

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

THE scholars of the Girls' High School at Potchefstroom recently innocently attended a lecture by Mr. Sastri. According to certain members of the governing body of the School, however, they had committed a grievous crime in having done so. The following report from a Potchefstroom correspondent of a daily paper speaks for itself:—

The question of scholars of the Girls' High School attending the recent lecture here by Mr. Sastri was hotly debated at a meeting of the governing body of the school. Mr. Hubert van der Merwe asked who had given permission, and the chairman of the body, the Rev. W. B. Allcock replied that Mr. Sastri was regarded as an outstanding scholar of the day, and to miss the lecture would have been to forego an intellectual treat.

Mr. R. Amm was more or less satisfied at being told that the invitation came from a responsible local committee and not from an Indian association, but the headmistress, Miss S. Hambloch, said the source of the invitation would not have influenced her in granting permission.

The matter was dropped when Mr. Allcock said that if they as a Christian community were going into the colour question, they would have to go back to the beginning of things and rule out the founder of Christianity himself. Mr. Allcock said he was prepared to fight to the last ditch against the views enumerated by Mr. van der Merwe and Mr. Amm.

A vacation course for Government and Government-aided Indian school teachers is to be conducted by the Education Department at the Carlisle Street Government Indian School, Durban, from Jan. 14 to 18 inclusive. The course, which will only be held if a sufficient number of teachers come forward to take advantage of it, will be free, and rail warrants will be supplied to the teachers to enable them to travel to and from Durban. The subjects which compromise the course will be school organisation, arithmetic, and English. Dec. 20 has been announced as the last day for the receipt of applications for admission to the course.

According to a Notice published in the *Union Gazette* dated December 7, the Minister of Labour has referred objections raised to the proposals regarding wages, etc., of shop assistants in Durban and other areas published under Government Notice No. 1903 of the 5th October, 1928, to the Wage Board for its reconsideration. The Board announces that persons or organised bodies interested may make written or oral representations in respect of such objections. Any written representations must be in the hands of the registrar and secretary of the Wage Board, Pretoria, not later than January 14, 1929. A public sitting of the Board to hear oral representations will be held in the Union Buildings, Pretoria on January 15, commencing at 10-30 a. m.

A complaint that certain stall holders in the Indian market are exceeding the bounds of their legitimate trade by retailing groceries, has been lodged with the Town Council by the Durban Retail Grocers'

Association. The Association holds that this practice constitutes an infringement of the conditions under which the stalls are leased. The Market Master, in reporting on this matter, advised that these stall holders recently considerably increased their stocks of groceries, despite repeated warnings. The offenders were subsequently advised that unless they ceased selling groceries their tenancies would be terminated. Following on this the Stall-holders' Association put forward a plea for permission to continue the sales, urging that these have been carried on in the market since its inception, and that this business has received the sanction of the Corporation. These contentions are contradicted by the Borough Market Master. The stall holders concerned have offered to pay an increased rental if granted permission to continue the sale of groceries. The matter has been referred to the markets committee for a recommendation on the policy to be followed.

Grahamstown British Indian Association passed the following resolution at its meeting held on the 2nd instant:—

"This meeting of the B. I. A. hereby places on record its profound sense of sorrow and regret at the untimely demise of India's Nationalist leader, Lala Lajpat Rai, and joins with all India in its grief over this National loss."

The fifth H. Y. M. A. Bazaar and Industrial Show, in aid of H. Y. M. A. Tamil School Fund, will be held in the H. Y. M. A. Hall, Maritzburg, on Dingaan's Day, Monday, 17th December, 1928, commencing at 9 a. m.

INDIAN HOUSING

THE evidence led before the recent enquiry by the Central Housing Board into the sanitary and housing conditions of the Indian community in and around Durban, and the considered statement submitted to that Board by the Natal Indian Congress, bring out and emphasise certain points. Durban and peri-Durban are really a single unit, considered from the economic, sanitary, and health points of view. And the Indian is an integral part of the scheme. The great majority of Indians living in the peri-Durban area contribute directly or indirectly, but withal intimately, to Durban's wealth and cater to its wants. They work, earn and spend in Durban, though they live in the peri-Durban area. Durban has, therefore, a responsibility for their civic welfare. And yet, in the past, Durban would not recognise it. Its one obsession was to drive the Indian out of the Borough regardless of consequences. It secured powers to insert anti-Asiatic clauses in the sales of municipal land, but had to promise that some land at least would be made available for Indians. But that was not done. What were the results of this repressive policy? Indians, who refused to be driven out of the Borough, fearfully overcrowded their present accommodation; and those, the poorer, for whom no

housing scheme was thought of by the Corporation, shifted to the outskirts of the Borough and sprawled about just as they liked without guidance or help. It is small wonder that the housing and sanitary conditions under which Indians live are far from satisfactory. The European was right in objecting to these conditions. He, however, did not recognise that they were not entirely due to the fault of the Indian, that he had a great share in bringing them about and it would not do for him now to turn round and swear at the Indian.

The old policy has produced two evils—overcrowding within the Borough and bad housing without. How is the first to be remedied? The Corporation's solution is that Indians should go out of the Borough and build an Indian village on the land bought for the purpose by the Corporation at Cato Manor. The Indians object to this on the ground that it spells segregation, and cuts across the Capetown Agreement, which, if it did anything, abandoned segregation. Secondly, they apprehend that worse slums would be created. The Asiatic Enquiry Commission of 1921 described vividly the wretched conditions to which a segregated and disfranchised community is consigned. It will not be helping Indians to come up to western standards by segregating them, and they have been told to come up to those standards if they are to remain in this country and be acceptable to it. It will not be playing the game by putting obstacles in the way of their doing so.

The real and only remedy for overcrowding is to provide facilities, if only partial, for expansion within the Borough itself. The Congress statement draws attention to land available and suitable for Indian housing in the Borough. We are of opinion that the Corporation should redeem its promise, and release some land within the Borough for Indian housing. There are three classes of people requiring different kinds of facilities. There are the richer classes who can afford to purchase land at municipal auctions, and put up houses. Then there are the middle classes, who would require cheap and long term loans to purchase land and build thereon. Then there are the poorer classes, who are ineligible for loans, and for whom the Corporation itself will have to build tenements or small cottages, and either let them on rent or sell them on the instalment system.

Outside the Borough the problem is one of bad housing. The richer people can take care of themselves. But the poorer require assistance. As is only to be expected, the evidence showed that the Indian free-holder housed himself much better than the lease-holder, though far below the acceptable standard. The free-holders can be helped by loans to improve their housing. But the most difficult class to help is the lease-holder, the wage-earner who leases a small bit of land and puts up a tin shanty on it, or the small agriculturist who leases land and erects a tin shelter. This class is perhaps the worst-housed, and unless it is helped, there will be no getting rid of the evil. No solution to this has, however, been offered by the Congress or by the other witnesses. The Housing Act limits the Government housing loans to the putting up of houses and does not permit of their being used for purchase of land. So that, the local authorities cannot buy land from such loans and put up houses for the poor. We trust that the Board will suggest some solution to this problem. It may be that the local authorities will have to raise loans in the open market for purchase of land and seek Government loans for building houses, or lease land for long terms and build thereon.

It is, however, doubtful if houses can be built, the economic rate of which will be within the reach of the poorer classes of Indians. That brings us to the bed-rock consideration, the low wages of Indians. Unless their economic position is considerably improved, it is futile to expect them to live up to western standards.

In any efforts to improve Indian housing conditions, it is absolutely necessary to ensure the full and hearty co-operation of the Indian community. It is a thousand pities that the relations between some health boards and their Indian constituents have not been cordial. Informal advisory Indian committees exist, but they have no statutory power. With wise restraint, the Congress has only asked that these bodies be made statutory and given the right to be consulted. The proposal is eminently reasonable. Diseases and epidemics are no respectors of persons or boundaries, and if only the health of the Europeans both within and without the Borough is to be safeguarded, it is essential that Indians should co-operate; and that is best secured by giving them opportunities to influence the decisions of the health boards.

The chief cause of Indian antagonism to the health boards seems to be that the rates are levied at a flat rate instead of being based on valuations. It is true the preparation of valuation rolls is costly, but that is certainly no excuse for levying flat rates which press so heavily on the poorer sections. The sooner the rates system is rationalised, the better.

There can be no doubt that the improvement in Indian housing will cost a great deal of money, and the £50,000 now placed at the disposal of the Durban Corporation is but a flea-bite. What is wanted is a carefully thought out policy and a programme spread over a number of years. But money alone is not enough. A better and more sympathetic understanding of the needs and circumstances of the Indian people is essential, a real change of heart, for which Mr. Sastri has so eloquently and so convincingly pleaded.

Indians And The Municipal Franchise

Mr. S. R. Naidoo (Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress Maritzburg branch) writes as follows in the *Natal Witness* dated December 8:—

The Honourable G. A. Natesan of Madras is not unknown to the Indian community in South Africa. He is the Editor of that excellent magazine *The Indian Review*. He takes a keen and unflinching interest in the problems of Indians overseas, and the problem of Indians in South Africa is nearer to his heart than any others. He is a member of the Legislative Council, and represented India on the Empire Parliamentary Delegation in Canada at Ottawa recently.

Reviewing the position and the status of Indians in South Africa at a gathering in Ottawa he pleaded, in a well reasoned and vigorous speech, for equitable treatment of the Indians here. He was full of praise of the conciliatory work of Mr. Sastri in the Union and attributed the change of atmosphere to the working of the Capetown Agreement. He is reported to have said that the Indians in the Cape Province enjoyed both Municipal and Parliamentary franchise; the Indians in the Transvaal were excluded from both; and the Indians in Natal have been excluded from the Parliamentary franchise which they once enjoyed, but exercised Municipal franchise. His last reference to the exercise of Municipal franchise by Natal Indians is incorrect.

In order to understand how the Indians were dispossessed of this right it becomes necessary to go into the past and review the situation.

From the time municipalities and local boards were created, the Indians in common with others, possessed the municipal vote on property and rental qualifications. If they owned rateable property to the value of £50, or if they paid a gross annual rental of £10, they were entitled to be placed on the roll. This position continued until the year 1924, when the Boroughs Ordinance No. 19 of 1924 was passed. To the qualifications laid down it added a new clause in these terms: Every person, male or female, who being a male is entitled to be registered as a Parliamentary voter, or being a female, would be entitled to be so registered if she was a male, shall be entitled to be enrolled as a burgess and to vote at the election of councillors for such ward as aforesaid, subject to the disqualifications hereinafter stated."

A proviso which immediately comes after this clause reads as follows:

"Provided, however, that no person who, at the first day of July 1924, was enrolled as a burgess of any borough shall be disqualified for or disentitled to such enrolment in that borough merely by reason of not being a British subject or for non-compliance with the foregoing provision in regard to Parliamentary qualifications."

The effect of the new clause adding a further qualification is this: A person possessing a property and rental qualifications should also be a person qualified to be registered as a Parliamentary voter, and that those who were already on the roll at the first day of July 1924, were allowed to remain on the roll. Now the implication of the additional qualification is this: As Indians were excluded from parliamentary franchise, they were *ipso facto* debarred from claiming municipal franchise, although they are otherwise qualified as property owners and renters of property. It is well to remember that Indians were excluded from possessing the parliamentary vote in 1896.

When Indians realised the move that was made to deprive them of the municipal franchise they protested, appealed to the Provincial Council, and strongly opposed a vital change in the constitution of a municipality, whose avowed aim was to deny the municipal franchise to Indians, notwithstanding the fact that they were owners of rateable property and taxpayers. These proved of no avail. They went on a reputation and interviewed the Cabinet Ministers. There too they were unsuccessful. A test case was thereafter brought on the grounds that the change was class legislation, it differentiated on colour, and that it was not within the powers of a Provincial Council to make such a fundamental change which affected the Indians as a whole. Both the Supreme Court of Natal and the Appellate Court gave ruling against the contention of the Indians.

It is difficult to understand the motive underlying this change, unless it be that the Indians were placing their names on the roll, and voted at municipal elections. They thus evinced a keen interest in municipal affairs, and their main interest centred round the neglected condition of their locality, their streets and the insufficiency of lighting. But this was not to be. And they have been dispossessed of the right to call themselves as burgesses, regardless of the fact that they own properties to a considerable value and pay rates.

If we assume that this was due to the intensity of climax to which the Indian problem reached then it is safe to assume that now the Indian Agreement is recognised to be a document of national importance, and is reckoned to pave the way for a solution of the Indian problem as far as it goes at present, it would be an act of justice on the part of the authorities to restore the municipal vote to the Indian.

The first step that should be taken by the Indian community is to address a petition to the Provincial Council in the matter.

Housing Of Indians

Central Housing Board's Inquiry

Natal Indian Congress Statement

The following is the full text of the statement submitted by the Natal Indian Congress, as representing the Indian community of Natal, to the Central Housing Board with regard to its inquiry into the sanitary and housing conditions of Indians in and around Durban:—

Sirs,—As promised at the inquiry at Durban on the 24th ulto., we, the undersigned, on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress, beg to submit herewith our observations and suggestions in regard to the sanitary and housing conditions of the Indian community in Durban and in the peri-Durban area.

Before we deal with the subject of your enquiry we beg to point out that owing to the economic conditions that affect the majority of the Indians who live in these areas, consequent upon the lack of facilities for proper training to qualify themselves in the various industrial and commercial pursuits in which they are employed, their earning power is consequently very low and this, undoubtedly, prevents them from improving the conditions under which they live, however much they may wish to do so. The remedy, therefore, lies in the amelioration of these economic conditions, thus increasing their earning power, when they will readily adopt the principles of hygiene and healthy living.

The following information is of interest in dealing with the question. The population of the Borough of Durban, according to the Union census of 1921, was 64,251 out of which 16,893 were Indians. In the same year the Indians in the peri-Durban area numbered 30,918 as against 10,635 Europeans. It will, therefore, be found that while the Indians in Durban constitute about one third of the European population, the position in the districts is the reverse.

The Indians in and around Durban could be conveniently classed under the following main heads, viz:—Traders, artisans, petty gardeners and labourers. The majority are constituted of the last two classes whose income is from £2 to £5 per month. Artisans, cooks, waiters, clerks and salesmen earn from £5 to £10 per month while traders including hawkers of soft goods and others, earn, in most cases, slightly above these figures.

Sanitation

So far as the Municipality of Durban is concerned, the by-laws are sufficiently strict to ensure its burgesses, irrespective of race or colour, conforming to proper sanitary conditions. Any person disregarding these by-laws is severely dealt with by the authorities. But with regard to the peri-Durban area, the conditions, which you have no doubt witnessed, are very unsatisfactory. Any improvement in this respect could only be achieved by active co-operation of the various Health Boards with the Indians in their districts and by the gradual elimination of the hovels, shacks and barracks in which the very poor at present live.

Most of these insanitary and unsightly structures are put up on land owned by rich individuals and companies and let at a fairly high rental on an annual squatting lease. Owing to the insecurity of tenure, there is no incentive to improve their conditions; the conditions on freehold lands are, however, considerably better. It is felt in some quarters that Indians are averse to sanitary by-laws and therefore resist the activities of the Health Boards and refuse to pay taxes. This erroneous assumption is mainly due to ignorance and prejudice displayed by those who incessantly agitate against the Indians as being undesirable, but the fact that the Indians have no say whatever in the election of members on the Health Boards nor in their administration though they are called upon to pay more rates in proportion to the Europeans, and receiving in return little or no attention, is lost sight of. Any opposition to these Health Boards by the Indians has been only on these grounds. We will deal with these Health Boards and their methods of rating under a separate head.

Another factor which adds to the insanitary condition is the lack of proper attention to the roads in the Indian localities. The extension of water and electric light to these areas will materially improve these conditions. This is a matter which could be conveniently taken up by the Durban Corporation, if it is at all anxious to clean up the suburbs.

Housing Of Indians

Although the sanitary laws of the Borough of Durban are strictly enforced, the matter of overcrowding has not, for obvious reasons, been seriously taken up by the authorities. Statistics show that the number of occupants per room (all dwellings excluding compounds and locations) in all urban areas, is as follows:—

	Europeans.	Asiatics.	Bantu.	Other Coloureds.
Natal	1.07	2.44	2.11	1.79
Transvaal	1.33	2.10	2.65	2.30
Cape Province	1.14	1.89	2.64	2.50
In the Union	1.22	2.18	2.58	2.48

From the above it will be observed that in Natal the overcrowd-

ing of Asiatics is greater than any other community and much of it is in the peri-Durban areas.

There are some 800 acres of land in the Borough suitable for residential purposes but, owing to the anti-Asiatic policy pursued by the Town Council, no land has been set aside for Indian occupation, although about fourteen sales of residential sites by auction have taken place since the passing of the Durban Land Alienation Ordinance in 1922. The undertaking given by the Municipality to the Government at the time of the passing of the Ordinance that Asiatics will be given reasonable opportunity for securing adequate residential sites is a dead letter. The majority of the Indians reside in Wards 4 and 6 which may be termed "Indian Wards," and there are many sites contiguous to or adjoining Indian residences which could be used to relieve the overcrowding in these wards. Cheaper land for the poorer section of the community is available at the Eastern Vlei near the Umgeni River where some 400 to 500 houses could be conveniently put up, and could be either sold or let to Indians. A portion of the Vlei land near the Indian Barracks is suitable for the erection of tenements for the very poor and let at a small rental.

We append herewith a plan of Durban showing approximately the land which is unalienated and which could be used for Indian housing.

We beg to submit the following as a fair estimate of a housing scheme, without an anti-Asiatic clause, on the Eastern Vlei:—

Land one-tenth of an acre for each cottage value	£100
Building, 3 rooms & kitchen with E/Light & Sewerage	£300
	£400

If such a dwelling were let at £2 a month, and allowing a sum of £4 per annum for contingencies, it would bring in a return of 5% nett on the outlay or if sold at this figure with a deposit of 10% and the balance repayable in monthly instalments of say £4, the whole amount would be paid off in twelve years.

We are confident that a scheme on the above basis would prove successful, as at present most of those who live in the congested wards above mentioned pay a rental from £2 to £2 10s. per room per mensem.

The Durban Corporation, however, in accordance with its policy of keeping Indians out of the Borough, has acquired some 281 acres of land at Cato Manor for the sum of £52 10s. per acre. This land is about 2½ miles from Toll Gate by the Main Road and is intended for an Indian village. Whether it is possible to do so in terms of the Housing Act, we do not wish to discuss here.

We strongly feel however that any such scheme will tend to create slum conditions which are undesirable in view of the fact that the spirit and intention of the Capetown Agreement are gradually to uplift and westernise the Indian community. Moreover the creation of any such Indian village cannot but be regarded by the Indian community as a step towards segregation on racial grounds. No amount of camouflage on the part of the Durban Corporation would alter the character of the scheme. The Estates Manager in reporting to the Town Council on the 27th September 1923 in the matter of the Indian Settlement Scheme at Cato Manor made it clear by the following:—"The Block is well clear of the Borough boundary and I have no hesitation in reporting that the site is suited in every way for the creation of an Indian village settlement, where gradual segregation of the Indians from the Borough can be arrived at."

Our fear is, and it would be obvious from the above statement of the Estates Manager, that if an Indian village were established outside the Borough boundary, pressure to migrate there would be brought to bear on Indians living inside the Borough boundary in such a manner and to such an extent that segregation would be in effect not voluntary but compulsory. To this the Indian community is unitedly opposed. The fate of a segregated community when that community is also disenfranchised, has been eloquently and without exaggeration depicted in the report of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission of 1921, which we quote below:—

"Para. 121. The result of our visits of inspection to some of the locations or so-called bazaars at present set apart for Asiatics in the Transvaal was not such as to inspire confidence in a general policy of segregation. At Germiston Asiatics are prohibited by the terms of the titles to stands from residing or trading in the township. But the Municipality has established an Asiatic bazaar about a mile outside the town, in which there are a considerable number of Indian residents, principally hawkers, and a few shopkeepers. The business carried on is chiefly with the natives employed at the neighbouring mines and those who reside in the adjoining native location.

"This bazaar appeared to be in a very neglected and insanitary condition. The Indians residing in it complained that, as regards lighting, sanitary and other arrangements, their wants received little or no consideration from the Municipality.

"These complaints were fully confirmed by our inspection, in which we were accompanied by the Town Clerk and the Location Superintendent.

"Para. 122. At Boksburg there are two Asiatic bazaars. The newer one, though well arranged and laid out, has comparatively few occupants at present, owing to the difficulty experienced in inducing the inhabitants of the older bazaar to vacate their dwellings and move into the former, which is only a few hundred yards off. The result is that

the old location, which is the more populous, is in the same neglected and insanitary condition as that at Germiston.

"Para. 123. But our worst experience by far was at Vrededorp, a township close to Johannesburg and within its municipal limits, which was originally established by President Kruger for the benefit of indigent burghers of the Republic. There are two locations, one for Asiatics and the other for Natives. They adjoin one another, and are separated from the European portion of the town by a single street. But no effort seems to be made to keep the inhabitants of the two locations apart. We found as many Natives and Cape coloured people as Indians in the Asiatic location. The members of the Commission were guided through the location by the Municipal Medical Officer of Health, and made a close and thorough inspection of its conditions, which were found to be appalling. It is difficult to conceive of a worse slum existing in any part of the world. We found the inhabitants crowded and huddled together in small hovels amidst indescribable filth. And this was the state of things existing within the Municipality of Johannesburg, the wealthiest and most populous town in South Africa, and within a little more than a mile of its magnificent Town Hall.

"The majority of the inhabitants of this location appeared to be Asiatics of a low and degraded type, though we met with a few of the superior class who strongly resented the miserable conditions under which they had to live.

"The outbreak of bubonic plague in 1904 had its origin in the Vrededorp Asiatic location; but, although many of its tenements were destroyed at that time and have since been re-erected, there seems to be no improvement; and, according to the reports of the Medical Officer of Health, the plague continues to be a serious danger to the public health of Johannesburg. It is moreover said to be the favourite haunt of illicit liquor dealers and criminals of the worst character.

"Para. 124. In the circumstances it is not surprising to find the Indian community pointing to these so-called bazaars or locations as examples of what may be expected, if they are to be relegated to such places at the behest of Municipalities in the Transvaal.

"There can be no question that the inter-mingling of the residence of Asiatics or other coloured people with those of Europeans is very undesirable, and should, if possible, be avoided. It is repugnant to the feelings and instincts of even the poorer class of Europeans in this country; and there appears to be no desire on the part of Asiatics to reside amongst Europeans. They would prefer living amongst compatriots of their own class, if they were afforded the opportunity of establishing decent places of residence in some suitable locality. But those traders who have acquired some education, and have raised themselves in the social scale, particularly object to be driven into locations in which they would be mixed up with the lower classes of their own race."

Corporation Indian Employees

While we are discussing the question of housing within the Borough, we would earnestly beg to invite the attention of the Board to the admittedly deplorable conditions in which some of the Indian employees of the Durban Municipality are housed. Neither in respect of these employees nor in respect of Indian employees of the South African Railways and Harbours do we propose, in the course of this statement, to make any detailed criticism or recommendations, as we realise that by your inspection of their premises you are fully acquainted with their conditions. The responsibility in these cases rests with the employers who have an obligation both to the employees themselves and to the burgesses of Durban to see that their employees are properly housed.

Before closing the subject, however, we desire to point out that the question of housing these Indians in quarters appropriate to the standard of living which is required of them, is one of extreme urgency. The double-storeyed brick barracks that are now in course of erection to take the place of the row of wood and iron barracks for Municipal employees are somewhat better, but they leave much to be desired. And, generally, as regards the housing of Municipal and Railway employees, we would respectfully urge that the barracks system is not the most congenial for Indians with families; the type of building most suited is the semi-detached cottage with two or three rooms.

Peri-Durban Area

Bound up with the interests of Durban itself and in matters of housing and sanitation, most closely identified with those interests are the interests of the peri-Durban area,—the suburban tract which, commencing with Umgeni, Sea Cow Lake and Greenwood Park on the North, encircles the Borough boundary by way of Springfield, Overport, Sydenham, Mayville, Cato Manor, South Coast Junction, Clairwood, and Jacobs to Wentworth on the South. As already mentioned the Indian population of this suburban area was found to be over 38,000 at the census of 1921 or nearly three times the European population of the same area. In all these districts there are houses which compare very favourably with those in Durban. There are, however, as the Board would have seen, parts where the Indians are living in mere shanties and shacks which are admittedly a source of danger to the health not only of the suburbs but also of Durban itself, for epidemics are no respectors of statutory boundaries.

Much of the area impinging upon the Borough boundary is densely populated by the poorer type of Indian, depending on the housing in one way or another for his livelihood, travelling there daily to work or to market his produce. Some of these own small plots of land on which they have built and inhabit poorly constructed, unsightly and unsanitary structures of wood and iron, some own land but are not in a position to build, while others either occupy plots of land and/or houses as tenants on a monthly or yearly tenancy. Out of some 55,600 acres in the District of Durban, nearly 6,425 acres are owned by Indians.

Those who own small plots of land, with or without buildings, may be in a position to take advantage at once of a scheme of loans for building such as are provided for in Section 6 of the Housing Act. It is with this class, the small freeholder outside the Borough that a start should, in our opinion, be made in the matter of housing; while his need is not less than that of the poorer tenant we believe that he is in the main more deserving of encouragement and more likely, if helped, to lay the foundation of a general improvement.

We would suggest that a sum of money, distributed on the basis of the size of the Indian population or on some other basis connected with the state of their housing, be made over to the Health Boards to be advanced by them as loans to approved Indians who already own small plots in freehold.

We believe that such a scheme will not only be a beginning on the right lines but will also meet with a ready response from and be an encouragement to a large number of small Indian freeholders upon whom the Health Boards bring pressure to improve their housing conditions but who are at present unable through poverty to comply with such requirements.

We may suggest, if it is at all possible, to divert the £50,000 that has been allotted to the Durban Corporation for Indian housing, to the Health Boards to enable them to commence advancing immediately so that within the next four years a few hundred decent cottages may be erected in the peri-Durban area. This would be a sound policy as doing more to spread the example of a good type of housing for the poorer Indian than would any single scheme of housing at Cato Manor or within the Borough boundary.

We would reiterate that we are not opposed to the spending of money on Indian housing in Durban itself; we recommend the diversion to the peri-Durban area of the sum at present allocated to Indian Housing because we feel that from the point of view of housing and sanitation, Durban and Greater Durban form, in fact, if not in law, a single entity with identical interests, and, that being so, we feel that the common interests will best be served by the spending in the peri-Durban area, of such money as is at present available. A great part of the population of peri-Durban works in Durban, and when it contracts disease, it contracts it, as often as not, at its work in Durban. The responsibility for the health of the peri-Durban area cannot altogether be repudiated by Durban, just as the risks to Durban interest in the state of affairs obtaining in peri-Durban cannot be ignored by Durban. For these reasons we venture to hope that the Municipal Authorities and the Board will not misunderstand our proposal that the sum of £50,000 allocated to Indian housing be devoted to improving conditions outside the Borough. We believe this to be the best use to which the money could be put from the point of view alike of the Indian community of Greater Durban, and of the Borough of Durban itself.

Health Boards

Although the various Health Boards in the peri-Durban area have been in existence since the year 1926, practically nothing has been done to meet the danger arising from the insanitary and unhealthy conditions in which people live in these districts. It was only recently that we learnt for the first time that a Health Board (that of the South Coast Junction area) had been giving attention to the question of sanitation.

We would say, however, that the all-important subject of sanitation, is one in which for success, co-operation is essential between the Boards and their Indian population. For reasons already stated we fear that friction rather than co-operation has ruled in the past. The Boards complain that the Indian does not pay the rates; the Indian complains that he gets nothing in return for the rates which he pays and has no say in the matter of spending the money. Our fear is that this state of unsatisfactory affairs is likely to continue so long as the Indian community have no effective voice in the management of local affairs. It will not, we believe, be disputed that if the Indian is to be induced to conform (as we think he ought to conform) to stringent sanitary regulations, it is essential that the authorities who are to make and enforce these regulations should at least know the Indian's wishes, should understand his limitations and respect his interests. We do not conceal from the Board that the position can never be wholly satisfactory until the Indian in the suburbs enjoys representation on these Health Boards, preferably on the same terms as the European. This is not possible under the present law and we realise that in the present state of public opinion a common franchise in the Health Board areas for Indians and European,—even based on a high educational test qualification as would save the European voter from the risk of being swamped,—is impracticable, but must remain an ideal to be achieved, we hope, in the not too distant

future. We further realise that for the present the Indian must be content with the advisory committee system. Advisory Committees of Indians at present exist but they are not expressly provided for by law. It is not therefore surprising that they are not consulted nor their advice given due consideration. For these advisory committees to function properly we consider that the first essential is that they should be properly organised. The Local Urban Areas Administration Ordinance (Natal Ordinance No. 4 of 1926) lays down a somewhat elaborate procedure for the constitution and periodical re-election of Health Boards. We should like to see a similar, if simplified, procedure laid down and adopted for the constitution and periodical re-election of the parallel bodies, the Indian advisory committees. The replacement of the present haphazard system by a more formal procedure ensuring, as far as possible, that the advisory committee really represented the local Indian population, could not but react favourably upon the status of the advisory committee themselves. Further, to ensure that the advice tendered by an Indian advisory committee be not lightly set aside, we would recommend that the Health Board be required to report to the Provincial Administration all cases in which the Health Board rejected the advice formally tendered by its Indian advisory committee, and that the Administration be empowered either to remit the matter to the Board for further consideration or to over-ride the Board. In these ways we think that much could be done to make the Indian advisory committee a living and useful body through whom the co-operation of the Indian community in matters of sanitation and housing could be procured. We attach great importance to this aspect of the Board's inquiry; the question of the establishment of Indian advisory committee was a matter specially particularised in the Capetown Agreement as calling for investigation, and we trust that the Board will make definite recommendations on the subject.

With regard to the levying of rates by the Health Boards, which is based on a flat rate, we consider that this method is most unjust and inequitable. For instance, a person owning a house of four rooms valued at say £1000 pays the same amount in rates as a person who owns a far inferior house of the same number of rooms. In this respect the Indian being the poorer is hard hit and has to bear the brunt of the inequity. The only equitable way and one which prevails in all civilized countries would be to levy rates by valuation and the cost of such valuation although heavy, will be fully met by the greater amount of rates that could be raised by this method.

We also wish to draw the Board's attention to the exorbitant and usurious interest charged on arrears rates; and again the poor Indian who is unable to pay on the due date has to suffer and in some cases sell out to pay his obligations to the Health Board. We trust the Housing Board will be pleased to recommend a reduction of the interest charged on overdue rates which would be fair and reasonable.

Summary

In summarising our observations and suggestions, we submit:—

1. That the rating by the Health Boards in the peri-Durban area be based on a valuation of the property.
2. That the rate of interest charged by the Health Boards on unpaid rates be considerably reduced.
3. That representation on the Health Boards be given to the Indians, failing which, Indian Advisory Committees be created and given official recognition.
4. That the £50,000 now allotted to the Durban Corporation for Indian Housing be diverted to the Health Boards so that they may loan to approved owners of building sites in their districts for housing purpose.
5. If the diversion of the above sum is not possible, then a sum of money be distributed to the Health Boards for the purpose above described.
6. That the Durban Corporation be requested to put up land contiguous to or adjoining Indian owned properties in Wards 4 and 6 for sale for housing purposes.
7. That the Durban Corporation be requested to build Cottages of two and three rooms on the eastern Vlei near Umgeni for poor Indians and either sell or let them on reasonable terms.

In conclusion, we are pleased to learn that the present inquiry is a result of the Agreement arrived at between the Government of India and the Government of the Union of South Africa at Capetown last year. We trust that you will be pleased to give due consideration to our representations on the matter, and desire to express our grateful thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Board for the opportunity afforded us to tender evidence before it, while sitting in Durban and for presenting the case of the Indians in this Statement. We beg to remain, Sirs, Your Obedient Servants,

SORABJEE KUSTOMJEE,
President.

A. I. KAJEE
P. R. PAIHER,
Joint Hon. Secretaries.

Confession of faults makes half amends. Denying; a fault doubles it.

He who takes the best care of to-day has the least fear of tomorrow.

Popularizing The M. K. Gandhi Library

Prizes To Students for Highest Attendance

The following is a copy of a circular letter posted to the Durban local and suburban schools by the M. K. Gandhi Library Committee:—

It is announced that the M. K. Gandhi Library and Parsee Rustomjee Hall Committee has decided to give nine prizes to students for the highest attendance and good conduct at the Library from the 1st December 1928 to 15th August 1929.

These prizes are open to all students from Standard 3 to Matriculation classes and will be divided as follows:—

Six prizes to the boys attending the Town schools and three prizes to those attending the suburban schools.

It is also announced that weekly prizes, in the form of back numbers of illustrated periodicals, will be given to boys attending the Library six days in the week during the school vacation.

A special table is set aside for the use of teachers with weekly periodicals such as the Practical Infant Teacher, The Schoolmaster, The Schoolmistress, Teachers Times and several other papers which will be of great assistance and benefit to those in the profession.

It is asked of the Headmasters of the various schools to request the members of their staff and the scholars to visit the Library more often and to take full advantage of the opportunity and facilities offered to them.

The Hon. Mr. Natesan In Canada

(Continued from page 370)

In the sessions of the Imperial Conference and of the League of Nations, some of my countrymen have distinguished themselves to a remarkable degree, and one I may refer to by name, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, whose character, ability and remarkable power of eloquence have won for him the admiration of some of the best British statesmen, and to-day he is in South Africa, acting as an ambassador of peace in handling the delicate and complicated question of the rights of the Indians domiciled there. In the Central Legislature, in the Municipal Corporations of our great cities and in the governing bodies of our Universities and in many other institutions—I speak from personal knowledge—Indians of all classes and creeds and Europeans have been working together, and one of them, Sir Darcy Lindsay is here. No doubt, we have our differences and our quarrels, but which institution is there in the world which is free from them? Indeed, these seem to be the common heritage of all mankind. In the world of letters and in the field of science, we can point with pride to Tagore, the poet, and Jagadish Chandra Bose, the scientist, who has astonished the scientific world with his marvellous discoveries and researches in regard to plants.

But the activities of the nation have not stopped with these. For over half-a century, several Protestant reformist movements and organisations like the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Servants of India Society, the Seva Sadan, the Indian Social Reform Movement, and the Depressed Classes Mission have been each in its own way carrying on active propaganda and beneficent work. The one common aim, the common purpose underlying the work of all these movements and organisations, is the improvement of the conditions of the people at large, the emancipation of

the individual, however poor and humble he may be, so that he may be enabled to rise to the full height of his manhood; and let me assure you, that in this great and noble endeavour, men and women of the highest classes have thrown themselves heart and soul.

Let me at this stage state at once that my object is not to present the picture of the bright side only. I shall be false to myself and to you if I leave any such impression. Nobody is more keenly alive than myself to our many defects and shortcomings. We have done many things which we ought not to have done. We have not always been keenly alive to all our responsibilities. We realise fully that only 7 per cent of our population is literate. In this and in some other respects the fault has not been entirely ours. I may mention one of the finest and noblest of our citizens, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who urged Government to introduce free elementary education, died broken-hearted. I have within the time of my disposal endeavoured to tell you that with all our sins of omission and commission and despite the disadvantages and handicaps incidental to the rule of one people over another, we have done something to our credit. It is because we lack the opportunities and facilities which are necessary for our fuller growth, we have been claiming to become the masters of our own house-hold. We have been, in short, demanding self-government. We want to be in our own country, what you Canadians are in yours and the people of other Colonies are in theirs. This cry for self-government, I assure you, is not a new cry. It is as old as a gift of Britain, but one which we are entitled to, which is due to us, indeed long overdue. We claim it as our birthright, the birthright of every British subject. We have been, in the gatherings of the Parliamentary Association, hearing almost incessantly that the British Empire stands for justice, equality and freedom for all. You, Mr. Premier, laid stress on the fact that the British can maintain their position only if they adhere to this ideal. I ask you to translate this into action in regard to my country. Remember, we ask for no favour but what is due to us and promised to us by a succession of great statesmen beginning from Malcolm and Elphinstone in the early part of the last century and repeatedly ratified by promises and proclamations. My Lord Peel, I am speaking about this with some warmth, because one of the members of our delegation went out of his way yesterday in his speech and declared that Great Britain would be glad to give India the gift of self-government, but she was staying her hand for our sake so that it may not prove to be the poisoned cup. You must not forget that when the Great War broke out, my country supplied nearly a million and a half for the fight, and some of them perished in fields thousands and thousands of miles away from the land of their birth. We contributed too from our impoverished exchequer two millions sterling. We did all this and more, because we thought it was a just war, a war fought for the overthrow of autocracies, a war fought for the right of "self-determination." Our ears are still ringing with the high-sounding declarations and proclamations of those days. Britishers who talk in these days of the gift of self-government for India and delaying it for our sake would do well to remember what Mr. Lloyd George said about the Irish demand for self-government. "It is something which has to do with the pride and self-respect of the people." The late Bonar Law made the following remarkable pronouncement in regard to the same question:—"I think very often, a bad form of government will work infinitely better than a much better system without that consent and good will."

The truth of this was well recognised by one of your great liberal statesmen, the late Sir Henry

Campbell Bannerman when he proclaimed: "Good government could never be a substitute for self-government." You have seen the wisdom of the policy in relation of South Africa.

If you look at the constitution of the Empire Parliamentary Association, you will find it is composed of three classes of members:—

(1) those that have responsible government and Dominion status;

(2) those who have responsible government without Dominion status;

(3) those who have no responsible government, and this refers to India.

It is time, high time, this incongruity, this anomaly, is removed.

Remove it not for our sake, but for the sake of the British Empire, and, if I may add, for the sake of humanity as well. I say, humanity as well, for we believe that India has a mission to fulfil in this world. Remember in the morning of the world, before many of the present day powerful nations had not even been born, before any one talked of the League of Nations, World Peace and the Parliament of Man, it was the sages of my land, who sang in rapturous tones, in the beautiful hymn of the Upanishads, proclaiming, for all time to come, the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

India asks for nothing more, nothing less. We want the opportunity to work out our own destiny and to translate into practice the message of peace and goodwill to all proclaimed thousands and thousands of years ago.—*Concluded.*

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part IV Chapter XLII.

TREATMENT OF PLEURISY

The persistence of pleurisy caused some anxiety but I knew that the cure lay not in taking medicine but in dietetic changes assisted by external remedies.

I called in Dr. Allinson, of vegetarian fame, who treated diseases by dietetic modifications and whom I had met in 1890. He thoroughly overhauled me. I explained to him how I had pledged myself not to take milk. He cheered me up and said: "You need not take milk. In fact I want you to do without any fat for some days." He then advised me to live on plain brown bread, raw vegetables such as beet, radish, onion and other tubers and greens, and also fresh fruit, mainly oranges. The vegetables were not to be cooked but merely grated fine, if I could not masticate them.

I adopted this for about three days, but raw vegetables did not quite suit me. My body was not in a condition to enable me to do full justice to the experiment. I was nervous about taking raw vegetables.

Dr. Allinson also advised me to keep all the win-lows of my room open for the whole twenty-four hours, bathe in tepid water, have an oil massage on the affected parts and walk in the open for fifteen to thirty minutes. I liked all these suggestions.

My room had French windows which if kept wide open would let in the rain. The fanlight could not be opened. I therefore got the glass broken, so as to let in fresh air and I partially opened the windows in a manner not to let in rain.

All these measures somewhat improved my health, but did not completely cure me.

Lady Cecilia Roberts occasionally called on me. We became friends. She wanted very much to persuade me to take milk. But as I was unyielding, she hunted about for a substitute for milk. Some friend suggested to her masticated milk, assuring her

quite unknowingly that it was absolutely free from milk, and that it was a chemical preparation with all the properties of milk. Lady Cecilia, I knew, had a great regard for my religious scruples, and so I implicitly trusted her. I dissolved the powder in water and took it only to find that it tasted just like milk. I read the label on the bottle, to find only too late, that it was a preparation of milk. So I gave it up.

I informed Lady Cecilia about the discovery, asking her not to worry over it. She came post-haste to me to say how sorry she was. Her friend had not read the label at all. I begged her not to be anxious and expressed my regret that I could not avail myself of the thing she had procured with so much trouble. I also assured her that I did not at all feel upset or guilty over having taken milk under a misapprehension.

I must skip over many other sweet reminiscences of my contact with Lady Cecilia. I could think of many friends who had been a source of great comfort to me in the midst of trials and disappointments. One who has faith reads in them the merciful providence of God who thus sweetens sorrow itself.

Dr. Allinson, when he next called, relaxed his restrictions and permitted me to have groundnut butter or olive oil for the sake of fat, and to take the vegetables, cooked if I chose, with rice. These changes were quite welcome, but they were far from giving me a complete cure. Very careful nursing was still necessary and I was obliged to keep mostly in bed.

Dr. Mehta occasionally looked in to examine me, and held out a standing offer to cure me if I would only listen to his advice.

Whilst things were going on in this way, Mr. Roberts one day came to see me and urged me very strongly to go home. "You cannot possibly go to Netley in this condition. There is still severer cold ahead of us. I would strongly advise you to get back to India for it is only there that you can be completely cured. If, after your recovery, you should find the War still going on, you will have many opportunities there of rendering help. As it is, I do not regard what you have already done as by any means a mean contribution."

I accepted his advice and began to make preparations for returning to India.

EDICTAL CITATION

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DURBAN HELD AT DURBAN

Between AMURTHAM No. 39590, Free Indian
Woman of Durban, Plaintiff,

and
MUNUSAMY No. 47132, Free Indian, Defendant
whose present address is unknown to Plaintiff.

To the above named Defendant:

Take Notice that a Summons has been issued against you in this Court by AMURTHAM of Durban for divorce, a vinculo, matrimonii, on the grounds of malicious desertion and costs of suit and that an order has been made that the publication of notice of such summons shall be deemed to be good and sufficient service of the summons on you. You are required to enter an appearance to the Summons on or before the 9th day of January 1929; and if you do not do so Judgment may be given against you in your absence.

Dated at Durban this 12th day of December 1928.

L. BESTER

Clerk of the Court.

JAS. W. GODFREY

Plaintiff's Attorney

437 Smith Street, Durban.