

# Indian Opinion

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## Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15th, 1908.

### A Set-Back?

THE stupid assault committed on Messrs. Essop Mia, Naidoo and Gandhi, while they were on their way to the Registration Office to register, has temporarily checked Indian progress. The Indians in the Transvaal seemed to be gaining in internal peace and nobility of character. We are satisfied that the assault was the work of a few misguided and fanatical Pathans. Mr. Gandhi's refusal to prosecute will break the force of the Pathan fury and the affair should be forgotten as a passing though painful incident of a historical campaign. It would have been wondrous if it had remained free from untoward events.

The assault, however, does but show that the leaders have really been much more moderate than the rank and file and that they have hitherto given a constitutional shape to the Indian indignation roused over the now almost defunct Asiatic Act.

Pathan fury has raged round the ten finger prints. Nor is it surprising. To the vast majority of Indians finger prints were the grossest embodiment of the law. Much argument and eloquence were centred on them. It was shown, as Lord Elgin has now admitted, that they had criminal associations. Many Asiatics could not

think of the Act without the finger prints.

But it was hoped that finger prints voluntarily and in a modified form given would not cause any trouble. Under the voluntary offer they have lost their racial application, but are to be applied for identifying those who could not be otherwise identified. Moreover, they lose their sting in the Transvaal because they are made of general application under the Immigration Act.

It was, therefore, the duty of Indian leaders to bear down ignorant opposition and to prevail upon the community to give their finger prints. In spite of the assault, Mr. Gandhi insisted on giving his finger prints and the other leaders have done likewise. The leaders have, therefore, done all they could. And the Government have responded by making the option of giving two thumb impressions more general. After all, thumb prints are enough for identification. The assault, then, has served its purpose. Those who would lead public opinion must be prepared to suffer. Theirs must ever be a crown of thorns.

THE QUESTION WAS PUT IN THE House of Commons

**The Old Story** recently as to the number of prosecutions on permit charges against Indians in the Transvaal. The official reply was that there were some 1500. It would almost seem as though all these prosecutions were of a most serious order, but it is curious to note that more than one-third of these took place within a period of 3½ months, extending from November 1902 to February 1903, and that the balance of less than two-thirds had been spread over a period of 4½ years. Of all these prosecutions the great bulk were against Asiatics who attempted to enter the Colony without permits.

These men were successfully prevented from doing so, having been prosecuted and ordered to leave the Colony. But it may be added that very many people came to the Transvaal without permits under the *bona fide* impression that no permits were required, and, as a matter of fact, at a certain period of 1902-3 there was free entry into the Transvaal of Asiatics. It must also be stated that extremely few prosecutions have been brought against Asiatics for using forged permits in any way and not a single one for forging permits. Obviously, therefore, the delinquency was a very trivial one, and in no way demonstrates that there has ever been a vast undetected influx of Asiatics unlawfully entering the Transvaal.

THE WHOLE INDIAN COMMUNITY OF South Africa owes

**Christian Charity** a very deep debt of gratitude to the Rev. Mr. J. J. Doke and his wife. These generous-hearted people have exhibited the Christian virtues in a manner that must have been a source of pride and joy to everyone of the Christian faith. They have gone out of their way to minister to Mr. Gandhi's comfort. They have nursed him in sickness, after having previously encouraged him in health. British Indians should hold before their eyes constantly the splendid example of charity, humility, and goodness of heart exhibited by Mr. and Mrs. Doke, and should regard them as exponents of all that is best in European and Christian thought and feeling. We are sure that work such as that so nobly and so humbly done by these two noble-hearted people will do more than anything else to bring the two races together on a common basis of human sympathy and brotherly love.

### Mr. Gandhi's Letter to the Press

The following has been sent to the Transvaal Press:

Johannesburg,

10th February, 1908.

My dear Friends,—I am well in the brotherly and sisterly hands of Mr. and Mrs. Doke. I hope to take up my duty shortly.

Those who have committed the act did not know what they were doing. They thought that I was doing what was wrong. They have had their redress in the only manner they know. I therefore request that no steps be taken against them.

Seeing that the assault was committed by a Mahomedan or Mahomedans, the Hindus might probably feel hurt. If so, they would put themselves in the wrong before the world and their Maker. Rather let the blood spilt to-day cement the two Communities indissolubly—such is my heartfelt prayer. May God grant it.

Assault or no assault, my advice remains the same. The large majority of Asiatics ought to give finger prints. Those who have real conscientious scruples will be exempted by the Government. To ask for more would be to show ourselves as children.

The spirit of passive resistance rightly understood should make the people fear none and nothing, but God—no cowardly fear, therefore, should deter the vast majority of sober-minded Indians from doing their duty. I am, of course, in favour of repeal of

the Act against voluntary registration having been given, it is the sacred duty of every good Indian to help the Government and the Colony to the uttermost.

I am,  
Your faithful friend and servant,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## The Beginning of Registration

### Mr. Gandhi and others Assaulted

#### A Cowardly Attack

[SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED]

Shortly after a quarter to ten on Monday morning, Mr. Gandhi with other leaders left his office to attend upon the Registrar of Asiatics at Von Brandis Square in order to make application for registration under the new voluntary arrangement. He was passing along Von Brandis Street, when, outside the premises of Messrs. Arnott & Gibson, not more than three minutes' walk from the Registration Office some 8 Panjabis and Pathans accosted Mr. Essop Mia, the Chairman of the Association, and Mr. Gandhi, inquiring where they intended to go. Upon it being explained to them that the leaders were going to the Registration office to make application for registration, the further question was put as to the manner in which they intended to register. The answer was that they intended to give ten finger impressions. If, however, any man had conscientious objections to giving ten finger impressions, he need only give an impression of the two thumbs, making, at the same time, a statement as to the nature of his objection. Apparently, the reply was not satisfactory, for one Pathan named Meer Allam Khan raised a heavy stick which he was carrying and struck Mr. Gandhi a terrific blow aimed with the intention of killing him on the spot. The stick missed the spinal cord, fortunately, but felled Mr. Gandhi to the ground senseless. Mr. Gandhi in falling struck his head against a jagged stone, with the result that his upper lip and cheek were badly lacerated and a tooth loosened, whilst his forehead just above the eye struck another stone, and a third stone just missed the eye itself. Whilst on the ground, several of the Pathans dealt terrible blows upon Mr. Gandhi's body, one of the men being armed with an iron rod. Mr. Thambi Naidoo and Mr. Essop Mia hastily intervened, but Mr. Essop Mia was soon put out of action by a blow upon the hand, which slightly injured the finger, and he thereupon hastened into Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's offices to seek help. Meanwhile, Mr. Thambi Naidoo engaged the attention of Meer Allam, who rained blow after blow upon him, which, fortunately, Naidoo was able to ward off by means of an umbrella which he was carrying at the time. Eventually,

the umbrella broke, and one more blow felled Naidoo to the ground, his head being badly gashed, and, when he was on the ground, further blows were struck at him and he was considerably bruised. Assistance now came from Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's office and a number of Europeans, including constables, hastened to the scene and eventually put an end to the disturbance. All the Pathans with the exception of Meer Allam managed to escape. Meer Allam, however, was arrested, together with a certain Abdul Rahman, a Konkni, who had also taken part in the assault, and these men were detained by the police inside Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's offices and were eventually taken to Marshall Square where they awaited the formal charge to be laid against them. Meanwhile, Mr. Gandhi had issued definite instructions that he refused to prosecute under any circumstances. He was picked up by kind friends just as he was recovering consciousness and carried into Mr. J. C. Gibson's private office, where he lay prostrate on the floor whilst Dr. Thwaites, a medical man, was sent for. Dr. Thwaites immediately examined the wound and pronounced Mr. Gandhi out of any immediate danger. He also examined Mr. Thambi Naidoo's wound, and asked Mr. Naidoo to go off immediately to the hospital to be attended to. Mr. Naidoo was afterwards told that he would not be needed any longer at the hospital after he had been bandaged. Meanwhile the Rev. Mr. Doke, who had been talking with Mr. Polak at the Registration Office, awaiting Mr. Gandhi's arrival there, and who followed Mr. Polak hastily, on receipt of the news, suggested that Mr. Gandhi, instead of being taken to the hospital, should be taken to his own house where he could receive every attention, and the suggestion was immediately acted upon. Mr. Gandhi was accompanied to Mr. Doke's house by Mr. Doke himself, Mr. Chamney, who had been hastily summoned, and a constable. Mr. Gandhi, however, was very eager that there should be no delay in starting registration and he accordingly begged Mr. Chamney to allow him to register immediately and fulfil his promise. Mr. Chamney accordingly sent for one of his clerks who shortly afterwards arrived at 163 Smit Street. Mr. Doke's residence, and there Mr. Gandhi made formal application for registration, giving every particular required by the form which had been mutually agreed on between the leaders of the Indian community and Mr. Smuts which form, of course, makes no mention whatever of the Registration Act. Mr. Gandhi also, although in great pain, gave ten digit impressions and then the simultaneous impressions of the four digits of each hand, the object being to show that there was nothing degrading in the mere giving of finger-impressions, it

was a voluntary act and not under a degrading, humiliating Law like criminals. The Doctor now made preparation to make a further examination of Mr. Gandhi's injuries. Eventually, he said that the face and lip would have to be stitched up, and accordingly five stitches were put in, whilst the remaining injuries which were in the nature of severe bruises and contusions were bandaged.

This brutal attack effectively upset all the arrangements for registration. As if to intensify the nervousness and irritation, by a foolish error, some five receipt forms were issued by the registration officials on which the words "Registered under the Asiatic Law Amendment Act" had not been obliterated. The result was to immediately arouse the suspicions of the people, who thought they were being trapped into registering under the Law. There is no doubt that it will take considerable time to allay this uneasy feeling, and, since then, owing to another stupid mistake of a similar nature, it has been found necessary to re-print the form of receipt.

The Chinese have steadfastly refused to register under the new arrangement, as they feel that they have sworn an oath not to give ten finger impressions. They are quite willing to give two thumb impressions. They have not yet realised that nobody at all is obliged to give ten finger impressions, but that he should do it as an act of duty and wisdom, in view of the fact that upon the satisfactory carrying out of a sensible arrangement within the next three months will depend the new legislation that will be brought forward when Parliament meets.

There is no doubt that all along the community has led the Government to believe that there was no opposition to finger-prints as finger-prints, but only when it was a matter of compulsion under a Law that degraded, the associations being then criminal, and naturally the Government expect that the community as a whole, now that the element of compulsion has been removed, will not make any ado about a matter which is on the part of the community, an act of grace. Unfortunately, the Government is not itself free from blame, seeing that the officials have, in many instances, created the impression that the ten finger impressions were going to be compulsorily demanded, and one or two tactless mistakes have not made the position easier. Mr. Marris, the expert advisor from India, who has been brought to the Transvaal in order to thoroughly go into the question of the personnel of the Civil Service with a view to retrenchment, has been attached to the Registration Office in order to advise in cases of difficulty, owing to his expert knowledge of Indian peoples.

Registration is going on more satisfactory now; and, on Wednesday, many of the leaders made application and with them a large number of others—Hindus and Mahomedans

alike. The statement that there is a split between the two faiths is absolutely incorrect. No distinction is being made, for, as explained above, practically all the leaders—both Hindu and Mahomedan—registered by Wednesday afternoon. There is not likely to be any considerable hitch in the work of further registration, except through some mistake on the part of some officials. The community is realising the significance of the present proceedings, and is readily falling in with the settlement arrived at. Mr. Gandhi himself is progressing rapidly towards recovery. The wounds are healing well, the bruises are disappearing, and he is getting through a good deal of work. He has been staying with the Rev. Mr. Doke, who, with his wife, has ministered to his comfort in a truly Christian manner. Everything that was possible was done for Mr. Gandhi's convenience, and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Doke's house has been used more as a reception room than anything else, as Mr. Gandhi has been receiving a constant stream of visitors—both Indians and Europeans—since last Monday. A large number of telegrams of thanks was received by Mr. and Mrs. Doke from all parts of South Africa, and many messages of regret at what had happened were received by the British Indian Association.

Meer Allam Khan and Abdool Rahman, two of the men who assaulted Mr. Gandhi, the former being the chief assailant, were re-arrested on Tuesday afternoon by Supt. Vernon. They were brought before Mr. Jordan on Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

Mr. Van Diggelen and Mr. Reuter announced that they appeared for the defence. Mr. Reuter said he had been instructed by a friend of the accused, while Mr. Van Diggelen claimed to be instructed by the accused. The accused were given the choice of representatives, and Mr. Van Diggelen was selected. He at once asked for a remand.

The Public Prosecutor, while not objecting, said he had all his witnesses present and was prepared to go on.

The Magistrate remanded the accused till the 19th and fixed bail at £100.

### What the Papers Say

The *Transvaal Leader* comments as under:—

Among decent-minded people the brutal assault committed upon Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Naidoo yesterday will give rise to feelings of profound regret and sympathy, coupled with the hope that the victims will before long regain their health.

Apparently the assault took place before the work of registration was begun—or attempted to be begun. Had the affray occurred after instead of before the officials began their duties it seems likely that the Government would have had placed upon it, morally if not legally, a terrible re-

sponsibility. It seems incredible that, despite the Colonial Secretary's statement, that registration under the Act is no longer possible in view of the expiry of the period named in the notices, the receipts or certificates handed out to the few who registered yesterday stated that they had registered under the Act and agreed to abide by all its regulations! The effect upon a suspicious and excited people was to make them believe that their leaders or the Government, or both, were betraying them. It is impossible, within the limits of conventional language, to do justice to those responsible for this, equally with preceding blunders in connection with the administration of the Act. The Colonial Secretary is in a position in which he deserves the sympathy of all good men. He is standing and has from the first stood by his department. He is observing the best traditions of responsible government. The pity of it is that from the first there have been writ large in the Asiatic branch the marks of incompetence, if not worse. Every Indian race and caste represented here had been dealt with as if all races and castes were alike, which is the first thing an experienced Indian official would avoid. So soon as the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Gandhi came together an understanding was arrived at. Yet even after this plain hint the Asiatic branch continued along its blundering path. Residents who recall registration a few years ago will remember that the then officials asked for and obtained the co-operation of the Asiatic leaders, so that, instead of hordes of Asiatics lining the streets and crowding the vicinity of offices, as took place yesterday, a few men were brought at a time, and the work went off smoothly. The work of registration, which requires patience, tact and diplomacy, has from the first been carried out in the narrowest and harshest spirit. Instead of all mention of the Act which proved so unworkable being avoided, its name and its provisions are insisted upon at every point, and the whole conduct of the registration branch gives colour to the view that its desire is less to aid the Government and the Colony in finding a way out of an awkward and delicate situation than to show the Asiatics that it is their master.

What is wanted is that the official who is the eye and hand and brain of the Government at the present conjuncture should bring a fresh mind to bear upon a fresh situation. Of the ability to do this there is no indication. On the injustice to Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Naidoo and Mr. Leung Quinn which the present state of things involves it would be waste of words to comment at length. The Government has assisting it a high official of the Indian Government, Mr. Marris. Since it has involved no loss of dignity by other departments of the public service to have Mr. Marris enquire into their working and arrangements, may we ask if it is not

possible for the Government to call in Mr. Marris to preside at the work of registration, insisting upon the whole of the proceedings being transacted before his eyes—not in another room? And is it not the part of wisdom only to employ Europeans as registration officials? We are informed that the departure from this rule is strongly condemned by Anglo-Indians here. It is pretty evident that unless reform be promptly initiated in this work of registration, the well-meant efforts of the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Gandhi will go for little.

The *Star* says:

Possibly yesterday's fracas was simply an outburst of an ancient feud between the hills and the plains with an extra touch of jealousy that the whole credit of the passive resistance campaign had gone to the plains. It should be remembered too that the bearers, water-carriers, and camp-followers who came to South Africa with the British Army had a good deal less to gain by a peaceful settlement than the Bengali traders with their old established business. Though less prominent in controversy these men have always been in the forefront of the opposition to the Government, and Mr. Smuts has more than once made merry over their heroic offer to face death rather than registration. They seem to have been regarded from the first as a new and rather complicating factor in the situation by the main body of their compatriots, who could always count on their support while it was a question of fighting, but have very little in common with them now that the fight is over.

The fact that Mr. Gandhi's assailants only represent a small section of the Asiatic community means, we hope, that yesterday's occurrence will have no serious bearing on the success of Mr. Smuts' new experiment. The subsequent proceedings, however, seem to have revealed some minor defects in the arrangements which are not altogether creditable to the tact and foresight of the Asiatic Department. The form of receipt, for instance, a perfectly immaterial document, still bore the offensive stigma of "compulsion," and has had to be altered in ink since registration actually began. It is a trifling matter, no doubt; but the Government have had every reason to learn by this time that they are dealing with a suspicious and sensitive people, and it seems a pity that there should ever have been the smallest ground for the belief that Mr. Smuts' settlement was not being carried out in the broad spirit of toleration in which it was framed. We have no desire to offer advice to the experts in matters of detail. As we have always insisted, the precise form and manner of registration is a matter of profound indifference to the public, which is only concerned with its effect. So long as it is perfectly clear that the whole Asiatic com-

munity is being registered in such a way as to place an absolute bar to illicit immigration, no one is going to cavil at the Government's methods. But there has been so much friction and miscalculation and hurried change of front that the public is quite justified in coming to the conclusion that a certain amount at least of the recent trouble has been due to departmental carelessness, and it is satisfactory to know that Mr. Smuts is back in Pretoria and in close touch with the local officials. We learn, too, that in Pretoria the work of registration is proceeding smoothly and expeditiously, so that there is no reason to suppose that there is any general opposition to the settlement on the side of the Asiatics.

The *Rand Daily Mail* has the following:—

We feel sure that all the better class Asiatics in South Africa will sincerely regret the cowardly attack made upon Mr. Gandhi yesterday at the opening of the registration office. However much the European population may disagree with Mr. Gandhi's ideas, they recognise his absolute honesty of purpose and the fairness of his methods. When he came to a compromise with the Government it was hoped that the whole of the Indians would endorse his policy. It is now evident that a handful of fanatics insist upon standing out of an arrangement which the Asiatics generally have every reason to regard as reasonable and satisfactory. It is to be hoped, however, that the opposition is only confined to a few malcontents, and that the bulk of the Asiatics will quietly and quickly fulfil their part in the settlement which has been reached. The obstinate ones can be left alone to ultimately incur the penalties they will richly deserve.

### A Distinguished Coloured Student

Alain LeRoy Locke, the successful candidate at Harvard University for the Cecil Rhodes Oxford Scholarship, which knows nothing of race, color or nationality, and which is given for "scholarship, manliness and athletic ability," is one more example to be quoted in evidence of the brain-power that resides in the pure Negro race. He was born in 1885 and was consequently 22 years of age when he was graduated at Harvard, having taken the entire course in three years instead of the usual four, winning honours, through the various terms.

His great triumph in scholarship was the winning of the Bowdoin Scholarship in March. Even without having secured the Rhodes Oxford Scholarship of \$1,500 annually, this would have been in itself a rare achievement. It carries with it a medal and \$250 in money with the public presentation of his thesis. In

the Rhodes Scholarship he was one of the five out of fifty contestants.—*The American Missionary*.

### Asiatic Trading in Natal

#### The Working Man's Point of View

Mr. John Connolly, M.L.A., speaking at a Ladysmith public meeting on the Asiatic question said, while he fully sympathised with the white storekeepers, and while he believed that it was difficult, if not impossible, to compete with the Arabs, he felt that the question would have to be dealt with in a different manner from that which was being advocated on platforms throughout the Colony at the present moment. He was personally of opinion that it could only be settled by the strict enforcement of the present sanitary and other laws by which they had the power to eliminate to certain extent the elements of unfairness from the competition. The same thing was happening in regard to the skilled and semi-skilled workers in the Colony. Asiatics were everywhere taking the place of white artisans and clerks, and the result was that there were upwards of 1,000 white men out of employment in Durban to-day, ("Shame.") As a representative of the workers, he felt this keenly, but, at the same time, he believed that it would not be in accordance with our ideas of what was right or just to deny the coloured races an opportunity of raising themselves; but they were justified in protecting the interests of the white men. This could be done by laws regulating wages. If they believed that cheap labour was a curse, then they were justified in abolishing it. A resolution was brought forward at each of the two last sessions of Parliament, calling upon the Government to insert a fair-wage clause in their contracts. The proposal was rejected, but he was of opinion that it was the only possible way of dealing with the question. The first thing to be done, however, was to stop the further influx of Asiatics in any shape or form. Mr. Sparks had suggested that the white people should band themselves together and refuse to support the Indian trader. This was all very well, but as long as the Indian was free to compete with the white worker the latter should be allowed the right to choose what he considered the cheapest market. If competition was bad, they should abolish it, if possible; but, if not, it should be free to one side as well as to the other. If the white traders employed nothing but white men, he would certainly be in favour of supporting them, but as long as they took advantage of cheap labour, the workers were justified in taking advantage of the cheap market provided by the Arabs; that was, if it was cheap. Personally, he did not believe it was, as, although the prices charged by the Arab were certainly lower in many

cases, the article itself was usually of inferior quality. This, however, was a matter of opinion. If the working men believed that it was to his interest to deal with the Indians, he was not prepared to deny him the right to do so under present circumstances.—*Natal Mercury*.

### A Jewish View of the Indian Question

Writing under date of January 3, the London correspondent of the *S. A. Jewish Chronicle* remarks: A prominent part in the agitation here on behalf of the British Indians in the Transvaal is being taken by Mr. L. W. Ritch, who has written frequent letters to the Press on the subject, and whose remarks are treated by editors with a good deal of respect. Mr. Ritch is very well known to the Jewish community of Johannesburg, which he left for London two or three years ago. He is not the only a Jew of education who, in the Transvaal, found himself attracted by the high-spirited qualities of the religion of the Hindus, and was keenly touched by the injustices under which they seemed to labour. The letters of "Disgusted Jew," on the subject, in your journal some two years ago, will no doubt still be fresh in the memory of your readers. At that time there seemed to be a danger that Jews might be subjected to the same disabilities as the Indians, and, having to fight for their own hand, they could not afford to spend any sympathy on their neighbours. Now that they have happily secured their objects, they can lend an ear to the complaints of their dusky fellow-subjects, and may feel legitimate pride in the fact that a co-religionist is fighting so sturdily for what appears to him the cause of justice and humanity. Of course Jews, whether in England or in South Africa, are not bound to agree with Mr. Ritch, nor to wish him success in his endeavours. There is a good old saying that charity begins at home; it is possible that some Jews will feel that their own position would be endangered were the Indians to obtain all they ask for. There is every sign that this question will be brought into English politics before long. The public here, of course, cannot understand the antipathy of the white population of South Africa to the Indians, and no doubt public protests will soon be raised against, what seems to be here, their very harsh and unjust treatment. In that case it will probably be placed to the credit of the Jewish community of the Transvaal that a Jewish gentleman from Johannesburg has been foremost in championing the cause of the Indians. In this way Mr. Ritch's action may ultimately prove to the advantage of the Jews in the Transvaal, though at present the line he is taking up may seem alien from their interests.

## General Smuts' Apologia

### Speech at Richmond

Speaking at Richmond, Johannesburg, last week, General Smuts, in the course of a lengthy address, said:

There was one question on which he had come to speak especially, one that had been very much to the fore, especially in the last few days, and he thought this an appropriate occasion on which to review the whole position as it presented itself to-day. He referred to the Asiatic question. When the whole case was before them he was sure they would absolutely approve of their course, and would say that a statesmanlike thing had been done, and that it really was not possible for the Government to do anything save what it had done. This Asiatic question was no new thing. It started after the first war of independence. He need not remind them that the Transvaal had been very much—perhaps over—advertised, and so far back as 1881 the war of independence had carried their fame to the East, and people began to come in from India and other parts of the world. They wanted to put a stop to it, but the Government was unable to do so—they would know why that was. The Transvaal did not receive complete independence under the London Convention of 1881, but remained under the suzerainty of England, and the Indians who came here were very largely British subjects. When the Government of that day wanted to tackle the question the Home Government stepped in and said "These Indians are our subjects, and you have not, under the terms of the Convention, the power to put them over the border or keep them out of the country." The treatment of the question in the O.R.C. was quite different, but the O.R.C. was a sovereign independent State, and could take the Asiatic by the neck, and put him out—and keep him out, too. They had been very lax in the Transvaal in those days. He was talking recently to a shrewd old man, who told him that when the first coolies came here he spoke to a merchant, who said, "We have a lot of old stock we can't dispose of, and these coolies would carry it about the country for us and sell it to the Boers and Kaffirs." (Laughter.) Some years afterwards, in 1885, the question had assumed much larger proportions, and by that time the merchants had come to quite a different idea as to the uses of the coolies, and clamoured to have them regulated. The Volksraad passed the first law on the subject—a law very much like the law they had passed last year. They could not put the Indian out because the British Empire sat behind him, but the Government could say, "You will have to register, so that we can know who is in the country and who has the right to be here." Every Asiatic had to pay a certain fee—£25, he thought

it was, though later it was reduced to £3. The whole object was to legalise those who were here, and, if possible, to keep the others out; but this was impossible, and the Asiatics streamed into the country till before the war they had 10,000 or 12,000—he did not know the exact number—coolies in the Transvaal. When the war broke out many left the country and went away, and the Indian population decreased sensibly, while during the war matters were at a standstill except for some Indians coming in with the army. The Pathans and others were now very clamorous because they came in with the British army and seemed to wish to be taken into a field by himself (the speaker) and General Botha and shot dead. (Laughter.) They had not been fighters but camp followers.

#### AFTER THE WAR.

After the war—though Mr. Gandhi would not admit it—the stream of immigrants increased very largely, and it became certain that the registration certificates of the old Republic were forged, and as the terms were not very particular it was easy that they could be forged. The result was that thousands poured into the country, and the question assumed dangerous proportions. That was the state of affairs in 1906, when the Crown Colony Government felt it right to put a stop to it. Unless they were to follow the fatal course of Natal they had to make a firm stand, and a law was introduced into the Legislative Council and passed. It was identical with the terms of the law passed last year. Was the object to put the Asiatics over the border or expel them or put them in prison? No. Lord Selborne had a long correspondence with the British Government, and this was all in a Blue-book, from which they would see the reasons that actuated the late Government in passing the measure. The object was to register in the most unmistakable way, a way that could not be subject to fraud or forgery, to register every Asiatic who was legally entitled to be here. The object was indeed twofold—to give a definite status to the Indians who were here before the war and to see that the rest of Asia was kept out of the country. What happened? A deputation from the Indian community interviewed the British Government and made a great show of resistance, with the result that the Home Government would not advise His Majesty the King to assent to the law.

#### THE FIRST PARLIAMENT.

That was the state of affairs when the first Parliament of the Transvaal met in March last and that was the first law tackled; which was the same as that lying in the pigeon-holes of the Government at Home. The people of the Colony were anxious to have the measure assented to and the old law was approved of verbatim. If he had done it, provisions would have

been included in the law which, as a matter of fact, were not in it. It was unanimously approved of and on the unanimous vote of this Parliament it was assented to. But it was never intended to put people over the border or to put them in prison; the one object was the registration of those who were in the country so that the Government might keep others out.

#### ONLY 500 REGISTERED.

In what way did the law propose to do that? The law proposed that the Government should notify a period within which Asiatics in this country entitled to register should come forward and register themselves. There was no legal compulsion, but a period was fixed, and after that period had expired no registration could take place. The character of that law was that it should come into force once, and should have its effect once, and once for all. It was a very risky law, because if the Asiatics did not come forward during that period, registration became impossible, and the law became a dead letter. What happened? They put the law into force. Notice was given to Indians to register, and after the period had expired and the Indians had not registered, he added another month. He knew some of them blamed him for that; but he did it because he wanted to give the law and the Indian population in the country every chance. That month also expired, and no registrations took place. Of the 10,000 Indians in the country only 500 registered. Well that month also expired, and registration became impossible.

#### THREE ALTERNATIVES.

Three alternatives remained to the Government. They might have put them over the border; they could have sent them all to prison; or they could have gone to Parliament again, and said to Parliament, "You have passed a law which was in operation for a certain period; that period has passed, the virtue of the law has gone, and we want further powers." Take the first alternative—putting the Indians who refused to register over the border. It was not easy putting men over the border. It was not a question for the Transvaal alone, but an international question. As soon as the measure was carried Natal gave notice "No coolie to be sent to us." The Transvaal could not send them to the Orange River Colony; could not send them to Rhodesia; could not send them to the Cape. There was one way open, which might have been open for a brief period. That was Delagoa Bay; but no one knew at what date that gate also might have been closed. It was a very difficult international question—a question which would have given rise to serious complications—and the Government, after full consideration, decided that that course should not be adopted. The next alternative was to put the Indians in prison. He had sent every leader to prison, and hundreds more

and it had had no impression. The policy of imprisonment was a very good policy as a threat, but every sensible man knew it was a policy which could not be carried out in this country. He defied any Government to take 10,000 men by the collar and put them in prison here. There were not prisons enough.

#### A PHYSICAL AND MORAL IMPOSSIBILITY.

They would have to fill the country with prisons and that was a course which was not only physical but morally impossible. It was a moral impossibility, because he thought it would injure the reputation and prestige of the white people of the Transvaal if they had abused their enormous power they were wielding and put people who had conscientious objections in prison. Well then they were at a complete deadlock. It was not the first time that the Government and the people of this country were confronted with such a situation. It was exactly the same position as the old Republic Government had drifted to long years ago. The law of 1885 became a dead letter, and the result was that from 1885 to 1899 the Asiatics in this country were free people. They paid no licences and they did not bother about the laws. They were free people, and quite outside the law. That was the position 14 years ago, and that was the position into which they had drifted now. It was not by the fault of the Government, not by the fault of a party, but because a law had been passed that required the co-operation of the Indian population. They did not give the co-operation; but they simply stood aside. He was describing the danger that was ahead—the same danger that the Republican Government incurred. They knew that he had made some speeches in various parts of the country, and he had put forward an idea. He had said to the Indian population that they had behaved very badly, that they had defied the law of the land, and the Government was going to punish them—of course he had to say that—(laughter)—and they would all go to prison. He said further, however, that if they would come in a body and promise to register and fulfil the objects of the law, then he would advise the Government to reconsider the whole matter. He wanted, by hook or by crook, to carry out the object of that law. He held out the olive branch. He told them that the law had expired, but that the Government would take their voluntary registration and lay it before Parliament. That was the suggestion he threw out at the time. At several meetings he repeated that offer. The Indian leaders who were pining in prison saw the reasonableness of the attitude which he took up, and accepted his suggestion.

#### MR. GANDHI'S OFFER.

The result was that they came forward and they made an offer. They

wrote a letter from prison, in which they stated that on certain conditions they were prepared to come forward in a body—the whole Asiatic population of the Transvaal—and register within a limited period—within, say, three months. What were those conditions? They had been told by some papers on the Rand that the Government had climbed down, that a miserable fiasco had been made of this question. He wanted them to scrutinise very carefully the terms. The first was that the Asiatics wanted to register voluntarily, and not under the law. Well, that was the exact position. Voluntary registration was the only course open. So he (Mr. Smuts) said "All right," because there was nothing dishonourable to the Government in that; the offer of the Asiatics to register voluntarily reflected exactly the legal position today. Their second condition was that to certain Indians—men well known, educated, and who had property—a dispensation should be given from the system of finger-prints which was fixed in the regulations. He was rather astonished at this condition, he must say, because he was led to think, and he had some reason for thinking, that his predecessor, Mr. Duncan, was willing to make this concession when the original regulations were framed, and was willing to accept the signatures of Indians of learning, of property, and well-known public character. But he understood also that the Indians had refused that offer. If he had for a moment thought, when the original regulations were drafted, that this point would have satisfied the Indians, he would at once have conceded it. He did not want every man to put down ten fingers, because there were certain among them of whom it was unnecessary. So that when this condition was put to him he did not think anything of it. There was no trouble about it. He might say, in common fairness to the leaders of the Indian community who put forward this proposal, that they themselves from Mr. Gandhi downwards were not going to give their signatures, but were going to give their finger-prints. (Hear, hear.) It was fair to state that, otherwise the charge might be made that they had left the Indian population in the lurch by bargaining for themselves. And he thought they would ultimately find that when the registration was complete very few Indians had registered in any other way than by giving their finger-prints. (Applause.)

#### THE CLIMBING DOWN PROCESS.

Now he asked them who had given in? Who had climbed down? (A voice: "Both.") Well, listen. It was a small question. The position he took up before them, and in all his public life, was that the man who could not climb down was a very small and contemptible man. (Hear, hear.) If one had an object to achieve, whether they went this way or that

way, so long as they achieved it let them be satisfied. And if one made a mistake the sooner one climbed down the better. So he did not object to climbing down. People had often accused him of being rather given to the practice of climbing down, but he was also given to the practice of securing his object at the same time. They would remember that the position he took up from the start was that any means of identification for the Indian population of the Transvaal other than the 10 finger-prints was insufficient. He might have been wrong in that opinion, but he had gone on the advice of such experts as he could get. The Indians said they would never submit to that system; they said it was only used for criminals in India, and their opposition for a long time was entirely based on that point. They had now submitted—to their honour be it said—they had learned more wisdom, and had seen that it was not criminal and not dishonourable; they had recognised that it had been working here with the Chinese, in Natal with the indentured Indians, and that it was used in India in many instances. He did not object to climbing down when it was necessary, but his hearers would see that in this connection the Government had achieved what they had been contending for. The Indians' second contention was that they would never register until the law had been repealed, that the law was an indignity and disgrace. He had told them that the law would not be repealed so long as there was an Asiatic in the country who had not registered, and like wise men the leaders of the Indian community had waived the question of repeal. Until every Indian in the country had registered the law would not be repealed. They saw that the law which had been passed by two different Governments in the Transvaal had for its object to get the Indians to register effectively. Under the settlement which had been effected by the Government, that object would be achieved, and every Indian in the country would have to register himself. What could never be done by the Republican Government had now been done by a little give and take on both sides, and he thought the settlement was honourable to both sides. A member of the audience had asked him what about the Indians of the future. His reply was that the Indians of the future would never come here. They had passed two laws last session which aimed at the same object. One was to register all the Indians who were here legally; the other was to close the door finally on the others.

#### A DRASTIC MEASURE.

No Asiatic in future could come into this country unless he was a resident of the Transvaal before the war. The British Government had assented to this Immigration Law. He thought that it was the most

drastic Asiatic Law that had ever been passed in the British Empire, a law that completely and finally shut the door from India. No British Colony had such a law, and he was agreeably surprised that His Majesty's Government had not objected to it. All praise to the British Government. The British Government had behaved with the utmost correctness all through this most troublesome question. They never troubled the Government here; they knew that here the question was being dealt with as wisely and firmly as possible. The only communication that was received from the Home Government was that giving the details of the system of registration in India. The Indian question was an enormous question for the British Empire. They knew that they belonged—if he might say so without offence—to a largely black Empire. The majority of the people of the British Empire were not whites, but were coloured and blacks, and that was a fact they must never forget when they criticised the British Government, and blamed them for taking up the cudgels for the black and coloured people. Whilst he was praising the British Government, he wished to go a step further, and also praise the Progressive Party, who might have taken up the attitude of saying that the Government had made a muddle over the question, and would simply sit still and criticise. That was the position they could have taken up if they were small and petty, but they did not.

A STRONG GOVERNMENT.

He thought they would agree that if the Government had taken any other course than they had taken they would have made a great mistake. (Hear, hear.) A weak Government would have done otherwise, but when they went to Parliament three months hence they hoped to have the registration of every Asiatic in this country. They wanted to put that before Parliament, and to say, "This work has been done. You will ratify it if you will." In doing that he said they had done well, and deserved well of the country. This Indian question was in the hands of the people. The Government of the country ought to be fair, in spite of the colour of a man's skin. When a man had a vested right in the country, the Government of the country had to recognise that right. If they thought he was a pestilence, the matter was in their hands. They could buy from whom they liked, and do what they liked. He (Mr. Smuts) did not interfere with them. He did not incite them to boycott Indians. He gave them no advice. They knew what was best. But, as a Government, they had to hold the balance correctly between the two sections of the community, white or black, their party or the other party, and for the Transvaal Government to have wantonly oppressed a certain section of the population, or deprived it of its rights, would have been a criminal blunder,

and he was glad to say they had not committed that blunder. (Applause.) —Star.

Comments on Mr. Smuts' Speech

"Transvaal Leader"

On the question of the Asiatics the Colonial Secretary was careful to explain the Government policy at length. We do not see that any useful purpose was to be served by drawing the subject out, unless it were the educational effect upon the Vrededorp electorate. The position is clear, and the Government is well out of the fog where it spent so much time beating the air. We note with pleasure the manly attitude of General Smuts with reference to the climbing down question. It is not a matter of great importance where compromise entered, but it is worth hearing from the Colonial Secretary that "the position he took up before them and in all his public life was that the man who could not climb down was a very small and contemptible man. If one had an object to achieve, whether they went this way or that way, so long as they achieved it, let them be satisfied. And if one made a mistake, the sooner one climbed down the better."

"Star"

Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues have preserved an attitude of admirable reticence since they came out of prison a week ago. It is the best possible evidence that they have their followers completely in hand and that the whole Asiatic community will be legally registered within the allotted three months of grace. The white population, taken all through, has maintained an equally dignified reserve in circumstances which lent themselves to a kind of cheap recrimination; and has shown, far more conclusively than any unanimous vote of Parliament, that the policy underlying the Registration Act correctly represents the popular wish. We are most of us prepared, in fact, to recognise the established Asiatic community as a permanent element in the life of the Colony, but we are not prepared to see it increased by any further immigration. There are exceptions, of course. No white community can hope to emulate the marvellous solidarity of these Asiatics. There has been talk, for instance, in one or two places of indignation meetings to denounce the Government's clemency, and a few enthusiasts are banding themselves together to boycott the coolie trader. But these people only disapprove the settlement because they disapproved the real object of the law. They looked upon it as an ingenious method, which was very nearly successful, of getting rid of the Asiatic altogether, and are now casting about for a fresh method of achieving an object which was certainly never contemplated by the Government. They do not represent the bulk of white opinion, which was perfectly satisfied with the principles underlying the Registration Act, and is perfectly ready to back the Government in any method of administration which will secure them without unnecessary friction.

Nothing could have been in better taste than the studied courtesy of Mr. Smuts' references to the Asiatic leaders, and his frank tribute to the forbearance of the Imperial Government, and to the patriotic support of the Progressive Party. It was a peace-offering in every direction.

"Rand Daily Mail"

Now that seems to be an accurate summary of recent events. What it omits to state is that the conditions, which the Indian leaders accepted in prison, are practically the identical conditions they stated they were willing to accept certainly eight months

ago; and if Mr. Smuts was under a misapprehension on this point, then he must have been very badly advised and could not have consulted with his colleagues; for those conditions were set forth by a Committee of Indians in a letter to the Prime Minister dated May 16, 1907. With the best wish in the world, therefore, and whether Mr. Smuts was or was not aware of the position, it is difficult to describe the Government's action as anything else than a climb down; and the reason for the Colonial Secretary's defence of the man who indulges in that undignified proceeding is a little hard to understand, unless it was also intended to be a defence of himself and his colleagues. The Government is blamed not because it is thought to have failed in achieving its object; not merely because it has changed its views with a precipitation that naturally caused some surprise; certainly not for passing an injudicious bill, which was drafted by its predecessors, and assented to by all parties. It is blamed because, being entrusted with the administration of that Bill, it failed for ten months to realise that its provisions could not be enforced; because during that time, up to within a few days of the publication of the terms of the compromise, its attitude was one of inflexible determination to carry out the law at any price, and was hostile and even threatening towards the Asiatics; because, by its own actions and utterances, it made a change of front impossible without a serious loss of prestige, and therefore dangerous; because it persisted in obstinacy until the last moment, depriving compromise of all its dignity and endowing it with humiliation, for it was obvious that the Government's armoury was exhausted and no other course was open to it; because it failed to notify to the people of the Transvaal alterations, limitations, and suspensions of the Colony's laws, secretly made by desire of the Imperial Government, the while an attitude of unshakable firmness was preserved in public for the benefit of its supporters. That is the case against the Government concerning the handling of the Asiatic question, and nobody has yet attempted either a defence or an explanation.

At the time when the compromise was arranged, so far as we can see, there existed no single reason in its favour which did not exist ten months ago, which was not obvious to anybody five months ago. To assert that the Indian leaders gave their consent because they were pining in prison is evidently to assert that which is not the case. They accepted in prison precisely what they were willing to accept eight months before they ever went there. To justify the action of the Government Mr. Smuts will have to explain not merely the reasons which made compromise expedient, but why those reasons were ignored by the Government for so long, and why a line of action was persisted in which led the public to believe that the Government was completely master of the situation.

In our opinion it is essential that the Government's action should be publicly discussed and criticised; for it has been responsible for an administrative fiasco which it might be disastrous to see repeated. It has shown a lack of tact and foresight in this matter even greater than that for which it has occasionally been conspicuous in other matters. The impression, conveyed by the Colonial Secretary's speech, is that for ten months the Government has been playing a gigantic game of bluff; and if that is an undesirable impression for a Government to leave in the minds of a European population, it may be a disastrous one where Asiatics and natives are concerned.

Mr. Smuts may flatter himself that, in politics, courage is best displayed in retreat; but the people have a different way of looking at things, and they are apt to enquire whether it is of much use to exert themselves to-day to support the Government in maintaining a position which there is no guarantee will not be soon abandoned in a few months' time.

## The Press on the Transvaal Situation

*The Progressive Monthly* for February says :

The news that the Asiatic difficulty had been surmounted was received with general satisfaction by most of our members, although a few are somewhat disappointed with the terms of the agreement. We therefore think it as well to reiterate the exact position taken up by the Progressive Party in this matter. As will be seen from Sir George Farrar's letter to General Smuts, we, as a party, adhere strictly to the spirit of the law, which has ever received our support. We have never, in any way, changed our ground on this point, but we disclaim any responsibility for the regulations which have been the cause of the recent trouble, and which were drafted by the Government without any consultation with us. These regulations have proved ineffective, and the Government has found it necessary to withdraw the obnoxious clauses, in order that the law may be carried out.

When the Colonial Secretary found that he was in a difficulty regarding the alteration of the regulations, he appealed to us for our co-operation, and Sir George Farrar at once laid the matter before his party, with the result that the Colonial Secretary was enabled to cable to the Imperial Government that "the course was agreed to by both political parties."

From first to last we have declined to make party capital out of the Asiatic question. Our policy can be classed under four heads:—

(1) The restriction of further Asiatic immigration.

(2) The expulsion of those Asiatics, who are not legally entitled to be in the Colony.

(3) The due recognition of the rights of those Asiatics, who are legally entitled to be in the Colony.

(4) The safeguarding of Imperial interests, in so far as is consistent with the welfare of the white population of the Transvaal.

And in order to successfully carry out this policy, we have supported the Government in the present crisis. That the Government has blundered must be admitted by all, but as we state above, the responsibility for the regulations is theirs, and theirs alone.

In conclusion, we would point out to those of our members, who are in any way dissatisfied with the action taken by the Government, that the subject is one which must be regarded from the Imperial standpoint. Let them think for one moment how any ill-advised action on the part of the Transvaal might have affected the other parts of the British Dominion, and we feel sure that they will agree with us that the present settlement has been made in the true interest of the Empire, of which we are but a section.

*The Natal Mercury* of the 7th inst., under the heading "Patched or Settled?" says :

In the nature of the case, there could not be, as the result of what has occurred, a permanent adjustment of the relations between the Europeans and the Asiatics in the Colony. All that has been decided, in the compromise to which the Government and the Asiatic leaders have consented, is the broad principle upon which a solution is to be attained—the principle of respecting the rights and feelings of an unenfranchised section of the population, and paying regard to Imperial responsibilities. This double principle was placed in subordination when the Transvaal authorities framed the obnoxious regulations under the Registration and Restriction Acts. It has now been endorsed by the Transvaal Government. The immediate cause of trouble has, therefore, been removed; but in the further application of the principle embodied in the Transvaal Act, important adjustments will yet be made.

*The Christian Express* (Lovedale) writes as follows on the Indian question :

The question is full of difficulties. It may be a herald of the approaching combat between East and West, the outcome of a hourly antagonism. It may be the death knell of an Empire which attempts to give such widely different races the same privileges and the same responsibilities. But what is wanted above all else to solve the problem in its present form and to prepare for its appearance in the future is patience.

The law of self-preservation is as strong in nations as individuals, but in both cases there exists a higher law. The Dominion of Canada is threatened precisely as the Transvaal is threatened, and it is meeting the danger with statesmanlike dignity and praiseworthy self-control. Imperial interests do count for something still, and the problems of the Empire, affecting as they do each of the free nations which constitute it separately, may well be approached in a spirit of patience and in the strength that comes from a sense of justice.

## The Reservation in the Transvaal Constitution

Mr. Harold Cox on Imperial Responsibility

Mr. Harold Cox, M.P., writes as under to the *Spectator* (Jan. 18):—

I do not propose to tempt your patience with another long letter, but I should like to point out that in your note to my previous letter you appear to have overlooked the fact that special power was reserved to the Imperial Government to deal with such legislation as that which is the cause of the present trouble. Clause 39 of the Transvaal Constitution says:—"The governor shall reserve any law whereby persons not of European birth or descent may be subjected or made liable to any disabilities or restrictions to which persons of European birth or descent or not also subjected or made liable." The only conceivable purpose of making this reservation in the Constitution was to enable the Imperial Government to protect the unrepresented races in the Transvaal from unjust legislation at the hands of a Parliament elected solely by persons of European descent. If it was right to make the reservation, it is right to act upon it. The existence of the reservation transfers responsibility from the Transvaal Government to the Imperial Government,—from the white Colonists of the Transvaal to the people of Great Britain and Ireland. If the editor of the *Spectator* delegates certain duties to me, I am responsible for the way in which those duties are discharged; but if he reserves to himself the right to decide on a particular class of questions, he is responsible for his own decision, and he cannot evade responsibility by pleading that on other matters I had full authority.

The object of making this reservation in the Transvaal Constitution was twofold: first, to protect the interests of England; and secondly, to defend

the liberties of the Indians and natives. Upon the first point both Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Lyttelton have spoken with admirable clearness. In 1904 Mr. Lyttelton wrote: "His Majesty's Government hold that it is derogatory to national honour to impose on resident British subjects disabilities against which we had remonstrated, and to which even the law of the late South African Republic, rightly interpreted, did not subject them."

With regard to the second part, the defence of the liberties of Indians and natives, I find it hard to imagine any clearer case of Imperial responsibility. In spite of the admirable precedent of the Cape franchise, which is based on education and property instead of upon colour, we have established a colour line in the Constitution of the Transvaal. We have thus made it impossible for the coloured races to protect themselves by their votes. We have at the same time deprived them of that ultimate argument of the oppressed against the oppressor, the power of insurrection, for our armies render any effective insurrection of the coloured races impossible. We have thus set up a form of tyranny which I am inclined to believe is without precedent in history. We endow a small fraction of the population of the Transvaal with the sole power of making and administering the laws; we deprive the rest of the population of all power of armed resistance to injustice; and then we wash our hands of the results and talk of self-government.

## Correspondence

### A Letter of Thanks

The Editor, INDIAN OPINION.

Sir,—My fellow prisoners and I have been inundated with telegrams of congratulation on what the senders have considered a victory for the Indian cause. We can only consider it a victory for Truth. In any case may I on behalf of my associates and myself, through the columns of this journal, thank the numerous senders of wires and writers of letters for their kindly thought. It has not been possible to write to individuals for which omission, being unavoidable, I trust they will excuse us.

I hope and pray to the Almighty that, should the occasion arise again, we will all be prepared to undergo imprisonment or any other hardship—if such it may be called—for the sake of Truth, Honour and Self-respect.

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT SANCTIONED. London February 12. The Governor of British Columbia has assented to the Bill restricting Asiatic immigration passed by the House of Assembly. *Reuter*

## Mr. Kipling on Oriental Immigration

We take the following from the *Free Press News Bulletin*, Winnipeg:—

The theme of Rudyard Kipling's address to the Canadian Club, whose guest he was at a luncheon given in the railway committee room at the House of Commons to-day, was imperial, national and patriotic. Over three hundred gentlemen were at the tables. Mr. Hill, president of the club, presided with Mr. Kipling and Sir Wilfred Laurier to the right and Speaker Sutherland to the left. The other ministers present were Hon. W. S. Fielding, Hon. L. P. Brodeur, Hon. Wm. Patterson and Hon. Sydney Fisher.

Mr. Kipling was greeted with an ovation. In reply to this he said: "The welcome which you have given me includes all the men, not the mere writers and talkers, but the real men who have borne their share in the constructive work of our empire. I count it the greatest of my privileges to have known many such men, to have met them in the hour of their victory and to have seen them in the hour of their many defeats. Concerned they may be for the empire, but for themselves in no wise, dismayed. Whatever of good you may have found in certain aspects of my work I have learned not a little at the feet and by the side of these men, and very probably the welcome you have accorded me is proof of the success of their teachings.

"I wish that some of these men could have been with me on my recent wonderful trip through your Dominion, and they would have rejoiced as I rejoiced at the existence of an assured spirit of nationality without which the greatest country on the map can only be an ethnological museum. It is as impossible to consolidate and administer an empire out of a people who have no national spirit as it would to administer a big business through a board of young gentlemen under 21, who have never spent anything but their father's money. The ocean, it is said, can make a people of almost any tribe, but in your case, shall I say the antiseptic treatment of an all round salt water bath was denied.

"You have the most difficult task of all to search for your soul within sight and earshot of the crowd. This is not an easy task for the individual, for the nation it is especially hard. Canada has always bulked high in the imagination of the other members of the imperial family. The first need of a nation is its own national sport, the second is men, not merely hundreds of thousands of men, but millions of men, men able to fill up and make strong the land. Now this question of men is the very kernel of the whole thing. It is only human to desire that our land shall be filled by the increase of our own flesh and blood and that the

multiplying generations shall succeed in filling it without improvement from the outside. But we of the newer generation, we of the younger nation, as I say, we have neither the patience nor the time to wait on these slow methods. The world has filled up, is filling up and there are in the world a hundred nations that perhaps do not look upon us with the eyes of awe and reverence that we look upon ourselves. I know that many people consider it is wrong, almost wicked, to recognise a fact like that, but the worst use you can make of a fact is to deny it, but even if all the nations were to live together in universal love there is a law from which there is no escape, and that law says that if a nation holds territory or resources which she does not develop, these resources will be developed by other nations. The material result of that development may be splendid, but there is a danger in the process of that development, that the original genius and ideals of the nation may be distorted, debauched, and in the long run destroyed.

### Country Needs Men

"Our need is men. At this time there are not enough men in the land now to develop it even on the broader national lines. But the most important of all on which the future of the state is based, suffers throughout the Dominion for lack of adequate and honourable domestic help which shall release the mother of the family to her proper work. At every step of my trip through the Dominion, I have been struck by the strong persistent cry for more help—more people. At the same time I have been struck by the existence of certain forces which wish, or seem to wish, to deny that want. Let me give you an instance. When I was on the west coast the other day there came in a consignment of Hindus, and I was assured that their presence was not required and that they would add to the already large mass of unemployed in their streets. I did not see that large mass of unemployed, but I made it my business to talk to our fellow-subjects, and they told me that although they had been a few hours in port the majority had been already engaged to go to work at unskilled labour which the white man would not handle. There is no need that any white man should handle that type of labour. The white man is wanted, urgently wanted, in positions requiring skilled labour, to fill posts where he would oversee the unskilled labour of which I am told there are more posts than there are white men to fill them. (Cheers.) Therefore, gentlemen, I do not understand what I am given so often to understand, that the question before this country is the exclusion of certain forms of labour. I do not understand how the Dominion proposes to control the enormous oriental trade, and at the same time hold herself aloof from the Asiatic influx which is the natural concomitant of that trade. Above all,

I do not understand why, with all the white immigration of the mother land only to draw from why, with all these resources, the Dominion should fear or be represented as fearing the consequences of that influx.

As I said before, everywhere I was impressed by the cry for more men, for more people, for more labour. I was also impressed, as you realise I must have been impressed, by the existence of an organisation or organisations, with the evident desire to have a policy to exclude or to regulate to the point of exclusion all labour except what labour was lucky enough to be on the spot at the time. (Hear, hear.) This, I take it, is your problem. It is a problem that, in a measure, affects all.

Speaking for myself, I do not see how the existence of a desire to exclude all labour and the desire to regulate all labour to the point of exclusion can in the long run, lead to anything except to starve the body politic and fetter the mind of the nation. (Hear, hear.) Still less do I see how it can in any way help the interests of a nation which ultimately must assume nothing less than the very

### Headship of the Empire

as the Dominion eventually must do. (Cheers.) Truly as I believe that, deeply as I believe in your future, I cannot see that your destiny is anything lower than this. If for any reason or at the bidding of any section or sub-section of your community you lay the groundwork, in the fabric of your state, which is the reflex of your soul, you develop your state fabric on the line of a close and selfish corporation, that glory and leadership will pass from you to some other nation that deserves it better (Applause), and with the glory will go the power and with the power will pass the prosperity and with the prosperity will pass your freedom. You have now your own national spirit. Your first and last need is men, men of your own stock and ideals to develop and to fill your land that it may stand erect above the shadow of any fear from without or within. (Cheers.) Now there are certain things which a man must not do merely because it is quite possible for him to do them, there are certain things which a man must do precisely because it appears impossible that he should do them. (Cheers.) That objection lies a millionfold heavier on a nation, it is as a nation among nations that you stand to-day; it is as a great nation among great nations that you will be judged." (Loud and long continued cheering.)

### Tendered Vote of Thanks

Hon. Mr. Sutherland, speaker of the Commons, in proposing a vote of thanks, said that no one could glance over the extent and diversity of the resources of the Empire or recall its history without feeling a tremendous pride in the fact that he is a citizen of that Empire and without appreciating by the imperial sentiment of which

Mr. Kipling was so splendid an exponent.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier seconded the vote. The Premier said that the man whom they had assembled to honour was a man who did not think, speak or act as other men. His words, his thoughts, his acts, were all his own, and he did not borrow his ideas from any man. Sir Wilfrid spoke of the invigorating climate of the Canadian winter, avowing that "Our Lady of the Snows" shall always be proud of having deserved the compliment that Mr. Kipling paid her. Kipling had given expression to a true conception of the Empire and highest thought of statesmanship, when on an occasion which Canadians can never forget, he put these words into the mouth of the nation, "Daughter am I in my mother's house, but mistress in my own." He never agreed with those who reproached Mr. Kipling for that expression. If there was anything by which he wanted his country to live in the memory of the nations it was in the language stereotyped by Mr. Kipling, "Our Lady of the Snows." The Canadian winter was the glory of the Canadian people.

### Mr. Keir Hardie on the Indian Question

The *Natal Mercury* reporter secured an interview with Mr. Keir Hardie on his arrival in Durban on Tuesday last.

Inviting his attention to the topic of Asiatic restriction, the interviewer asked Mr. Hardie if he had formed any definite impressions as the result of his contact with opinions in Australia.

Mr. Hardie replied that the point of view in Australia was based upon the determination to make the land a white man's country, which, in his opinion, South Africa never could be, because of the natives. But, irrespective of the merits of the matter as between the two countries, his solution of the difficulty was to pay the black man equal wages with the white. "It is all a question of wages," Mr. Hardie said.

"There is the question of the Asiatic trader."

"Yes. I have noticed one thing, though, in the course of this Asiatic dispute. All the outcry against the Indian appears to have come from the European trader, because it has been his interest which is touched. There wouldn't have been half the fuss made about it if only the working man's interest had been affected."

"It is the working man who is making most of the complaint here. The working men, besides, are quite capable of looking after themselves."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so," Mr. Hardie rejoined.

In reply to further questions, Mr. Hardie said he considered such a means of restriction as he had suggested defensible, but he was against

prohibition. The Indian, as a British subject, had the right of entry into any part of the British Empire, not excepting England.

"You may be surprised to learn," Mr. Hardie remarked, "that when I was in Tokio I found the Japanese confronted with an immigration problem of somewhat the same kind as yours. There was a railway being constructed by contract, and the contractor was bringing in thousands of Chinese as labourers, because they would work for 75 per cent. of the wage demanded by the Japanese workmen. There was nothing in the contract to prevent it, and the authorities had to look on, powerless."

### Misunderstood

The Colonial Secretary asks us (*Star*) to correct a misapprehension which has arisen from his speech at Blaauwbank, as reported in the last edition of Monday's *Star*. Speaking on the Asiatic settlement, Mr. Smuts was made to say that

"The religious sentiment turned on a question which reflected upon their mother. They said that it was a difficult matter for them to say who their mother was, but I contend that it is a more difficult matter for them to say who their father was."

It was perhaps hardly surprising that such a remark should have produced a well-merited castigation in this morning's *Leader*. "Is it possible," asks our indignant contemporary, "that a Minister of the Crown spoke thus? And does he defend it?" Mr. Smuts's answer is that, so far from wishing to defend the remark, he never even made it. What he really said, we are told, was to the effect that.

"I cannot see what greater objection there is to giving the name of the mother than to giving the name of the father."

Naturally we accept Mr. Smuts's word for it.

## Late News

Johannesburg, Friday.

Registration is proceeding smoothly. On Monday there were 7, on Tuesday 20, on Wednesday 124, on Thursday 191, and until noon to-day 100. All classes were represented, more than 90 per cent. carefully giving 10 digits, Hindus and Mahomedans alike. Mr. Essop Mia gave 10 digits; his cook gave two thumb-prints only; similarly other cases. There is no question of compulsion.

Mr. Gandhi is progressing splendidly. He receives a large number of messages and visitors daily. Mr. Gandhi requests everybody to accept his grateful thanks; it is impossible to acknowledge each individually.

Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Doke have received telegrams of thanks from all Indian communities in South Africa and desire to thank the senders cordially.

## Indentured Indians in Natal

### Official Figures

The Secretary of the Indian Immigration Trust Board has kindly favoured us with the following details in regard to Indentured Indians:—

	Introduced.	Deaths.	Births.	Repatriated.
1900	5,052	1,030	1,504	817
1901	7,731	1,113	1,794	1,279
1902	6,491	1,583	2,351	1,487
1903	4,633	1,692	2,614	2,367
1904	7,669	1,602	2,700	2,362
1905	8,059	2,003	3,032	2,358
1906	12,014	2,611	2,657	3,152
1907	6,489	2,392	2,938	6,591
Total	58,138	14,026	19,590	20,413

### DURING 8 YEARS.

Introduced	58,138
Births	19,590
	77,728
Deduct:— Deaths	14,026
Repatriated	20,413
	34,439
Total increase in population	43,239

40% Women, 10% Children, 50% Men.

### RE-INDENTURES OF MALES

#### DURING 1907.

January	153
February	170
March	105
April	147
May	166
June	206
July	220
August	156
September	204
October	179
November	156
December	359

Total 2,221

### APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIANS.

General Farming and small works	per cent.	
Sugar Estates	25.5	6,789
Coal Mines	28.8	7,131
Tea Estates	11.5	2,960
N. G. Railways	7.4	1,729
Domestic service	5.0	1,238
Corporations	10.2	2,039
Brickyards, Stone Quarries, &c.	3.9	956
Wattle Plantations	3.0	742
Landing, & Shipping Cos., Forwarding Agents, &c.	2.4	608
	2.3	569
	100.0	24,761

Indentured	20,657
Re-indentured	4,104
	24,761