

Indian Opinion

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GENERAL SMUTS AND THE £3 TAX

THE following telegram was sent by the Natal Coalowner's Association to the Minister of the Interior on the 25th ultimo:—

"At joint meeting of representatives of coal, sugar, and agriculture industries, held this morning, Mr. Gandhi stated that present strike of coal mines was specifically due to failure of Union Government to carry out definite promise given by them repeatedly that the annual tax of £3 would be repealed. He states that a promise or assurance was given definitely to Mr. Gokhale, and that this is confirmed by a statement made by Lord Amphill in the House of Lords, and reported in Blue-book, without reservation as to men, women, and children. Mr. Gandhi states that Indians will be immediately advised to resume work, regardless of any other grievances, as soon as Government give assurance that they will carry out their promise. After hearing Mr. Gandhi, the meeting resolved that the Union Government be asked to say whether they gave assurance regarding £3 tax mentioned by him, and as confirmed by Lord Amphill in the House of Lords; whether said assurance applied to men, women, and children, and, if not, what were the reservations, if any? The meeting would be glad to know, also, what the present intentions of the Government are in regard to tax of £3. In view of the extension of the strike daily, they would be indebted for immediate information for guidance of further joint meeting to be convened immediately such reply is received."

The Minister's Reply

The reply from the Minister was as follows: "With regard to your telegram, Government never gave such promise as Mr. Gandhi alleges, either to Mr. Gokhale or anybody elsewhere. Mr. Gokhale at interview with some members of Government, made strong point of repeal of £3 tax in Natal. Government replied that tax was unimportant from revenue point of view, but was imposed as matter of policy in Natal. Government promised to consult Natal members of Parliament, and if they had no objection on grounds of policy, Government would take question of repeal into favourable consideration. Government carried out their promise by consulting Natal members, the majority of whom objected to repeal of tax, otherwise than affecting women and children. Government feel that promise of repeal under present state of affairs would be a public disaster, with consequences which none can foresee, and are not disposed to consider it. With Mr. Gandhi, repeal of tax is an after-thought, and is intended to influence Natal Indians, to whom the real grounds on which he has started his passive resistance movement, and which never included this tax, do not appeal."

Speech by General Smuts

General Smuts addressed a meeting of the South African Party at Pretoria on the 28th ultimo and in the course of his speech, which was delivered in Dutch, he is reported to have said that the Indians, being incensed at an old Natal law under which they were originally satisfied to live in that Colony, also had recourse to strike methods. There was no hope for the Indians, but every risk in steps of that kind. It was said that the Government had promised Mr. Gokhale to repeal the £3 tax, but he emphatically denied that. The Government had told Mr. Gokhale that fiscally the tax was of little account, but it had been imposed as a matter of policy, and if the Natal members of Parliament did not object to the repeal of the tax, the Government would consider it. Those members, however, had decidedly objected, and the Government had consequently kept all it ever promised. The Indians were being misled, and any Government worth its salt would put its foot down when attempts were made at every turn to coerce the public, because these could only lead to revolutions in the long run. He again warned the Indians in Natal, that they were going the wrong way.

General Botha Supports

General Botha, speaking at Nylstroom, said that he was present at the interview with Mr. Gokhale. He only wished to say that he agreed with and endorsed every word spoken by Mr. Smuts in regard to that interview, and in regard to what took place. "At any rate," said General Botha, "we shall do nothing by which your rights will suffer." This was in reply to the Nylstroom Municipality who, in their address to General Botha, had urged the Government to take up a strong attitude on the Asiatic question.

Mr. Gokhale's Statement

Upon the publication of Mr. Smuts's statement regarding the £3 tax, the Natal Indian Association telegraphed as follows to Mr. Gokhale, at Poona:—

"Government deny having given you undertaking repeal tax. Please cable."

Mr. Gokhale replied as follows:—

"Definite assurance repeal tax. Asked for the authority to make an announcement. The Ministers said it was necessary to mention the matter at first to the Natal members, and suggested I should merely state that Ministers had promised most favourable consideration."

A Breach of Faith

The following resolutions were adopted unanimously at a meeting on the 29th ultimo of the Natal Indian Association:—

"The Natal Indian Association, having received from the Hon. Mr. Gokhale a distinct reaffirmation of

the Ministers' promise to him to repeal the £3 tax, is constrained to believe that, in repudiating their solemn undertaking, the Government have acted in bad faith both towards Mr. Gokhale and the Indian community, and urges Ministers to redeem their pledge in the next session of Parliament, for the sake of the good name of the European population."—Proposed from the chair by Mr. Hajee Dawad Mahomed.

"The Natal Indian Association strongly protests against Mr. Smuts's statement that, had not the £3 tax question been brought forward Natal Indians would not have supported Mr. Gandhi's demands; the Association is of opinion that it would be manifestly impossible for any Indian to accept a racial bar in the Immigration Law, in view of the past history of the passive resistance movement, and the fact that racial legislation was resisted by Natal Indians 20 years ago, or to assent to the taking away of existing rights, such as that of South African-born Indians to enter the Cape as under the repealed Cape Act, or to submit to the deprivation of the legal status of Indian wives of *de facto* monogamous marriages."—Proposed by Mr. I. A. H. Moosa and seconded by Mr. Bryan Gabriel.

Mr. Gandhi's Telegram

The following telegram has been sent to the Minister of Interior, Pretoria, by Mr. Gadidhi from Newcastle:—

"Have read Government reply Natal Collieries Association. Beg draw Minister's attention fact promise to Mr. Gokhale mentioned Mr. Cachalia's letter, also my letter September 28th. No repudiation then made. Repeal tax though only now made matter passive resistance certainly not after-thought as could be proved from documentary evidence in possession Government. Have repeatedly stated Indian employes under indenture not being brought out for other points of passive resistance. Independent Natal Indians certainly fighting on general grounds. Marriage, South Africa-born Indians to enter Cape, Immigration Act, Licensing Act questions affect Natal infinitely more than other Provinces. Government cannot complain of strike being ample notice was given. Any case respectfully ask Ministers not treat strike as threat, but emphatic expression of intense feeling against tax. Hundreds of poor helpless and comparatively ignorant people will not listen to, fancied unfelt grievances or grievances serious in themselves, but based upon theory. I therefore appeal to Minister to consider tax question upon merits only."

Press Comments

The *Natal Mercury*, in a leaderette on the 29th ultimo, says, in regard to the Government having consulted the Natal members about the tax:—Unfortunately, the majority of the members of Parliament for Natal can hardly be said to represent the political sentiment of the majority of the people of the Province. They belong to the Government party, and would, doubtless, vote on this, as on other questions, according to the wish of the Government. The matter is one on which the Government might very well have been asked to decide for themselves on grounds of expediency and equity.

Remarking upon Mr. Smuts' declaration that the promise of repeal under the present state of affairs would be a public disaster, our contemporary adds: The obvious comment is that the Government have helped to bring about this state of affairs by leaving a genuine grievance unremedied. The present trouble is the result of the Government's procrastination and equivocation, and it is for them to find a dignified way out of the difficulty.

The next day, the *Mercury* again referred to the matter editorially and said: Mr. Smuts was prepared to be guided by the advice of the majority of the Natal members of Parliament on the matter. We have reason to believe that there was a sharp division of opinion amongst the Natal members when Mr. Smuts consulted them, and that the division did not occur on party

lines. It is another question whether the Government ought not to have adopted a policy of their own, and we do not doubt that if they had decided for repeal they could have got their majority to sanction it.

Views of Members of Parliament

With reference to the statement made by Mr. J. C. Smuts (Minister for the Interior), to the effect that Government promised to consult Natal members of Parliament on the question of the repeal of the £3 tax on Indians, and if they had no objection on grounds of policy, Government would take the question of repeal into favourable consideration, Government carried out their promise by consulting Natal members, (says the *Natal Advertiser*) the majority of whom objected to the repeal of the tax, otherwise than affecting women and children. Further inquiries were made of the local members of the Legislative Assembly and it was found that there was no divergence of opinion regarding the advisability of the abolition of the tax. It was strange, however, to learn, despite Mr. Smuts' statement that the Natal members were consulted by him upon the matter, that two of Durban's members, Messrs. Silburn and Boydell were never invited to attend the meeting, although they are both in favour of the repeal of the tax.

Major Silburn

Major Silburn expressed himself in his usual forceful and pithy manner. He said: "Mr. Smuts met me in the lobby of the House, and asked me for my opinion with reference to the tax. I said that I was always opposed to it, because there was no principle in it. In my opinion it was so opposed to the obvious purpose of desiring the Indian people to re-indenture, that it totally failed. Further than that I got it from Mr. Fischer himself, during a visit to Pretoria, that he (Mr. Fischer) had informed Mr. Gokhale that the tax would be raised. Mr. Smuts said that he proposed to invite the Natal members to meet him in order to discuss the question fully; but I did not receive an invitation to attend the meeting, and I found out afterwards that only the Natal members known to be in sympathy with the tax were invited to attend the meeting, and I question whether a majority of the Natal members were present. No one is more desirous than I of seeing South Africa free of the Indians, but I want the question to be discussed upon constitutional lines, and with justice to the Indians."

Sir David Hunter

Sir David Hunter said that he was one of those invited to the meeting, and he was strongly in favour of the repeal of the tax. Throughout the last session he continually asked the Government as to their intentions regarding the tax, and he was always met with the reply that the question was under consideration. He could say that Senator Marshall Campbell, one of the largest employers of Indian labour, was also strongly in favour of the abolition of the tax.

Mr. Boydell

Mr. Thomas Boydell, the labour member for Greyville, was found appropriately enough at the usual Wednesday afternoon meeting of his party at the Railway Gates. While Mr. Kentridge was vigorously expounding matters of moment, the member found time to answer a question upon the subject under notice.

Mr. Boydell says that he, for one, was never referred to upon the question of the £3 tax repeal, and had he been consulted would certainly have been in favour of that course. Mr. Boydell says he is just as much against that tax as he is against the poll-tax on white people. "I have," he added, "protested against the poll-tax, and consider any similar measure an injustice to any section of the community. It cannot be defended upon any principles of justice or equality. It was not really imposed with a view to making those

people return to India, but to make them re-indenture. Had it been imposed with a view to making them return it would have been enforced more strictly than it now is, for very few licences are collected.

"I think the meaning of the paragraph in the telegram that 'the Government carried out their promise by consulting the Natal members, the majority of whom objected to the repeal of the tax otherwise than as affecting women and children,' is that the Natal members who were of the Government party were consulted only. That is the only conclusion I can come to at any rate and as those members are mostly interested in tea and sugar, they would naturally be against the repeal of the tax, because it would interfere with Indian re-indentures. I do not know of any Natal members outside that party being consulted, while I can assure you that neither I nor my party were referred to at all."

From the Editor's Chair

PIE-CRUST PROMISES

There seems to be a taint in the public morality of the leading Ministers of the Crown in South Africa. In 1908 General Smuts undeniably promised Mr. Gandhi to repeal the Transvaal Asiatic Act of 1907. He broke that promise unblushingly and denied having made it. A prominent European sympathiser, who was endeavouring to effect a settlement, came away from an interview with the Minister with the belief that he apparently did not consider it dishonourable to fail to keep faith with a coloured man. The Government gave a written undertaking, in 1911, to remove the racial-bar from the statute-book, as to immigration, and to preserve existing rights. The Immigration Act of 1913 fails to carry out either undertaking, and would have failed still more flagrantly had it not been for the patriotic activities of the Opposition. When Mr. Gokhale met the Ministers at Pretoria, last year, they gave him a clear assurance that they would introduce in the next session of Parliament a Bill to repeal the tax. It is significant, though not altogether unexpected, that General Smuts should deny that such an undertaking was ever given, and that General Botha, who bolstered up General Smuts' act of bad faith, in 1908, should have corroborated the latter's denial now. With existing standards of political morality perhaps nothing else was to be hoped for from these "statesmen." But, for Indians, Mr. Gokhale's emphatic reiteration of the promise is more than sufficient to convince them that it was made to him. His public record is unblemished and he does not consider himself dishonoured when he has withdrawn statements for which he has made himself responsible and which he has subsequently discovered to be inaccurate. But as the Indian objection to the £3 tax was never based upon the giving or not giving of a promise to repeal it, so how it is absurd to suppose that Indians, who have undertaken passive resistance until its repeal, will refrain from action merely because of a denial of the promise by Ministers whose political scrupulousness is not beyond reproach.

General Smuts would now make it appear that the Government are prevented from taking remedial action because of the strike. This, like all else that emanates from the Minister at the present time on this subject, is sheer misrepresentation of the facts. He was not likely, of course, to mention, even casually, that, weeks before the strike commenced, before even ordinary passive resistance commenced, he was urged and implored by Mr. Gandhi to give an assurance that repealing legislation would be introduced by the Government next session. There was no coercion then—for that matter there is none now, unless a pacific demonstration of intensity of feeling may be thus described—and the fact that General Smuts turned a deaf ear sufficiently

condemns his sincerity and his statesmanship. The position to-day is that the Indian passive resisters are now bound to insist that the Government carry out their pledges, and to carry out their own—to persist to the bitter end—in order to do so.

Views of Members of Parliament (contd.)

Mr. H. Meyler

Mr. Meyler, upon being interviewed, said:—

"True to the principles of the present Government the Minister has only told half the truth."

"Mr. Smuts certainly did discuss the question of the £3 Indian tax with some of the Natal members, but his meeting with them was held when the House was actually sitting, and it was difficult to give any time to the matter."

"It was only by chance that I heard of the meeting, and one of the Natal members assured me yesterday that he knew nothing at all about it."

"The members present were unanimous on the point that the tax should no longer be collected from the women and children, but the intention as far as I was concerned, was that this was to be an administrative matter, and when legislation on the subject was rushed upon Parliament on the last day of the session, I killed the Bill, as being only likely to fog the general issue."

"The meeting with the Minister was of a private nature, so I am not at liberty to disclose the nature of the individual votes on the main question, but even if the majority of those present were in favour of the retention of the tax on the Indian men, the voting was very evenly divided, and no numbers were announced to the meeting."

"If Mr. Smuts is correctly reported, at his Pretoria meeting held yesterday, he made an absolute misstatement when he said that the Natal members had 'decidedly objected' to the abolition of the tax."

"The Natal members were never informed that the meeting with them was the result of a promise made to Mr. Gokhale, or they would have wanted to know much more of the matter."

"The £3 tax was imposed solely for the purpose of persuading Indians to return to their own country after the expiry of their indentures, and in this respect it has absolutely failed. The reason why some employers will want to retain it is quite different, and is indefensible in a British Colony."

Senator Churchill

Senator F. O. F. Churchill, who was present at the meeting called by Mr. Smuts, said he was surprised to read in yesterday's *Advertiser* that Messrs. Silburn, Boydell and Fawcus were never asked to attend, and this, he declared, took away from it the idea that it was a representative meeting of Natal members. The meeting was called together in a very higger-mugger fashion, as were several that had been left to Sir Thos. Watt to call. Mr. Churchill said that he was fully in favour of the tax being removed from Indian women and children, and this was the unanimous desire of the meeting. But, he declared, Mr. Harry Escombe imposed the tax with the view to compelling Indians to return to India at the expiry of their indentures, and if the tax is now having that effect, he (Mr. Churchill) was in favour of it being retained. He understood from the Protector of Immigrants that the tax was having the effect of sending Indians back to India, but immediately the tax failed in this purpose it should be removed. Mr. Churchill understood that there were ships waiting to take the Indians back, and while this state of affairs remained, the tax should be retained.

Mr. C. Henwood

Mr. Henwood said that he was strongly in favour of the £3 tax being taken off Indian women and children. "But," he said, "I think it should be

placed upon the men who come to Natal under contract, and they should either return to India or pay the fine of £3 that has been imposed. The Indians have the option of remaining here and paying the £3 or of returning to India and if they find that this country is a better one than their own, they should pay for the privilege of remaining by having to pay the £3. I do not think that Mr. Smuts tried to hold his meeting in the hole-and-corner manner as has been represented. The Natal members were invited to attend the meeting, and the position was very clearly and fairly put before them, and the meeting came to the decision that the tax should be retained as far as the men were concerned, but removed from the women and children, and in this I agree."

Mr. Henderson

Mr. Henderson, M.L.A., stated that the Natal Members and Senators were called together privately by Mr. Smuts during the sitting of the last session of Parliament. The question of the Indian tax was discussed, and a majority were in favour of its continuance as far as the Indian males were concerned, but were practically unanimous in supporting a proposal to abolish the tax upon the women and children. Mr. Henderson said that, as far as he was personally concerned, he agreed to the withdrawal of the tax upon the women and children, but strongly opposed the suggestion to release the men from the tax. He considered the tax was quite an equitable one, especially as the Indians contributed nothing to the support of the country (except indirectly through the Customs) or to the defence of the land. In this respect they were far better off than either the Whites, or the Natives; the latter were called upon to pay a hut tax.

The tax was imposed for the purpose of inducing the Indians to return to India after their indentures came to an end, and he considered it would not be fair to release Indians from the payment of the tax unless those Indians who had re-indentured owing to the existence of the tax, were likewise freed from their agreements. He concluded by expressing the hope that the tax would not be abolished. If it were, then all hope of keeping this a white man's country was at an end.

The *Rand Daily Mail's* Pretoria correspondent, writing on Friday last, says:—

The cabled statement of Mr. Gokhale and the published interviews with Natal M.L.A.'s as to General Smuts's consultation with them on the subject of the remission of the £3 tax on Indians, all of which are more or less a negation of public statements of General Smuts, led to enquiries being made to-day as to whether General Smuts was desirous of replying to the statements or of adding anything to his side of the controversy. General Smuts replied he had nothing to say or to add to what he had previously said.

A Reuter telegram from Lourenço Marques, dated the 28th ultimo, states that the Government Council have completed lengthy discussions with regard to the new law dealing with Asiatics, which is expected to be legalised by publication in the next *Government Gazette*.

All resident Asiatics will be required to pay £1 annually, while newcomers will be taxed £8 per annum for three years, and £1 thereafter, besides giving identification data, including photo and finger-prints.

Commenting on the new measure, the *Guardian* recently showed that many Indians came here through labour agents in Bombay, who recruit principally in the districts of Diu and Kathiawar. Store assistants and others are freely engaged at 100 rupees per annum for three years, exclusive of passage money, £5 either way, which the employer pays, as well as food, clothing, and lodging. These immigrants come for about 11s. a month, or, including food, etc., much less than the average native.

Progress of the Strike

The Coal Owner's Society held a meeting on the 29th ultimo when it was decided to inform the Press as to the attitude of the Society up to the present in connection with the strike of the Indian miners.

The majority of the collieries have up to the present supplied rations day by day to their Indian employers on strike. On Tuesday morning, after the receipt of the telegram from the Minister of the Interior, it was decided to despatch instructions to the mine managers to convey the contents of the telegram to the Indians, and to inform them that, provided they returned to work yesterday (Wednesday) morning, the time they had lost would be treated as a holiday, and no steps would be taken against them for breach of contract. The managers were also instructed to point out to the Indians that the owners could not do anything outside the law, and that, as Parliament would not meet possibly until February next, there was no prospect of their grievance being remedied for several months to come. They pointed out that they had refrained from taking any action in view of the fact that there was some doubt as to the position, but now the position had been made clear by the Minister's telegram, they must demand that the Indians fulfilled their obligations.

The managers assembled the Indians on the mines yesterday, and gave them the message received. The Indians, however, declined to listen, insulting the managers, and intimating that they were only prepared to receive instructions or advice from Mr. Gandhi.

For the purpose of having the telegram from Mr. Smuts delivered to the Indians with some show of authority, a telegram was despatched to the Government urging them to at once instruct the Magistrates in the disturbed districts to visit the collieries and announce that the Government never made any promise with regard to the withdrawal of the tax to Mr. Gokhale, to Mr. Gandhi, or anyone else.

The Magistrate of Dundee motored out to the Burside Colliery for the purpose of addressing the Indians there, and the manager endeavoured to assemble the Indians for this purpose. They declined to recognise the Magistrate's authority, but he, in an endeavour to carry out his instructions, proceeded to the Indians' compound, when the door was slammed in his face. Information regarding this incident has been conveyed to the Government.

In view of the unwillingness of the Indians to accept the terms offered by the mine owners, instructions have now been sent to the various managers to stop their rations, and to arrest any ringleaders who may be intimidating any Indians who may be on the mine and are willing to work.

An Emphatic Contradiction.

Mr. Polak has addressed the following letter to the press:—

In view of the wide publicity that you have given to an alleged insult to the Dundee Magistrate by certain Indian strikers who are supposed to have slammed the door of the quarters in his face, may I ask you, in fairness, to publish the following extract from a letter addressed by Advocate Jas. W. Godfrey, of Dundee, to the *Natal Witness*, of which he has been good enough to send me a copy, the extract being as follows:—

"I personally interviewed the Magistrate and the staff who accompanied him and I am happy to be in the position of publishing an emphatic contradiction to this statement.

"What happened was that the Indians merely remained in their rooms and sent a respectful message through the Indian Interpreter that unless the Government's telegram was one which signified the repeal of the £3 tax, they would prefer not to hear anything from the Government. Some of the Indians whom the Magistrate casually met on the roads stated that as they had gone on strike because of what Mr. Gandhi had informed them, they would only return to work upon his (Mr.

Gandhi's) assurance that this obnoxious tax was repealed.

"I have troubled myself to obtain these contradictions because I feel that such misleading statements are calculated to do innocent men and their cause incalculable injury. The principles of passive resistance are opposed to such methods as offering insults to any person or persons. . . . There is no desire on the part of passive resisters to do anything likely to inflame the European or any other community's opinion against themselves."

In the face of Mr. Godfrey's contradiction, it seems somewhat of a waste of energy to apologise or expect apology for what has never occurred.

I would also take the opportunity of protesting emphatically against the absurd remark made by Sir Thos. Watt, at Kimberley, in connection with the strike, that the Government were prepared to protect life and property. They may need to make such preparations where white strikers are concerned. But passive resisters, in spite of interested reports to the contrary in sundry obscure quarters, do not use methods of violence, even in self-protection, as witness the case of the Indian who received from the compound-manager at one of the Dannhauser mines a most brutal thrashing, and who, although well able to retaliate in kind, refrained from taking the law into his own hands because, like all his fellow-strikers, he had been specially warned against using physical force in a struggle where only ethical weapons could be of service. And convincing evidence of the peaceful attitude of the strikers is given by the special correspondent of the *Times of Natal* on the 31st ultimo, when he says:—"It is most interesting to notice that no lawlessness whatever is indulged in by these Indians."

Sir Thos. Watt's Speech

A Reuter message from Kimberley states that, at a public meeting Sir Thomas Watt said that Mr. Gandhi had tried the passive resistance movement in connection with other grievances; but, as this failed, he suddenly made a grievance of the £3 tax which had been imposed—not for revenue, but as a matter of policy, in order to induce Indians to return to India after having served their indentures. The strikers now demanded that the Government should promise to repeal the tax, otherwise they would remain out and "pull out" other Indians also, thus crippling the mining and agricultural industries in Natal. "No Government worthy of the name," said Sir Thomas, "can submit to be dictated to in this way, and if the Government were weak enough to make such a promise Parliament would repudiate it. If the Indians are successful, the next agitation will probably be from the Natives here and on the Witwatersrand for the removal of all taxes—but tax, poll tax, pass fees, etc.—otherwise they may threaten to strike. The next step would be the brushing aside of the Constitution and all law and order, and the establishment of mob rule. It is absurd to contemplate such a thing at the dictation of a few thousand Indians who are so well treated in Natal under existing conditions that nothing will induce them to return to their own country. The Government has made ample provision for the protection of life and property, and if the Indians prefer to remain on strike the mines will probably manage to carry on with native labour, and the strikers will eventually be the main sufferers."

The Natal Indian Association on Wednesday received the following telegram from Ingogo:—"Mr. Gandhi, with majority Ballengeich men, left at 8 this morning for Volksrust. Number of Ballengeich men still here. Warrants and police after them. Second batch left Newcastle during the morning." The telegram also stated that seven Indian women from the Transvaal arrived at Ingogo on Wednesday night with Mr. Thambi Naidoo, and in the same train were 11

at the mine. Desai was brought before the Newcastle Magistrate on the 29th ultimo and charged with trespassing on the Newcastle mine property.

passing on the Newcastle mine property. Prior to entering the property Mr. Desai had made arrangements with the Manager, who in Court, admitted the fact. But the point was that he had taken a short cut through the fence from another mine. He was therefore sentenced to three months in gaol.

About 200 men and women, under the leadership of Mr. A. D. Pillay, left Newcastle on Friday morning to march to Volksrust. It rained heavily during the day.

A party left by train; 130 paid their own fares whilst 272 full fares and 72 halves had to be paid from public funds.

The Newcastle Committee found sleeping accommodation for about 1,500 strikers on Thursday night.

About 100 families were expected on Friday from Hatting Spruit. A telegram had been received later which stated that the Station-master had refused to entrain them.

Reuter reported on Friday: Messages from various centres in the colliery area show that the Indian miners generally have accepted Mr. Gandhi's advice and started off for the Transvaal border.

A message from Charlestown states that 200 men from the Ballengeich Colliery have been arrested there.

From Newcastle it is reported that another 200 left there this morning by road, and 100 Indian women yesterday, entrained for Volksrust. Some 300 others from Glencoe and other collieries have also arrived there, and it is reported that another 800 are at present en route.

The local Magistrate to-day sentenced 16 men to 7 days' imprisonment, and five others were fined £5.

Another message from Volksrust on the same day states: Eighty men, women and children, passive resisters, arrived by train at Volksrust last evening, and 25 more arrived this morning. Mr. Gandhi, with a party of 200, has reached Charlestown, and is expected at Volksrust to-day. Thumbi Naidoo, leader of the Transvaal Indians, is coming to Volksrust on foot with a party 300 strong, who left Newcastle on Thursday morning. Another detachment left Newcastle under a Durban leader, Mr. Albert Christopher, about two o'clock on Thursday, some 250 strong. The Indians slept at the Police Camp, on the outskirts of the town, on Thursday night.

At Newcastle on the 30th ultimo, Messrs. Bungar and Sundher, both of the Ballengeich Mine, were charged with refusing to work and desertion. They were sentenced to six months' hard labour. Two others (a man and a woman, Moonsamy and Ramabrah), of the Durban Navigation Collieries, were sentenced to seven days' imprisonment without the option of a fine. Mr. Giles was on the bench and he remarked:—"Let Mr. Gandhi do his dirty work," and warned them not to be used as his tools.

On hearing the report that the lady passive resistance prisoners at Newcastle had been forcibly vaccinated, Mr. Gandhi telegraphed as follows to the Minister of the Interior:—"Newcastle Indian Committee have learnt that gaol doctor forcibly vaccinated passive resistance female prisoners by removing blouse and holding arm. Ladies not supplied with ghee, request investigation, prompt relief."

In reply to the above the Director of Prisons states that instructions have since been issued to the Magistrate, Newcastle, that the Minister of Justice will not insist on the Gaol Regulations in regard to vaccination being enforced where religious objections are raised by passive resisters.

With regard to the supply of ghee, the Director adds that ghee does not figure in the diet-scales of prisoners sentenced to three months or under.

Private information came to hand that at some mines the strikers have been severely dealt with and compelled to resume work.

The Cambrian strikers, who were induced by the Deputy Protector to return to work, have gone on strike again.

Mr. Gandhi telegraphs from Charlestown that about 5,000 Indians are affected in the strike area. Of these 4,000 are being fed and supported, including 300 women and 600 children. Three hundred passive resisters are to-day in gaol.

At Charlestown there are now 1,500 strikers. Two thousand more are gathered in Newcastle and hundreds of others are pouring in, prior to marching to the border. The utmost enthusiasm prevails.

At Newcastle, 175 Ballengeich strikers brought back from Volksrust under arrest, were remanded till Monday next. They demanded of the Court that they should have rations. The Government, however, was unable to find accommodation and so discharged them from custody. They are thus thrown upon the community. They desire to return at once to the border.

We understand that the Ladysmith Railwaymen have now joined the strikers.

News of the Struggle

On the 22nd ultimo, Messrs. Bhaga Dhanā, Narsai Ranchand and Sana Kalan went out hawking licenceless in Johannesburg, but, in spite of all their efforts, they did not succeed in getting arrested. They, however, made good use of their time and enriched the passive resistance fund by 18s. 6d.

The following were arrested at Volksrust on the 27th ultimo:—Mr. Hanmanth Vengetsamy from Maritzburg and Messrs. Dominic Francis, Kandasamy Vadivel Moodley, Shenmagam Dorasamy, Joseph Mariam and Gayadin Maharaj from Durban.

The following gentlemen left Durban on the 28th ultimo for the strike area:—Messrs. Albert Christopher (Secretary Colonial-born Indian Association), Ruben Joseph (head-master South Coast Junction Indian School), S. B. Chetty, A. D. Pillay, and C. E. Lal-mohomed, of Sydenham. The foregoing are all Colonial-born Indians.

The names of the four Transvaal men who accompanied Mr. Manilal Gandhi and were sentenced on the 27th ultimo at Volksrust to three months' imprisonment, are Messrs. Suppiah Pillay, Annamaly, Veera Francis and Bhaga Mancha. Mr. S. B. Medh received a similar sentence at the same place on Thursday last.

On Wednesday last, seven more ladies left the Transvaal for Newcastle to take the place of the eleven recently sentenced there.

The Police have now stopped arresting at Volksrust, and Messrs. Chetty, Lal Mahomed and others who had been arrested were discharged.

Messrs. P. K. Naidoo, T. Coopooosamy Naidoo, Willie Morgan, Rajoo Naidoo and M. Ruthnam Pillay crossed the border on the 18th ultimo at Fourteen Streams. They were all arrested and declared prohibited immigrants by the Minister and were accordingly deported to the Cape Border on the 21st. The five returned immediately and were lodged in the Christiana Police Station the same evening. The following day their cases were remanded till the 29th ultimo, when they were all found guilty. The Public Prosecutor for some reason known to himself asked for a further remand till the 4th inst. In the meantime it appears that instructions were sent from Pretoria to discharge the five. They were brought in front of the Magistrate who said that the five were found guilty, but they should appear when called upon to receive their sentence.

Great and memorable was the meeting of Johannesburg Hindus held at the West End Bioscope Hall on Wednesday last, the occasion of the Divali Festival. The meeting had been advertised for 2-30 p.m., but long before that hour every seat in the large hall was occupied, while many were unable to find seats. Mr. G. K. Patel was in the Chair. Among those present were Mr. William Hosken, who received an ovation and was garlanded on rising to speak, Mr. A. M. Cachalia, Chairman of the British Indian Association, Mr. E. M. Aswat, Mr. I. Gabru, the Rev. John Howard,

Mr. L. W. Ritch, Mr. C. E. Nelson, and Miss Schlesin. Delegates attended from several of the country districts.

The Chairman's and other speeches have had to be held over.

On the conclusion of the speeches all present were asked to stand as a mark of respect to the woman passive resisters then undergoing imprisonment; and presently a photograph of the Johannesburg ladies then in Newcastle gaol was shown on the screen. Collections were then called for and a scene of great enthusiasm followed. Rings, pocket-knives, caps, watches, etc., were offered up by their owners, and were put up for auction, fetching extraordinary prices. An umbrella was sold for five guineas, a ring for seventeen guineas, pocket knives for 10s. 6d., a bottle of sweets for £1 10s. A large amount was contributed both in cash and provisions. On the termination of the proceedings, those present formed in procession and quietly marched along Fox and Commissioner Streets, then up Rissik Street and through Pritchard Street to the House of the Chairman in Diagonal Street. The procession was preceded by two men carrying black flags and all wore black rosettes to mark the present sufferings of the community.

News in Brief

We publish with this issue a photograph of Mrs. Sheikh Mehtab who was the first Mahomedan Lady Passive Resister to seek imprisonment. She was accompanied by her mother.

Mr. Wm. Hosken, the Chairman of the European Committee, addressed a letter to the Minister of the Interior on the 15th ultimo, in which the Committee supports the Indians' position and offering its services as mediator between the Government and the Indian community. The Secretary for the Interior replied on the 25th ultimo expressing regret that the Government were not able to avail themselves of it.

At the Durban Bioscope entertainment given by Mr. Rawat in aid of the passive resistance fund the amount raised was £30 8s. 9d.

A Capetown message by Reuter states that the draft Ordinance to amend the law relating to licences provides that an applicant should be able to read and write a "European language," which includes Yiddish, or a language current among the aboriginal natives of South Africa.

The Natal division of the Unionist Party, at the third annual conference at Maritzburg, passed the following resolution to be submitted to the General Congress at Capetown this month:—

Indian Immigration.—"Seeing that it is a declared object of every section of the people, and for the settlement of a contented population, this Congress records its opinion that, while no more Indians should be admitted into the Union, those who are here should be treated with scrupulous justice, and legitimate causes of discontent removed."

The London All-India Moslem League has addressed a communication to the Colonial Office in reference to the recent decision of the South African Court regarding the recognition of Hindu or Mahomedan marriages solemnised outside the Union. The communication says that the Musselmans of India consider the decision as a direct attack on their religion.

Much capital is being made by agitators in India, says the *Rand Daily Mail's* correspondent, out of the treatment of British Indians in South Africa, and the Imperial Government's supineness or inaction in redress the grievances.