

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

MANY cases of distinct hardships felt under the Personal Tax by Indians have come to the notice of the Natal Indian Congress and some cases where prosecution had taken place were defended by Mr. J. W. Godfrey at the instance of the Congress. By consent cases were taken together and evidence was only led in the case against Harry Walter who had been out of employment for three years and had 16 persons in his household. The facts elicited were that from March this year no exemptions were granted to Indians whereas they were granted to Europeans. That while the principles indicated by the Administrator to Revenue Officers in determining whether a person may be considered to be indigent or not were applied in the case of Europeans Indians were told that no principles will apply but that they will have to pay the tax. Walter was convicted and ordered to come up for sentence if the tax was not paid within three months.

THE £1 Personal Tax is imposed under Ordinance No. 17 of 1928, as amended by Ordinance No. 17 of 1931, on every male person twenty-one years of age or over, and among the exempted persons are included those male adults certified as indigent by the Receiver of Revenue of the district. The Administrator in moving the second reading of the Ordinance in the Natal Provincial Council said:—

"Among those who were relieved of taxation under the existing law are a large number of Indians who thus escape contributing to the Provincial Exchequer, and in passing I may say that as a Native is called upon by Union Statute to pay £1 per annum, it is considered that it is only just that members of the Indian community should be called upon to pay a similar amount.

This will explain why no exemptions are granted to Indians. The Ordinance, though it is of general application, is purposely administered harshly in the case of Indians.

It will not be out of place here to quote from Mrs. Mabel Palmer's letter to our morning contemporary on the subject. Mrs. Palmer is a member of the Indo-European Council and takes a keen interest in the cause of the oppressed people.

"To begin with," says Mrs. Palmer, "the personal tax is a poll tax, payable by every adult male irrespective of his income. It is thus a heavier proportionate burden on the poor than on the rich. Many Indians make no more than £4 or £5 a month, and some even less, and thus a quarter of a man's income in one month may be taken in taxation. This is equivalent to a tax of £5 in the case of a European earning £20 a month. Can anyone believe that a personal tax of this amount could be imposed on poor Europeans without protest? But the poor Indians have no constitutional means of impressing their grievances on the authorities.....A tax of this sort is strongly to be condemned and would certainly never be imposed on a poor section of the community in an up-to-date modern nation.....Either the tax should be very small—say 5s. every six months—or it should not be imposed on persons below a definite limit of income.

"Again," Mrs. Palmer goes on further to say, "is sufficient allowance being made for the fact that Indians suffer from unemployment as much as Europeans, probably more, since there are fewer relieving agencies in their case? In the existing depression many Indian wage-earners have been thrown out of work. No statistics are available, since there are neither labour bureaux nor trade unions to which the bulk of Indians belong. But all the churches and charitable agencies which deal with Indians know of cases of pitiable

destitution and absolute starvation. These are not so frequent as they would otherwise be, because of the strength of the family tie. An Indian earning £5 a month will without hesitation take in an unemployed brother or cousin and his family, and maintain him for months. Is the personal tax being exacted from these unemployed Indians? If so, it is safe to say that where one very small income is supporting two and sometimes more adult men, the coin in which it is really being paid is the cold and hunger of little children, since to squeeze £1 in one sum out of an income of £5 a month, supporting eight or nine persons, can be raised in no other way!"

Mrs. Palmer has put the Indian case so strongly that any further comment on our part would be superfluous.

THE Durban Town Council agreed by an odd vote to hire out the Town Hall on Aug. 6 for the purpose of holding a non-European boxing contest for the light weight championship of the Union. An amendment, moved by Dr. H. E. Arbuckle and seconded by Mr. S. K. Elgie, that the application for the hall be turned down, was defeated by eight votes to seven, the vote of the Mayor, the Rev. A. Lamont, carrying the day.

WE congratulate the Mayor for his fair-mindedness in giving his casting vote in favour of justice which alone saved the situation. Surely the Town Hall will not be polluted by the presence of non-Europeans in it when the money derived from them in rates and taxes does not pollute the town treasury!

It is learnt with regret that the six teachers brought from India for staffing the Sastri College under three years' contract with the right of extension by the Natal Education Department for a further period of two years, have been notified that their services will terminate at the end of this year and they will then return to India. These teachers will be replaced by European graduates at a salary of £300 per annum whereas the former were given £400. They were given this high salary because it was felt that as they were not likely to settle permanently, they should be rewarded for being away from their homeland. No harm would have been done if the services of the present teachers would have been extended for another two years at least. As it is, the authorities are spending mighty little on Indian education and this is, we think, an uncalled for economy at the expense of Indians.

OWNERS of omnibuses and motor vehicles plying for hire should note that in terms of the Motor Car and Road Traffic Amendment Ordinance, promulgated in last Thursday's Natal Provincial Gazette, certificate of fitness in respect of each vehicle requires to be endorsed by the registrar by whom it was issued regarding the number of passengers which may be carried. Where such endorsement has not been made for the current year, as with taxis, this must be done within three weeks from the date of the start of the Ordinance. Failure to comply with this constitutes an offence.

THAT REUNION SCHEME

THE *Natal Advertiser* has in its issue of July 22, a leading article, reproduced in this issue, expressing much concern about unemployment among Indians and advising the Natal Indian Congress to take the opportunity offered to them to investigate the conditions in Reunion to see if Indians could not settle in that French Island and be happier than they are in the Union. This is about the third article by our contemporary offering us the pious suggestion that we should not miss a single opportunity of looking for a place outside the Union where our people could live in more congenial surroundings and enjoy full rights of citizenship which we cherish so much and which will for ever be denied us in South Africa. Our fight for our legitimate rights in this country as a self-respecting community, our contemporary suggests, is "fanatical pig-headedness" on our part; that "political nostrums will not find employment for the workless Indian to-day, they will not keep a roof over his head, they will not be food and drink for his wife and children." While the working class the world over is getting more and more enlightened our contemporary obviously holds a very low opinion about our working class and has no practical scheme to offer that would help to remove them from the mire of ignorance. "Among workers of this type," the paper says, "the family instincts and the urge to obtain the wherewithal to live predominate. Political desires and feelings regarding nationality and the rights of citizenship are almost embryonic. The chances are that if 2,000 of these men, workless at present and unable to provide even the simple necessities they require for a contented family life, are taken to Reunion and there find reasonably satisfactory conditions, that question of domicile will not arise. As the early Indians settled down among the canefields of Natal, so these will gradually strike their roots in the fertile soil of the French Province. So long as life flows smoothly on in the way to which they are accustomed they will care little whether the Union Jack, the South African flag or the Tricolour of France is flying from the Governor's residence." Throwing the responsibility on the Congress, our contemporary goes on further to say that, "on their decision may rest the question whether 2,000 of their poorer compatriots shall remain here in conditions which may approach actual starvation and by doing so maintain that somewhat uncertain "solidity" of the Indian political front, or whether they will find food, homes and employment in congenial surroundings elsewhere." Lastly the paper says that "only by a commonsense and practical approach to the bread-and-butter problems of their own people will the leaders of the Indians in South Africa gradually gain the confidence of the white population of the country, and so advance that political status which looms so large in their present day activities." If this is what the British intellect has to offer to us and if the British sense of fairplay and justice has reached such a low ebb, then well may the people living under the British rule say that they have lost all faith in that rule.

We are amazed that our contemporary has no fault to find with the present rule which is the real

cause of the distress among Indians. We are amazed that its British sense will not stir it to abhor the idea that a section of the country's population that has settled here for years, contributed very largely to its prosperity and in the majority of cases born and bred in the country under British rule should, in cold blood, be thrown into a foreign land and that this should not appear to it to be a cruel injustice! Whose is the grave responsibility, we would feign ask. Is it of the Congress or of the British rule? We came to this country as British subjects to a British Colony, and naturally expected to be protected under the British rule. And the only protection we find offered to us is to be coolly told to clear out and to go to a foreign country! We fear our contemporary is led away by the popular feeling. If it had the courage of its conviction it would certainly have directed its energies to guiding public opinion in the right direction as strongly as it seeks to guide us, in our opinion, in the wrong direction. If we desire to get out of this country we shall certainly require no coaxing. We shall do so of our own accord, and so long as India is there to receive us we need not look for another country. But we are protesting as a self-respecting community against the evils done to us in this country. The present policy of the Government, quite obviously, is to squeeze us out of the country, and we are painfully surprised to find that our contemporary is, consciously or unconsciously, subscribing to that policy. Our brethren are thrown out of work, almost every avenue whereby they could seek an honest livelihood is gradually being closed against them by subtle means. Our unemployed are not treated as a section of the population but are left uncared for. This is a state of affairs which does not speak well of any good government. Strong comment on this misrule would have been the proper thing on the part of our contemporary. But in that it has failed and has, on the contrary, thrown all the rebuke on our shoulders. We are blamed for our brethren being thrown on the streets and are told seemingly sympathetically that we are fools, that we should look to our bread and butter, and we are offered a colonisation scheme and a bonus if we would for goodness' sake relieve this country for ever of our burden! This is our position. We, however, wish to view it in this light: We are put to the test as to whether we are really a self-respecting community and are able to show our manhood or whether we are cowards enough to submit to the indignities we are subjected to and to sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. We must regretfully state that our contemporary's suggestion, however pious it may appear to be, does not appeal to us.

In so far as the Reunion scheme is concerned we do not think it is a matter in which we should get involved. Nor has South Africa the right to send Indians to that country. It could certainly enter into a contract with Reunion to supply it with labour generally if it so desires and in that case, it would be responsible for its nationals going to that country. But in the case of Indians the right channel to apply to would be the Government of India. We do not advise a single Indian to sell his birthright in this country and to go to Reunion.

Should anyone desire to go independently without losing his right of domicile in this country, he may certainly do so. We are opposed to the principle of the colonisation scheme as suggested in the Capetown Agreement and an acceptance on our part of the offer to investigate would amount to having accepted the principle of that scheme.

WELCOME TO THE NEW AGENT

BRE our next week's issue is out the new Agent of the Government of India will be amidst us. Kunvar Maharaj Singh is accompanied by Mrs. Maharaj Singh, their little daughter and Mrs. Maharaj Singh's half brother; We extend to them all a very cordial welcome to this sub-continent. Kunvar Maharaj Singh unfortunately comes at a time when the community is very much perturbed over the new anti-Asiatic legislation in the Transvaal. He comes in troublous times and however much we may wish him peace and happiness, for the present at least, we are afraid, he will have little of them. We do not anticipate it but there may be times when there may be a clash of opinions between the new Agent and the Indian community. We will expect in such times not a cold shoulder but forbearance, sympathy and guidance from the new Agent. We hope we will be able to look upon him not merely as a Government officer acting as a post office but as a true leader.

As for Mrs. Maharaj Singh she does not come to us a stranger. Indians in Durban at least had the pleasure of welcoming Mrs. Maharaj Singh some years back when she passed through on her return to India from England as Miss Maya Das. Mrs. Maharaj Singh is a graduate of the Cambridge University and we have no doubt her culture will be a boon to our womanhood in this country.

Kunvar Maharaj Singh has had a very brilliant career in the past and we fervently hope that his career in South Africa will be equally successful and that the stay of the Agent and his family in this country will be a very happy one. We once again heartily welcome them to these shores.

A NEW INDIAN BARRISTER

THE Transvaal Indians have had the pleasure of welcoming amongst them Mr. D. U. Mistry who, after qualifying himself as a barrister-at-law, has recently arrived from England. Mr. Mistry is the son of Mr. Ukabhai Mistry of Standerton. He entered the Transvaal with his father when he was twelve years of age and after obtaining his registration certificate returned to India for his studies. He took his B. A. degree at the Baroda College and in 1928 went to England to study law. Mr. Mistry is domiciled in the Transvaal and intends practising in Johannesburg. We heartily welcome Mr. Mistry and congratulate him on his success and wish him a very bright future.

Mr. Ukabhai Mistry is to be particularly congratulated for the pains he had to take to give his worthy son a high standard of education. The more men we have amongst us of higher qualifications the better it will be for the future of our people in this country. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the good example set by Mr. Ukabhai Mistry will be followed by many other parents.

Application For Municipal Vote Refused By Burgess Roll Revision Court

On the grounds that he was of Aryan stock, the descendants of whom were Anglo-Saxon, Mr. R. M. Naidoo claimed to have his name included in the Durban municipal voters' roll.

The application was refused by the Burgess Roll Revision Court, which sat in Durban's Magistrate Court. Mr. Maynard Page, the Chief Magistrate presided, with the Mayor, the Rev. A. Lamont, and the Deputy-Mayor, Dr. H. E. Arbuckle.

The applicant, Mr. R. M. Naidoo, said that his name appeared on the roll last year, but had been removed this year. In support of his application for the right to vote, he said he was of Aryan stock and consequently of European descent, because it was history that the Aryans were one of the primitive peoples of Asia who migrated into Europe from Central Asia, and among their descendants were the Anglo-Saxons. Therefore he was as much of European descent as those who sat on the Bench. He claimed further that he had been over 50 years in the Borough of Durban and had had the municipal vote for many years. He asked the Court not to take the narrow geographical view of what might be meant by European, but to take the wider view, which must include all members of the Aryan race. It was not right that the laws made when men were imported into the country as cheap labour should be made to apply to people with a proper standard of living who were able to realise how insulting those laws were to human nature with a proper understanding of the world.

Application Refused

The Chief Magistrate said that the applicant was not entitled to be placed on the municipal roll, because he had not all the requisite qualifications for inclusion in the Parliamentary roll. The whole matter rested on the clause of the Act which made it clear that anybody who was a native or descendant in the male line of a country that did not in 1896 possess elective representative institutions was not entitled to be on the Parliamentary voters' roll.

One of these countries was India, and the applicant was a descendant of natives of India, and therefore he must be excluded from the roll.—*Natal Mercury*.

Transvaal Indians

How The New Law Will Affect Them

No Action Till New Agent Arrives

The following are extracts from the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 11:—

While the Indians of the Transvaal are determined that the Asiatic Tenure Act will not be allowed to come into force without some effort on their part to mitigate, what they contend to be, its harshness, no plan of campaign has yet been decided upon. Yesterday's mass meeting of Indians in Johannesburg agreed, after the implications of the new Act had been explained, to suspend any decision until the arrival of the new Agent-General for India, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, in the first days of August. At that time a joint congress of all the Indian associations of the Transvaal, the Cape and Natal will be held in Johannesburg, and, after discussion of the position, a programme will be drafted.

In spite of the holding of the Round Table Conference at the Cape, and the subsequent amendment of the Tenure Bill, Indians are very dissatisfied. There are about 8,000 licences in the Province that are affected by the law, of which the following is a summary:—

Those licences which were protected by the Act of 1919 will continue to enjoy that protection, no matter where they are situated, provided that the owners or

their successors have been carrying on business continuously in the same township.

All licences held by Indians since 1919, and before May, 1930, on proclaimed or unproclaimed land, and which land comes under the Gold Law, are declared illegal, and these licence-holders must register before September 1, 1932. After registration they will be allowed to remain on their present spot till 1935. If they do not register by September 2, 1932, the licences become illegal, and the municipality has the right of ejecting the holders.

Registration does not only apply to business places, but to every non-European who is residing on proclaimed or unproclaimed land under the Gold Law, because no non-European can live in towns except in locations according to the Act of 1885. Therefore all householders are called upon to register by September 1, 1932.

In regard to properties bought before May, 1930, they are all protected, no matter where they are situated, and shares held by Indians are safeguarded up to May, 1932.

Properties bought after May, 1930, will be confiscated if they are not transferred to a person who can hold the property lawfully within a year.

All licences taken out after May, 1930, are illegal, and will not be considered under any circumstances.

The Government will appoint a commission to inspect the different areas, and this commission will recommend to the Minister the areas that should be exempted; and only in those areas will Indians be allowed to trade and reside. If Indians are trading and residing in areas which are not exempted, they cannot remain there after 1935, and they will have to move into exempted areas.

Asiatics In Post Offices

Racial Discrimination Not Allowed

Judgment In Pietersburg Case

Judgment was given by Mr. Justice Barry last Monday in the Supreme Court in the case of I. G. Rasool versus the Postmaster-General and the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs.

Mr. Ivan Curlewis, instructed by Messrs. Stegmann, Oosthuizen and Jackson, appeared for Rasool, and Mr. A. A. Roberts, instructed by the Government Attorney, for respondents.

The case was an application by Rasool to have set aside an instruction of the Postmaster-General to the Postmaster at Pietersburg, by which Asiatics were recently required to be served at a separate counter at the Post Office, altering the existing arrangements by which both sections were attended to at the same counter.

It had been contended by Mr. Roberts that the procedure by Rasool should have been by way of action and not by application. He stated that the latter was an extraordinary remedy, and that it was not appropriate in the present case.

His Lordship quoted a previous case in which procedure by application was held to be in order, and said that he, sitting as a single judge, was not prepared to amend the decision, and he would follow it.

On the main issue Mr. Justice Barry, after citing various cases, said that the courts of justice were not entitled to rule that certain discriminations are not within the powers of those who make them. The Railway Administration reserved certain premises and railway coaches for certain classes; there was power for local authorities to have separate tramcars for specific races.

"In the absence of any legislative authority," he said, "I think the general principle applies in the present case, and there is no express authority given to the Postmaster-General to discriminate; he is not entitled to set aside special counters for

Europeans and Asiatics respectively. In the absence of statutory authority, the Postmaster-General has no power.

"The applicant is entitled to a mandamus compelling the Postmaster-General to withdraw the instruction that he issued to the Postmaster at Pietersburg, the respondents, however, to have leave to institute action to have the mandamus set aside. And the costs of this application will be costs in the cause. If the action is not instituted within a month from this judgment then the second respondent (the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs) will have to pay the costs of this application."—*Pretoria News*.

Reunion Wants Indian Labour

The Government of the Island of Reunion desires to recruit about 2,000 Indians from Natal as labourers for service in Reunion on the sugar plantations. These labourers would be employed under contract for a period of two, three and more years.

This is the substance of certain negotiations being made by the legal representative of a leading shipping firm, which is acting on behalf of the Government of the Island of Reunion. In order to secure the support of the leaders of the Indian community efforts have been made to enlist the assistance of the Natal Indian Congress.

It has been suggested that two nominees of the Natal Indian Congress should, at the expense of the shipping firm, visit Reunion to report on the scheme and more particularly on:—

- (a) The labour to be performed.
- (b) Sanitary, housing and health conditions.
- (c) The extent of hospital and medical facilities available.
- (d) Whether domiciliary rights could be acquired by the labourers.

It is understood that the labour to be performed is the ordinary work similar to that performed on the Natal plantations. Housing and sanitary conditions, if not satisfactory, could be improved upon before any contract is entered into.

In regard to domiciliary rights it is stated (says the *Natal Advertiser*), that the Reunion Government is extremely liberal in its treatment of coloured persons, and there is no objection to the labourers becoming subjects of the French Republic after a certain stay on the island. There is no restriction to the acquisition of land by coloured persons in Reunion.

It is the intention of those responsible for the scheme, it is learnt, to make it a condition with the Union Government that the bonus which the Union Government gives to emigrants—namely, £20 per adult and £5 for each child under 16, with a maximum of £50 per family emigrating to India—should apply to the labourers on their transfer to the Island of Reunion.

Another of the conditions stipulated would be to secure the transport charges of £7 10s. (which are paid for each person to the shipping companies transporting Indians who leave South Africa of their own accord under the assisted emigration scheme for India) to be allowed for transport to Reunion.

Local Opinion

Indian opinion is desired as to whether the Natal Indian Congress would be prepared to send two of its leading members to Reunion at the expense of the promoters of the scheme to investigate whether there are sufficient unemployed in Natal to allow of 2,000 being recruited, and whether, if the scheme has the blessings of the Natal Indian Congress, such labourers would be prepared to go.

The Island

Reunion, known by its former name of Bourbon, an island and French colony in the Indian Ocean lies between Madagascar and Mauritius. The formation of

the island has been determined by the volcanic action, though the craters are now more or less extinct.

Reunion may be divided into five zones. The first or maritime zone contains all the towns and most of the villages, built on the limited areas of level alluvium occurring at intervals round the coast. In the second, which lies between 2,600 to 4,000 ft., the sugar plantations make a green belt round the island and country houses abound. The third zone is that of the forests; the fourth that of the plateaux, where European vegetables can be cultivated; and above this extends the region of the mountains.

The year divides into two seasons, that of heat and rain from November to April, that of dry and more bracing weather from May to October. On the coast and lower zones on the windward side the mean temperature is about 78 deg. F. in the winter and 78 deg. F. in the summer. On the leeward side the heat is somewhat greater.

There is abundant rain, with a very heavy fall on the windward side, some stations registering 160ins. a year, while on the "dry" side of the island not more than 50ins. are registered. On the mountain heights snow falls every year, and ice is occasionally seen. In general, the island is healthy, but fever is prevalent on the coast.

Equal Rights

The inhabitants are divided into various classes—creoles, coloureds, negroes, Indians and other Asiatics. The population is considerably over 200,000. Indians were introduced to Reunion in the same year that they first came out to Natal, namely, 1860, but in 1882, owing to the inconsiderate treatment of the Indians by the colonists, the Government of India stopped further emigration. Subsequently conditions have improved and Indians who have become French nationals enjoy rights and privileges in common with the rest of the population.

There are several towns—St. Denis, the capital of the island, has a population of about 40,000. It is the seat of the bishopric, a magistrate's court and an appeal court. St. Pierre, St. Louis, St. Paul, the Cape Pointe des Galets and St. Benoit are among the other important towns.

There is a regular steamship communication with the outside world, boats sailing regularly for Marseilles, Havre and Madagascar. It has telegraphic communication with all parts of the world.

Sugar Industry

Its main industry is the cultivation of cane for the manufacture of sugar. Cane was first introduced in 1711 and is now the staple crop of the island. Owing to competition with beet sugar; it was decided some years ago to consolidate the position of the industry by the formation of central sugar mills and refineries instead of splitting up into too many small mills. One of its by-products, rum, is largely distilled and forms an important article of export. Conditions are favourable for the growth of maize, potatoes, haricots, coffee, cocoa, etc.

The mineral wealth of the island has not been exploited, except for the mineral springs, which yield waters highly esteemed. Almost all the products of the island are exported, so the import trade is very varied. Rice, the chief article of food, is imported from India; petrol is largely in manufactories from America and Russia; and almost everything else comes from France, to which country goes the great majority of the exports. Over 5 per cent. of the shipping is under the French flag.

Politically, Reunion is regarded as a department of France. It sends two Deputies and one Senator to the French Legislature and is governed by laws passed by that body. All inhabitants, not being aliens, enjoy the franchise, no distinction being made between whites, negroes and coloureds; all of whom are citizens.

At the head of the local administration is a governor, who is assisted by a secretary-general, an advocate-general, a privy council and a council-general, elected by the suffrages of all citizens.

Natal Indian Congress And The Workless

'Natal Advertiser's' 'Pious' Suggestion

The *Natal Advertiser* in its issue of July 22, has the following leading article:—

The report printed in this journal yesterday that the French island province of Reunion desires 2,000 Natal Indians for work in the sugar plantations causes one to speculate on the extent of unemployment among Natal's Asiatic population, particularly in the coastal belts. Reliable figures are difficult, almost impossible, to obtain, for the Indian has no organisations of his own whereby such particulars can be recorded and tabulated, and it is only in the crafts where he works alongside the European under trade union conditions that any details of unemployment are available. Indians of the class who work in the cane fields are not vocal in regard to their fortunes or their grievances; at a pinch they can exist on very little, picking up a casual job, a coin or a simple meal here and there, and by their very unobtrusiveness allowing their plight to go unnoticed both by the higher classes of their own race and by the Europeans. They appear to assist one another freely in meeting the simple needs of a bare existence, and one feels at times that one might be surrounded by thousands of unemployed of this class without the facts becoming apparent. That there must be a good deal of unemployment among the poorer Indians to-day would appear inevitable. They have not only shared in the general retrenchment that has been forced on the community but in many cases successful efforts to find emergency employment for white men and boys have resulted in adding yet further to the number of Indians who are without definit and regular work.

Bread And Butter

In these circumstances, as in the case of the European unemployed, any scheme which promises a measure of relief, whether it is under Government auspices, such as those suggested at the Cape-town Conference, or a private scheme, such as the Reunion project, deserves the closest consideration, both in Government circles and by the leaders of the Indian community. We hold no brief for the particular enterprise announced yesterday, and while appreciating that with proper safeguards it has possibilities, realise the necessity for that further personal investigation on the spot for which the promoters are said to be desirous of offering facilities. This opportunity to see for themselves appears to be frankly and freely tendered to the Natal Indian Congress and, as it apparently involves no further obligation on either side, should be accepted. In times such as this non-co-operation in such investigations is always to be deplored, for whatever reason such an attitude may be adopted. We are well aware of the sentiments and aims of the Natal Indian Congress, and have not hesitated in the past to point out to them how far, in the present temper of South Africa, the line of practical achievement can be extended. The rights of citizenship which they have been able to acquire here are very nebulous and shadowy, extending very little further

than the right of domicile, and at present and probably for a very long time to come there seems little prospect of this social and political status being raised. While one can always admire a nation or a section of the public fighting for an ideal, the campaign must be governed by a wise sense of the practical, not by a fanatical pig-headedness that refuses to see anything but the will o' the wisp of an idealistic slogan. There are aspects of these colonisation schemes, official as well as private, which appear to the Indian political fighter to be backward steps along the road it is desired to follow. Yet it is not always the fist-shaking gesture which is the prelude to an advance; there is the well-known military principle that the sacrifice of a doubtful forward salient may bring one advantage that more than compensate for the withdrawal of the moment. Political nostrums will not find employment for the workless Indian to-day, they will not keep a roof over his head, they will not be food and drink for his wife and children. Bread and butter considerations must, in times of great stress such as the present, take the place of those sentimental and political attitudes that may be indulged in in times of prosperity.

A New Home?

The Natal Indian Congress fears that if this scheme, or any similar enterprise, comes to fruition the Indians who go to settle in Reunion for the stipulated period of two years or more, will lose their domiciliary rights in this country. On the face of it, if the project is proceeded with along the lines set out in our columns yesterday this would appear almost inevitable, for the South African Government is hardly likely to grant the financial assistance to emigrants provided under the Capetown Agreement and at the same time waive the clause which was the very reason for the measure being devised, namely, the lessening of the surplus of Indians in South Africa. Here is the principal reason why the proposed facilities for investigation of the conditions at Reunion should be accepted. It is many years ago now since the forerunners of our present Indian population in Natal came over to work in the cane plantations of Natal. They did not return when their contracts were completed, they elected to stay where their bread and butter could be obtained, where they were fast gathering family and home-like associations, and the majority of them still wish to stay so long as they can carry on their simple family life with a reasonable amount of comfort and assurance of the necessities of life. Among workers of this type the family instincts and the urge to obtain the wherewithal to live predominate. Political desires and feelings regarding nationality and the rights of citizenship are almost embryonic. The chances are that if 2,000 of these men, workless at present and unable to provide even the simple necessities they require for a contented family life, are taken to Reunion and there find reasonably satisfactory conditions, that question of domicile will not arise. As the early Indians settled down among the canefields of Natal, so these will gradually strike their roots in the fertile soil of the French Province. So long as life flows smoothly on in the way to which they are accustomed, they will care little whether the Union Jack, the South African flag or the tricolour of France is flying from the Governor's residence.

The Responsibility

We do not say that conditions will be as suggested above, but we would impress on the Natal Indian Congress that theirs will be a grave responsibility if they turn aside from this scheme without a full

and proper investigation. On their decision may rest the question whether 2,000 of their poorer compatriots shall remain here in conditions which may approach actual starvation and by doing so maintain that somewhat uncertain "solidity" of the Indian political front, or whether they find food, homes and employment in congenial surroundings elsewhere. If any further considerations are needed that will appeal to the orthodox political leader, there are two. The first is the fact that in Reunion the new settlers may find themselves in enjoyment of those full rights of citizenship and nationality which they have been told will forever be denied them in South Africa. The second is that only by a common sense and practical approach to the bread-and-butter problems of their own people will the leaders of the Indians in South Africa gradually gain the confidence of the white population of the country, and so advance that political status which looms so large in their present-day activities.

An Englishwoman's Impression About Pandit Malaviya

Miss Ellen Wilkinson writes in the *Times of India*:

The arrest of Pandit Malaviya carries the Indian struggle to a new stage. To the Hindus, Pandit Malaviya has a holiness that is breath-taking, and with all his gentle modesty he conveyed that impression to the unregenerate English who met him at the Round Table Conference. I was one of a small group of M.P.s, members of the India League, who stage-managed the Parliamentary appearances of Mahatma Gandhi and the Pandit, and met them on very friendly terms at Mr. J. F. Horrabin's flat in Bloomsbury. Frankly, I never could feel too awe-inspired by Mr. Gandhi. I say this with all apologies to everybody, but I just felt that he and I were two politicians with a flair for publicity, and that he had the courage to do his job supremely well. I preferred to be rather more comfortable. None of which detracts in the least from my sound admiration for his qualities as a leader, and for his uncanny understanding of the prejudices of those he led. But in the presence of Pandit Malaviya I felt a sense of holiness, of something withdrawn. The tiny figure, the delicate face, the clothes of soft, white wool, his sensitiveness to the least feeling of others, his delicate courtesy, made me feel like the brutal representative of a blond-stained, coweating race when I had to offer him a cup of tea, knowing that he was bound to refuse it, though with such gentle regret.

He was so fair in argument, so anxious to hear the case of the other side, and at heart, one felt, utterly indifferent to the way the carnal world gets itself governed. Hindus will shudder at the mere idea of the unsanctified contacts that a prison sentence will mean to this holy man. While Mr. Gandhi will be spinning away cheerfully, with, I am convinced, a certain human appreciation of the exasperation of his captors, it is unlikely that this sheltered, seventy-year-old colleague of his could survive a long sentence. To regard the arrest of such a man as Mr. Malaviya as a necessity, is a pretty damning indictment in itself of our present tactics in India.

Original Correspondence

To THE EDITOR "INDIAN OPINION"

Sir,—I read with interest the issue for July 15th, and feel that sympathy with the Indians, which every right-minded person should feel.

Why are Indians dealt with so harshly by South Africa? Is it because the Indians are more intelligent in business than the Afrikaner, if so then one can understand that the Afrikaners feel their inferiority.

If Indians are not fit to be citizens of the Union, why does the Union seek to get a trade agreement with India? There is some weak spot somewhere.

Do Afrikaners, when in India get treated with European rights, or are they treated as a lower race; it would be interesting to know this. If treated as a lower race, then these hardships against Indians can be understood.

Who brought the cost of living down some 30 years by 25%? The Indians. The real reason why the Indians get sat on so much is because they don't look after *quid pro quos*. For each advantage South Africa gets in India, an equal advantage should be obtained for Indians in the Union.

There are many more points of injustice which should not be lost sight of.

JUSTICE.

ગીતા મન્યન

(વિષય—હિંદીઓના અસ્વાસ્થ્યના અસરવાળા)

અધ્યાય ૨ નો

(૩૩) શ્લોક ૬૭ થી ૬૮

“પાર્થ, રખેતે મારા શબ્દોથી તને ગૌરવમળ વિપ્લવ થાય, અને હું મનના ભય ઉપર ભાર મુકું છું કે હિન્દીઓના ભય ઉપર ભાર મુકું છું. એ વિષે તું યોદ્ધાઓમાં પડે. કારણ, આવા બંને મતો ધરાવવાવાળા પુરુષો ભવતમાં મળી આવે છે. કેટલાક માને છે કે મન પવિત્ર હોય તો, જલેને, હિન્દીઓ માપફી સુખેથી વિષયો ભોગવતી, એના સંબંધની જરૂર નથી એથી હિંદુ, કેટલાક હિન્દીઓના જન્મ ઉપર એટલો બધો ભાર મુકે છે કે જેને ફેડવા, કાપવા સુધીના ઉપયોગ સુચવે છે અને મનના જ્ઞાને સુધી જ આવે છે, આ બેમાંથી એકે માર્ગ મારા કર્મોના સંગત નથી.

“હિન્દીઓના અધિમાનથી ચોતાને સુરક્ષિત પ્રાનનારને મન કેવી રીતે છેતરે છે, તે મેં તને વિસ્તારથી સમજાવ્યું છે. પ્રથમ, મનોભય થયેલો છે એવો વિશ્વાસ રાખી હિન્દીઓને શ્રેણી મેલનારના ચે એવાજ હાલ થાય છે, એમ, હે યુદ્ધકે, તું સમજી શકીને. કારણ કે, આ હિન્દીઓ અને મન વચ્ચે હિંસા અને શત્રુતા જેવી અજાણ છે; સ્વભાવ, વસ્તુતઃ જન્મ સેતુ અને એનાના અલંકારો નાશ પ્રાપ્ત, કહેવાને આતરજ, જુદાં કહી શકાય, તેમ જન્મ અને હિન્દીઓને જ્ઞાન સમજવા આતરજ જુદાં કહેવાય છે. કહીકતે, જેમ જુદા જુદા ધારો માં પડાયેલું સોનુંજ વેદ, વીંટી, કડાં, સંકળાં ઇત્યાદિ જુદે જુદે નામે ઓળાય છે, તેમ જ્ઞાન, જન, નાક હંભાદિ હિન્દીઓ એ મનનાજ જુદા જુદા પાસે છે એમ આન આથી હિન્દીઓનું વિષયોમાં અમલ્ય એ મનનું અમલ્ય છે એમ સમજી શકાય.

આમ કોઈ પુરુષ પ્રમાણથી ચોતાની ઝાઝા હિન્દીઓને જુદી મુકે તો તુર્તજ મન એની સાથે દોડેલું જ હોય છે, અને પછી એ મન એ પુરુષની જુદીનો વાવાઝોડામાં સપડાયેલા વહાલુની માફક આમથી તેમ અને તેમથી આમ ભટકાવીને નાશ કરે છે.

“આથી, હે મિત્ર, મારે ફરી ફરીને કહેવું પડે છે કે જેની હિન્દીઓ એમોરથી સ્વાધીન છે તેનીજ જુદી સ્થિતિ થયેલી છે એમ તું નિશ્ચય માનજે” ૬૭-૬૮

(૩૪) શ્લોક ૬૯

“કુરુવીર, તેં મને સ્થિરશુદ્ધિવાળો પુરુષ કેમ ઓલો, કેમ બેસે, કેમ ચાલે વગેરે પુછ્યું હતું. મેં તને કહ્યું હતું કે જેની બધી ક્રિયાઓ સદલ, કૃતિમતા વિનાની હોય છે. એ જેનો હોય છે, તેથી જુદો દેખાવાનો ડોળ નથી કરતો. આ સિવાય રથુળ દ્રષ્ટિએ, એના સંબંધી, અને કર્મપરમણ્ણ તથા યોગયુક્ત જીવનને લીધે જે કાંઈ રહેણી-કાંઈના બેદો દેખાય તે સિવાય, સામાન્ય મનુષ્ય કરતાં કોઈ જુદી ભવના એના ખાન, પાન, વેશ હોયજ એમ ન કહેવાય.

“મરંતુ, સંબંધી, સ્થિરશુદ્ધિવાળા પુરુષ અને સંસારી અને શ્રોભાસકવ પુરુષ વચ્ચે જીવન વિષેની દ્રષ્ટિમાંજ, એમના આકર્યોમાંજ રાત અને દિવસ જેવો તીવ્ર ભેદ રહેલો છે. તે એવો છે કે સ્થિર ભવિષ્યાળો, સંબંધી પુરુષ જે બાબતોમાં ઉદાસીન અસવા રસહીન હોય; છે, તે બાબતો ભોગી પુરુષને અતિશય સદરજની અને રસવાળું જાગે છે અને તે માટે એ રાત દિવસ પ્રવલ્ન કરતો હોય છે; અને સંબંધી પુરુષ જે માટે વસ્ત્રોડ મહેનત કરે છે, તેમાં જોગી પુરુષને જરાએ રમ જામતો નથી, વધારે સ્પષ્ટ રીતે જોઈ તો ભોગી પુરુષો હિન્દીઓનાં સુખો તથા તેને આસ કરવાનાં સાધનો-કામ અને અર્થ-એ બેનેજ મદદર આપે છે અને એમાંજ ભવમનુ પ્રાર્થિક સમજે છે. એ બેને દ્રષ્ટિમાં રાખીનેજ તેઓ મર્મ જાને જ્ઞાનની સાધના કરે છે; અને જે ધર્મના પ્રાંત કરવાથી કે અજ્ઞાનને ફેલાવાથી ચોતાને સુખ કે અર્થની પ્રાપ્તિનો સંભવ જવાય, તો તેમ કરવામાં પાછી પાની કરતા નથી.

“આથી ઉલ્ટું, સંબંધી, વિચરી પુરુષ ચોતાના કામ અને અર્થ માટે ઉદાસીન હોય છે, અને ધર્મનો લોપ કરી કે અજ્ઞાનનો આશ્રય કરી તેની પ્રાપ્તિ માટે કહી પ્રવલ્ન કરતા નથી; પણ, રાત-દિવસ ધર્મ અને જ્ઞાનનો આશ્રય કરી લઈ જુતોના વિલ માટેજ પ્રવલ્ન કરે છે. આમ, જે વિષયોમાં ભોગી પુરુષો ભગ્નત રહે છે, તેમાં સંબંધી ધરાદાપુર્વક ઉધે છે. અને સંબંધી જેમાં ભગ્નત છે, તેમાં ભોગી બેદરકાર સુતેલા રહે છે.” ૬૯

પરચુરણ

છી, આજ, હાઇનની નવી યોટો—શ્રીકૃષ્ણ હિન્દી આજનની જે જુની યોટો હિંદી આબ્યા કરતી તે હવે કાલી નાખી નવી યોટો ફનીયા, કરંજ, ટકલીયા અને ટાઇરીયા તેના બધામાં આવી છે. આ યોટો મોટી છે અને વધારે સમવડવાળી હોવાનું જણાવાય છે. આ સ્ટીમરોમાં ઇન્ટર કલામ નથી.

ચોરીથી આવેલો હિંદી ફેશન—વોરેન્સો પ્રાકારની જોક હિંદી કરવાનું જાણીને આબ્યા હવે અને હિન્દીઓને સારકેટ આશ્રય પકડાયો કવે તેને સરકારે હટીમર ટપરીયામાં ફેડવાનું કહી દીધો છે.

ઈન્ડિઅન ઓપિનિઅન.

પુસ્તક ૩૦ મું.

શીનીકચ, શુક્રવાર, તારીખ ૨૬ જુલાઈ ૧૯૩૨

અંક ૩૦

નોંધ અને સમાચાર

બેંકાર હોદીઓ અને પર્સનલ ટેક્સ

પર્સનલ ટેક્સથી હોદીઓ ઉપર પડતી મુશીબતોના કષ્ટો દાખલા નાટાલ ઇન્ડિઅન ટ્રેડિસની જાણમાં આવી છે અને ટ્રેડિસની સુચનાથી તેવા ટેક્સ કેસો, જેમાં હોદીઓ સામે ટેક્સ નહિ લાગવા માટે કાયદેસર પગલાં લેવાયાં છે, તેનો ખ્યાલ કરવાને મી. જે. ડબલ્યુ. ગ્રોસે હાજર થયા હતા. બધાનો કેસ સાથે ચલાવી હેરી વોલ્ટરની સામેની જુબાનીઓ લેવાઈ હતી. હેરી વોલ્ટર ત્રણ વર્ષથી નોકરી વગરનો હતો અને તેને ૧૬ માસુસોનું પોષણ કરવાનું હતું. જુબાનીઓ પરથી જણાયું હતું કે આજુ સાલના માર્ચ મહિનાથી કોઈ પણ હોદીઓને એકઝેમ્પ્શન આપવામાં આવતાં નથી જ્યારે યુરો-પીપીનેને એકઝેમ્પ્શન આપવામાં આવે છે વળી એક માસુસ મરીબ છે કે નહિ તેની તપાસ કરવાને એડમીનીસ્ટ્રેટર તરફથી ફરિયાદો જે નીચેના યુરોપીયનોના સંબંધમાં અમલમાં મુકવા માં આવે છે તે હોદીઓને લાગુ પાડવામાં આવતા નથી. હોદીઓને યોજાઈ હોવામાં આવે છે કે: "તમને કંઈ પણ નીચમ લાગુ પડી શકશે નહિ તમારે કર લાગવો પડશે" વોલ્ટરને ગ્રુ-હેમાર ફરિયાદ ત્રણ મહિનાની અંદર કર નહિ લાગે તે સળ માટે હાજર કરવાનો કોર્ટ હુકમ કર્યો છે.

એકઝેમ્પ્શન કેમ નથી આપાતાં?

આ એક પાર્ટીને પર્સનલ ટેક્સ ૧૯૩૧ ના ૧૭ માં એડ્વિન-નન્સથી સુધારવામાં આવેલા ૧૯૨૮ ના ૧૭ માં એડ્વિન-નન્સની રૂએ ૨૧ વર્ષ કે તેથી વધુ વયના દરેક પુરુષની ઉપર નાખવા માં આવ્યો છે અને તેમાંથી એકઝેમ્પ્શન સુધારાઓમાં પોતાની ડીરેક્ટરનો રેવન્યુ ઓફીસર જેને મરીબ ફરિયાદો તેના સમાવેશ થાય છે. એડમીનીસ્ટ્રેટર આ એડ્વિન-નન્સનું પીલું વાચન નાટાલ પ્રાંતિક કોર્ટસીલમાં દાખલ કરતાં જણાવ્યું હતું કે

"હાલના આજ કાયદાની રૂએ કષ્ટો હોદીઓ કરમાંથી મુક્ત છે અને એ રીતે તેઓ પ્રાંતિક ત્રીજીને પોતાનો દિવસો આપવામાંથી બચી ગયા છે આરે જણાવ્યું જોઈએ કે વાલ્પી રીતે જેમ યુનીયનના કાયદાથી નેદીવને દર વર્ષે પા. ૧ લાગે પડે છે તેવી જ રીતે હોદી કરામની પાસેથી પણ તેવા કર વસૂલ કરવામાં આવવો જોઈએ."

આ ઉપરથી હોદીઓને એકઝેમ્પ્શન કેમ નથી આપવામાં આવતાં તેનું કારણ સહેજે સમજી શકાય.

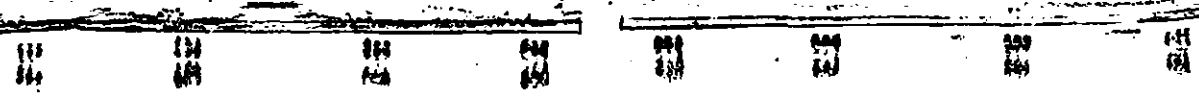
બાણીના અંગ્રેજ બાલુ શું કહે છે?

મીસીસ મેબલ પાક્કર એ એક બાણીના અંગ્રેજ બાલુ અર્થશાસ્ત્રી છે, ઇન્ડો-યુરોપીયન કોર્ટસીલના એક સભ્ય છે અને કમ્પોઝિટ લોકોના જવાબમાં જીડી રસ લેનારા છે.

તેમણે 'નાટાલ મરકયુરી' માં આ બાબતમાં એક મંતવણી છે તેમાંથી કેટલીક હકીકતો અહિં ટાંકવી અસ્થાને નહિ મણાય. તેઓ લખે છે કે:—

"આ પર્સનલ ટેક્સ પ્રત્યેક ઉમરલાયક માણસને પોતાની આવક ગમે તેવી હોય છતાં લાગવો આવે છે. આથી તે શ્રીમંતના કરતાં ગરીબ ઉપર વધારે બોલવું છે કષ્ટો હોદીઓ માસિક પા. ૪ થી પા. ૫ કરતાં વધારે કમાતા નથી અને કેટલાક એથીયે ઓછું કમાય છે અને તેથી માણસની આવકનો પા ભાગ એક માસની અંદર જ લાગવામાં આવ્યો જાય છે. આ માસિક પા. ૨૦ કમાતા યુરોપીયને પા પનો કર લાગે પડે તેના જેવું થયું. આવી રકમનો કર ગરીબ યુરોપીયનો ઉપર તેમના વિરોધ વિના ખાચ એમ કોઈથી માની શકાય ખરે? પણ ગરીબ હોદીઓને પોતાની ફરિયાદો સરકારને સંભાળવાને કંઈ પણ બંધારણસરનું સાધન નથી.....આનો કર સખ રીતે વખોડવો જોઈએ અને એક આધુનિક સુધારાવાળા દેશ માં પ્રબળ એક ગરીબ વર્ગની ઉપર ખચીતજ કંઈ પણ નાખવામાં નહિ આવે.....યા તો એ કર ઘણો જોઈએ, એટલે કે જ મહિને શી ૫ જેટલો હોવો જોઈએ, અથવા અમુક આવક કરતાં ઓછી આવક વાળા લોકો ઉપર નખાવો નહિ જોઈએ.....વળી હોદીઓ બેઠારીથી યુરોપીયનો જેટલો જ પીડાય છે અને તેઓમાં નિવાસી સંસ્થાઓ ઓછી હોવાથી તેઓ વધારે પીડાય છે એ હકીકત ધ્યાનમાં લેવાઈ છે ખરી? આજની મંદીના વખતમાં કષ્ટો હોદી પગારદારો નોકરી વગરના થયા છે. તેઓના ટરેડ યુનીયનો કે મજૂર એડ્વોકેટો નહિ હોવાથી તેઓની બેઠારીના આંકડા મળવા મુશ્કેલ છે. પરંતુ જે દેવળો અને સખાવતી સંસ્થાઓને હોદીઓની સાથે સંબંધ છે તેઓની ક્યાલનક અને જીવનમરની સ્થિતિથી વાકેફ છે. તેઓની કોટુમ્બીક ગારને લીધે તે ઘણી જોવામાં આવતી નથી. પા. ૫ કમાતો એક હોદી વગર સંકોચે પોતાના બેંકાર લાઇ અને તેના કુટુંબને સંભરશે અને મહિનાઓ સુધી તેનું પોષણ કરશે. શું આવા હોદીઓ પાસેથી પર્સનલ ટેક્સ વસૂલ કરવામાં આવે છે? જો તેમ હોય તો સહી-સલામત રીતે એમ કહી શકાય કે જ્યાં એક નહાની સરખી આવકથી બે કે તેથી વધારે ઉમર લાયક માણસોનું પોષણ થવું હોય ત્યાં તેવા કર કંઈ અને જીવનમરની ટળવળતાં બાણીના શિક્ષામાં લાગવામાં આવે છે, કેમકે જ્યાં પા. ૫ ની માસિક આવકમાંથી આઠ કે નવ માણસોનું પોષણ થવું હોય ત્યાં આજો એક પાર્ટી નીચેની લેવામાં આવે તો તે બીજી રીતે લાગી નહિ શકાય?"

એક એંગ્રેજ બાલુએ હોદીઓનો કેસ આટલી મજબુત રીતે રજૂ કર્યો પછી અમારે તેપર વિશેષ ટીકા કરવાપણું રહેતું નથી.



THE NEW AGENT AND HIS STAFF



(Sitting) Kunvar Maharaj Singh and Kunvarani Maharaj Singh.
(Standing) Mr. C. S. Ricketts, Mr. Mayadas, Mr. S. Bozman
(Agent's Secretary).