

THE
INDIAN QUESTION
IN
EAST AFRICA

BY

C. F. ANDREWS.

(FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.)

THE SWIFT PRESS, NAIROBI, KENYA COLONY.

THE
INDIAN QUESTION
IN
EAST AFRICA

BY

C. F. ANDREWS.

(FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.)

THE SWIFT PRESS, NAIROBI, KENYA COLONY.

A PRELIMINARY NOTE.

This book was left in a half finished state, when I went away from Africa in March, 1920. My time in India was so occupied, that I was not able to get the concluding chapters finished. I therefore abandoned the book altogether. But on returning to the Colony and reading over again the pages that were already printed, it has seemed to me that certain principles, which I emphasised, are living interests, to-day. Lord Delamere and Mr. C. Archer in the Memorandum, on behalf of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council and the Convention of European Associations have challenged these principles once more, at the time that this is going to the Press. As their Memorandum has been made public property in the East African Newspapers, and therefore now a public document, I am venturing to re-publish it, at the end of this book, for reference, as an Appendix. I would call attention only to one sentence, which appears to me to strike at the root of all religious and racial neutrality on the part of Government within the British Commonwealth. The writers sum up with three questions, one of which reads as follows :—

“Is the young growth of Christianity and Western Civilisation to be supplanted by Eastern creeds and superstitions?”

I am printing this book for private circulation only, and not for sale, because it is entirely incomplete as an argument and also partly out of date. The world has gone very rapidly forward in the East during the last two years. I hope to be able on some future occasion to publish something on the whole subject in a more permanent form. If I am able to do so, I shall use some of the material which I have gathered here.

The last chapter, called the "Economic Argument," contains the Report which I presented in India, on the East African Question, on my return to India at the end of March, 1920.

Visram Villa
Nairobi.

C. F. ANDREWS.

P. S.—I have to thank the Swift Press, Nairobi, for their long-suffering patience in dealing with my long delays. I would also add, that if any one in the Colony cares to have a copy of this book, in its present incompleteness, it can be obtained by sending the postage payment and written request for it to the Swift Press, Nairobi.

October, 25th 1921.

PREFACE.

THE following chapters are published as a preliminary statement, giving immediate impressions, at the end of my first visit to East Africa and also to Uganda. I hope to be able to stay for some time in the Conquered Territories on my way back from South Africa, and to spend a further period in British East Africa. After the whole journey is over, it is my intention to publish a book on the general subject of Indian Immigration.

As this present paper is purely tentative and open to correction, I shall be most grateful if any mistakes, which I may have fallen into unawares, are pointed out. Letters addressed c/o. The Indian Association, Nairobi, will always find me, and I shall deem it an act of kindness, if any of my readers can spare the necessary time to write about any point which strikes them either as ill-considered or unfair. I shall also welcome frank and open discussion of the principles expressed and the conclusions provisionally formed.

In India, it has been my good fortune never to belong to any political party. My work has been almost entirely educational. The study of Indian History, in a living way, has been a passion with me. If asked the question, what led me to take up this peculiar subject of Indian immigration, I can only say that I have had an instinctive sympathy with things Indian and a certain understanding of them, since the time when I landed in India, now sixteen years ago. Along with this,—which seems to me to be the prerequisite in a foreigner of any fruitful study,—the question of India's destiny abroad has always had its great attraction for me as an historical student. Furthermore, it has so happened, without any planning or designing, that invitations

have come, at different times, to go out to the Colonies and make personal investigations on the spot about Indian colonisation; and when these invitations have come, I have not felt it possible to refuse them.

Wherever and whenever I have gone, complete unfettered freedom has always been given me to form and to express my own individual judgments. I could never have worked for a single moment under any other conditions. It has also been possible to offer my services without any remuneration, and this has increased my sense of independence. More than once I have come to conclusions, which were directly opposed to the views of those who invited me to go out. But I have never been asked to refrain from publishing those conclusions on that account.

I am anxious to disarm beforehand a certain form of opposition on the part of practical men, who dislike theorists above all things and rightly suspect their opinions. I would simply state in this connexion that, a few months ago, the Planters' Association of the Federated Malay States unanimously requested me (through a resolution proposed by their Vice-President and supported by their Chairman and Secretary) to go over to Malaya, at their own expense and as their guest, in order to help them in solving the problem of Indian Colonisation in that country. Indeed, just before I started on my present voyage, a cable reached me from the Chairman again pressing upon me this original invitation. Furthermore, I have quite recently visited Ceylon and have been welcomed cordially by the Estates' Agents Association at Colombo, one of the most important financial bodies in the Island. I had also opportunities of addressing in the up-country districts the different branches of the Planters' Association. From the letters which I have subsequently received, it is quite evident that they have regarded me as an expert who has been able to give them expert advice. I mention these facts for one reason only, namely, to show in the briefest possible manner that my work has been practical in character.

In order, however, not to omit other things which may appear, to some of my readers, to tell against me, I should state that the Planters' Associations in Fiji have formed an adverse opinion and condemned me for the action, which I recently took, in helping to bring to an end the Indian indentured labour immigration to their sugar plantations. In that matter, I am entirely impenitent; for I visited the islands twice over, spending many months in the midst of the Indian labourers themselves and also among the Planters. I have thus witnessed with my own eyes the actual conditions. After all the things that I have seen, I cannot be otherwise than profoundly thankful that Indian indentured labour was not introduced into British East Africa between the years 1908-1912, during a period when serious efforts were being made in that direction and both the Colonial and the India Offices were ready to countenance such a possible development. I am under no illusion, to-day, as to the evil effects of Indian immigration under conditions such as those in Fiji. Personally, I should be the very last man to desire to encourage any system of that kind being again introduced into any part of the world.

My experience of Indian immigration for plantation work has not been confined to the Fiji Islands. I have traced out, on the spot, the same evil effects in South Africa; and I am fully convinced that the trouble there at the present moment is very largely due to the ill-advised efforts in the past of the large estate owners in Natal to import that kind of labour.

Though, therefore, I have by no means been always welcomed by my own fellow-countrymen, on account of the opinions I have formed, and though at times I have had to face serious Indian opposition I feel that I may fairly claim that these things have never been allowed to affect my independence. I have kept that intact throughout. Furthermore, my present position has been reached, not so much by reliance on books, as on personal intercourse with men and women.

I regret that I have been obliged to bring the personal note into this preface. It has been distasteful to me and I would have much rather done without it. But as a stranger, I could only explain my request for a patient hearing in the frankest possible manner and then set forward my views.

I must ask indulgence beforehand for the extreme haste with which the following pages have been actually written and for their lack of adequate revision. As I have stated, they are purely tentative and provisional, I felt it better to invite criticism by publishing them before my second visit, than to omit writing altogether and thus fail to get mistakes corrected and imperfect opinions set right. I am afraid that my boat will sail without my having time to go through the final proofs.

C. F. ANDREWS.

Nairobi, January, 1920.