Association) then read an illuminated address from the Indian community of Grahamstown which was presented to Mr. Sastri amid loud applause. The address read as follows:—

"Sir,—We, the members of the Grahamstown Indian community, desire to extend to you a respectful and wholehearted welcome to our city.

"We have followed with the deepest interest your untiring efforts to promote the welfare of the Indians in the Union and elsewhere, and we rejoice that, as a result of your great work upon the Indo-Union Agreement, there are signs of a more friendly spirit in the relationship between the European and Indian communities.

"The active interest you take in education and your association with the Imperial Conference and the League of Nations are also deeply appreciated by us.

"We are glad, too, that your invaluable services in the cause of justice and truth and of constitutional reform have been upheld.

"It is our fervent hope that you may long be spared to continue your brilliant and successful career and that you will consent to accept another term of office in South Africa.

"We heartily thank you for the honour you have conferred upon us by accepting our invitation to Grahamstown and we trust that you will carry away very happy recollections of your brief visit."

The Mayor then asked Mr. Sastri to speak and as the latter stood he was again applauded thunderously.

Mr. Sastri's Speech

Mr. Sastri said they had given him a welcome as cordial as he had had anywhere in South Africa. Speaking of the Mayor's reference to his schoolmaster days, and to his change in life to a somewhat tired and weary politician, he said if he could go to schools and colleges again and teach as he had done before, he might fairly assure them that he would have more happiness and in the long run be of more

Air and manner are more expressive than words—

use. That, however, was a vain regret, for he was now out of date so far as education went.

Mr. Sastri then spoke at some length on the connection of India with the British Empire and the present political situation in India.

Proceeding, Mr. Sastri said what we desired of our statesmen was to make British rule acceptable—acceptable to all peoples who might come under it, so that they might not be unwilling subjects of the Crown, but willing and devoted subjects of the Commonwealth. It had to be made clear to everybody that he who was within the British Commonwealth was a happy person and that he who was without it was the reverse. And how could that be the case unless where the British flag flew it was understood without question or cavil that the fullest individual freedom would be awarded; that all peoples would be permitted to rise to the full height of their own capacities and that in abilities, in talents, no possibilities would be repressed? There should be established a facility for everyone to fit himself for life and attain distinction to the fullest capacity that he might possess.

Disaffected Elements

Mr. Sastri then referred to disaffected elements in India which had worked against the British connection. Unfortunately during recent years, said the speaker, owing to certain comical blunders of the British Government, these had been given a surer footing than they had before and in the greatest Indian organisation a periodic resolution was put forward to exclude themselves from the British Empire. These resolutions, however, had always until recently been defeated by overwhelming majorities. For some years the man who had taken the greatest pleasure defeating this proposition annually at the Indian National Congress was Mr. Gandhi himself. Last year, however, owing to the appointment in the teeth of Indian opposition of the Simon Commission this independent school waxed so strong in the Indian National Congress that at this last session, when Mr. Gandhi was away for a time, they managed to bring forward this resolution and carried it.

Statesmen's Mistake

The mistake that had been made by British statesmen brought its punishment. But although the Indian National Congress passed the resolution it did not interfere with other parts of the programme for political work which required that a constitution should be drawn up by the people as would approve itself to Indian intelligence and for which they were prepared to work. The committee which was appointed to draw up this constitution consisted of people who had hitherto been the loudest in proclaiming this independence. When they actually came to the draft constitution they put forward the aim in the first article for independence within the British Commonwealth. (Hear, hear.) He had read of this with the greatest relief, as it showed to him that the resolution of the Indian National Congress was really in the nature of a reply to the British Government and a political bluff. Still more encouraging news had come in recent weeks to the effect that when this resolution was brought before the larger body, the Indian Conference, it was set aside summarily and they accepted the resolution which gave India its political outlook within the Commonwealth.

Loyalty An Asset

That fact ought to be deeply impressed upon the hearts of all who sometimes thought that India did not understand the privileges of belonging to the British Commonwealth. They should realise what an incalculable asset was India's loyalty. If this

were so we should not hear so much as we did here and there in small corners of the British Commonwealth of the thoughtless expression "coolie," and of repressive legislation, or of the cry "dispense with the Indian; send him across the sea so that we may be free." When people in South Africa refused to accord Indians amongst them the rights of citizenship natural resentment arose which was not calculated to strengthen the bonds of the Empire. "It goes without saying, and that is why I appeal to people who are British by blood and British by tendency to remember this that even if it is but a slight disability the ideals of the British connection must be observed by everybody. You cannot for a moment allow that to be forgotten. That is why I remember always to bring before people in South Africa, as in Fiji, British Guiana, and other distant places, this fundamental principle of your actions.

A Difficult Course

"Often the Imperial and local sides of the matters at issue coalesce. Then there is great difficulty in steering your course. Oftener still these two aspects seem to collide. If you consider only local interests you seem compelled to take a course which may have its reactions in India, and on the Commonwealth generally very dangerous consequences. It is not often that you have time to think of the larger consequences and I grant that sometimes you are often tempted to forget there are other aspects. To say, as did a premier of one of the Canadian provinces, a Yorkshireman, that they had had enough of the British Empire was entirely disruptive and utterly against the spirit of British institutions, besides being ruinous to the Empire. "I am an Indian by birth, I am an Indian, no doubt, but, believe me, I am scarcely less than you are in my admiration of the British Empire and my love for it. (Applause).

Whole-hearted Devotion

Mr. Sastri continued: If I were not an Indian and stood outside the British Empire I should still not yield to you in my desire that the British Empire should continue strong and prosperous. In my appeal to you, therefore, I forget for the time being my nationality. I cast my eye over the whole earth and ask myself which political institution is it to which if I had the choice, as if I were just descended upon the planet, I would devote my best energy and all my time. I should have no hesitation in making up my mind. The fact that you are born to it lays upon you a duty which must not be lost sight of. I hope you will keep it faithfully before you in all your doings, large or small. If necessary, sacrifice some of your own interests. What harm is there if from that sacrifice you secure the establishment of very much larger interests? You secure further with such sacrifice the prosperity and increasing popularity of the British Empire." (Applause.)

He concluded: The danger, then, to the Empire is in these outlying places and if I may I will ask each one of you to remember that danger and to see with what force in you lies that you bring that danger no nearer, but keep it ever more and more remote, so that you and I, white and black, civilised, and half civilised, all subjects of the British Crown, may sing its glory for ever and ever, and wish that nothing should be done to imperil its usefulness. Thus the enormous benefits it is able to confer, will be shared (1) particularly by those who belong to it and (2) indirectly and by force of example by the whole human race. (Loud applause.)

Closing Tributes

The Bishop of Grahamstown voiced their gratitude to Mr. Sastri for his address, which showed he had

well earned his wide reputation in international politics. He approved the high moral aim that had been set before them—ideals of Empire. These had been well illustrated from India's experience. They offered to him as citizens of Grahamstown their great and deep thanks, feeling greatly honoured by his visit. Mr. Sastri's was a wise contribution towards the solution of our South African life, for which he had earned deep gratitude. South Africa, though small compared with India, had a large crop of difficulties and Mr. Sastri had contributed largely towards the settlement of at least one of these. His address had been an intellectual treat and privilege for which the speaker was deeply thankful. Mr. Sastri had shown how difficult it was for strangers to understand each other, but after his address he had thrown light upon the Indian questions, and appealed to South Africa's high consideration of them. The speaker, amid remarkable enthusiasm, moved a sincere vote of thanks to Mr. Sastri.

Sir John Adamson, in seconding the resolution, referred to Mr. Sastri's lucidity and eloquence. His address embodied political thought at its highest, and one feature of the address was Mr. Sastri's unflinching courage. His obvious sincerity was admirable. (Applause).

The Mayor briefly put the resolution in a few fitting words and ended the meeting, which concluded with "God Save the King" and three cheers for Mr. Sastri.—*Grocott's Daily Mail*.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part IV Chapter XXXIX.

A SPIRITUAL DILEMMA

As soon as the news reached South Africa that I, along with other friends, had offered my services in the War, I received two cables. One of these was from Mr. Polak who questioned the consistency of my action with my profession of *ahimsa*.

I had to a certain extent anticipated this objection, for I had discussed the question in my *Hind Swaraj* and used to discuss it day in and day out with friends in South Africa. All of us recognised the immorality of war. If I was not prepared to prosecute my assailant, much less should I be willing to participate in a war, especially when I knew nothing of the justice or otherwise of the cause of the combatants. Friends, of course, knew that I had previously served in the Boer War, but they assumed that my views had since undergone a change.

As a matter of fact, the very same line of argument that persuaded me to take part in the Boer War had weighed with me on this occasion. It was quite clear to me that participation in war could never be consistent with *ahimsa*. But it is not always given to one to be equally clear about one's duty. A votary of truth is often obliged to grope in the dark.

Ahimsa is a comprehensive principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of *himsa*. The saying that 'life lives on life' has a deep meaning about it. Man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward *himsa*. The very fact of his living,—eating, drinking and moving about,—necessarily involves some *himsa*, destruction of life, be it ever so minute. A

votary of *ahimsa*, therefore, remains true to his faith, if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it and thus, incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of *himsa*. He will be constantly growing in self-restraint and compassion, but he can never become entirely free from outward *himsa*.

Then, again, because underlying *ahimsa* is the unity of all life, the error of one cannot but affect all, and hence man cannot be wholly free from *himsa*. So long as he continues to be a social being, he cannot but participate in the *himsa* that the very existence of society involves. When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of *ahimsa* is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war, and yet, whole-heartedly, try to free himself, his nation, and the world from war.

I had hoped to improve my status and that of my people through the British Empire. Whilst in England I was enjoying the protection of the British Fleet, and taking, as I did, shelter under its armed might, I was directly participating in its potential violence. Therefore, if I desired to retain my connection with the Empire and to live under its banner, one of the three courses was open to me: I could declare open resistance against the war, and in accordance with the law of Satyagraha, boycott the Empire until it changed its military policy, or I could seek imprisonment by civil disobedience of such of its laws as were fit to be disobeyed, or I could participate in the war on the side of the Empire and thereby acquire the capacity and fitness for resisting the violence of war. I lacked this capacity and fitness, so I thought there was nothing for it but for me to serve in the War.

I make no distinction from the point of view of *ahimsa*, between combatants and non-combatants. He who volunteers to serve a band of dacoits, by working as their carrier, or watchman while they are about their business, or their nurse when they are wounded, is as much guilty of dacoity as the dacoits themselves. In the same way, those who confine themselves to attending to the wounded in battle cannot be absolved from the guilt of war.

I had argued the whole thing out to myself in this manner, before I received Polak's cable, and soon after its receipt, I discussed these views with several friends and concluded that it was my duty to offer to serve in the War. Even to-day I see no flaw in that line of argument, nor am I sorry for my action, holding, as I then did, views favourable to the British connection.

I know that even I could not carry conviction with all my friends about the correctness of my position. The question is a subtle one. It admits of differences of opinion, and therefore I have submitted my argument as clearly as possible to those who believe in *ahimsa* and who are making serious efforts to practise it in every walk of life. A devotee of Truth may not do anything in deference to convention. He must always hold himself open to correction, and whenever he discovers himself to be wrong, he must confess it at all cost and atone for it.

Part IV. Chapter XXXX.

MINIATURE SATYAGRAHA

Though I took part in the War as a matter of duty, as luck would have it, I was not only unable directly to participate in it, but was actually compelled to offer what may be called miniature Satyagraha even at that critical juncture.

I have already said that an officer was appointed to be in charge of our training, as soon as our names were approved and enlisted. We were all under the im-

pression that this Commanding Officer was to be our chief only so far as technical matters were concerned, and that in all other matters I was the head of our Corps which was directly responsible to me in matters of internal discipline; that is to say, the Commanding Officer had to deal with the Corps through me. But from the first the officer left us under no such delusion.

Mr. Sorabji Adajania was a shrewd man. He warned me. 'Beware of this man,' he said. 'He seems inclined to lord it over us. We will have none of his orders. We are prepared to look upon him as our instructor. But the youngsters he has appointed to instruct us also feel as though they had come as our masters.'

These youngsters were Oxford students who had come to instruct us and whom the Commanding Officer had appointed to be our section leaders.

I also had not failed to notice the high-handedness of the Commanding Officer, but I asked Sorabji not to be anxious and tried to pacify him. But he was not the man to be easily convinced.

'You are too trusting. These people deceive you with wretched words, and when at last you see through them, you will ask us to resort to Satyagraha and so come to grief and bring us all to grief along with you,' said he with a smile.

'What else but grief can you hope to come to by having cast in your lot with me?' said I. 'A Satyagrahi is born to be deceived. Let the Commanding Officer deceive us. Have I not told you times without number that ultimately a deceiver deceives himself?'

Sorabji gave a loud laugh. 'Well, then, said he, 'continue to be deceived. You will some day meet your death in Satyagraha and drag poor mortals like me behind you.'

These words put me in mind of what the late Miss Emily Hobhouse wrote to me with regard to Non-cooperation: 'I should not be surprised if one of these days you have to go to the gallows for the sake of truth. May God show you the right path and protect you.'

The talk with Sorabji took place just after the appointment of the Commanding Officer. In a very few days our relations reached the breaking point. I had hardly regained my strength after the fourteen days' fast, when I began to take part in the drill, often walking to the appointed place about two miles from home. This gave me pleurisy and laid me prostrate. In this condition I had to go week-end camping. Whilst the others stayed there, I returned home. It was here that an occasion arose for Satyagraha.

The Commanding Officer began to exercise his authority somewhat freely. He gave us clearly to understand that he was our head in all matters, military and non-military, giving us at the same time a state of his authority. Sorabji hurried to me. He was not at all prepared to put up with this high-handedness. He said: 'We must have all orders through you. We are still in the training camp and all sorts of absurd orders are being issued. Invidious distinctions are made between ourselves and those youths who have been appointed to instruct us. We must have it out with the Commanding Officer, otherwise we shall not be able to go on any longer. The Indian students and others who have joined our Corps are not going to abide by any absurd orders. In a cause which has been taken up for the sake of self-respect, it is unthinkable to put up with loss of it.'

I approached the Commanding Officer and drew his attention to the complaints I had received. He wrote asking me to set out the complaints in writing, at the same time asking me 'to impress upon those who complain that the proper direction in which to make complaints is to me through their section commanders, now appointed, who will inform me through the instructors.'

To this I replied saying that I claimed no authority, that in the military sense I was no more than any other private, but that I had believed that as Chairman of the

Volunteer Corps, I would unofficially be allowed to act as their representative. I also set out the grievances and requests that had been brought to my notice, namely, that grievous dissatisfaction had been caused by the appointment of section leaders without reference to the feeling of the members of the Corps; that they be recalled, and the Corps be invited to elect section leaders, subject to the Commander's approval.

This did not appeal to the Commanding Officer who said it was repugnant to all military discipline that the section leaders should be elected by the Corps, and that the recall of appointments already made would be subversive of all discipline.

So we held a meeting and decided upon withdrawal, I brought home to the members the serious consequences of Satyagraha. But a very large majority voted for the resolution which was to the effect that unless the appointments of Corporals already made were recalled and the members of the Corps given an opportunity of electing their own Corporals, the members would be obliged to abstain from further drilling and week-end camping.

I then addressed a letter to the Commanding Officer telling him what a severe disappointment to me his letter rejecting my suggestion had been. I assured him that I was not fond of any exercise of authority and that I was most anxious to serve. I also drew his attention to a precedent. I pointed out that although I occupied no official rank in the South African Indian Ambulance Corps, at the time of the Boer War, there was never a hitch between Colonel Gallwey and the Corps, and the Colonel never took a step without reference to me with a view to ascertain the wishes of the Corps. I also enclosed a copy of the resolution we had passed the previous evening.

This had no good effect on the Officer who felt that the meeting and the resolution were a grave breach of discipline.

Hereupon I addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for India acquainting him with all the facts and enclosing a copy of the resolution. He replied explaining that conditions in South Africa were different, and drawing my attention to the fact that under the rules the section commanders were appointed by the Commanding Officer, but assuring me that in future when appointing section commanders, the Commanding Officer would consider my recommendations.

A good deal of correspondence passed between us after this, but I do not want to prolong the bitter tale. Suffice it to say that my experience was of a piece with the experiences we daily have in India. What with threats and what with adroitness the Commanding Officer succeeded in creating a division in our Corps. Some of those who had voted for the resolution yielded to the Commander's threats or persuasions and went back on their promise.

About this time an unexpectedly large contingent of wounded soldiers arrived at the Netley Hospital and the services of our Corps were requisitioned. Those whom the Commanding Officer could persuade went to Netley. The others refused to go. I was on my back, but was in communication with the members of the Corps. Mr. Roberts, the Under-secretary of State, honoured me with many a call during those days. He insisted on my persuading the others to serve. He suggested that they should form a separate Corps, and that at the Netley Hospital they could be responsible only to the Commanding Officer there, so that there would be no question of loss of self-respect and Government would be placated, and at the same time helpful service would be rendered to the large number of wounded received at the hospital. This suggestion appealed both to my companions and to me with the result that those who had stayed away also went to Netley.

Only I remained away, lying on my back and making the best of a bad job.

True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most forcible light for convincing and persuading men.

Speak as you mean, do as you profess, and perform what you promise.