

Indian Opinion

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— EDITORIAL

Repatriation Of Indians

We have endeavoured to point out the economic and political conditions of Indians in the Colony at the present time during the last few months in this Journal and it is appropriate, we believe, to request the immediate assistance of our friends in India, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

We claim to have not only friends in India, but we feel confident that our brothers and sisters and the Press in our Motherland will not allow the majority of our people and their kith and kin to continue to perish in this British Crown Colony. It is abundantly clear that the Indian workers are being exploited for the benefit of certain English Capitalists.

We claim to have friends in the United Kingdom, and we now make a special plea to the Fabian Colonial Bureau and the Indian League to render our people all possible assistance to improve their position within the Colony and to bring pressure on the Authorities to afford all those who are willing to return to India an early opportunity to do so.

We claim to have friends in the United States of America and we now make an urgent and sincere appeal to Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Agent General for India in the United States of America to represent our case to the Indian and United States Governments for prompt consideration. It is to be hoped that Sir G. S. Bajpai

Mechanisation of The B.G. Rice Industry

Mahaicony—Abery Rice Expansion Scheme

BY JENARAIN SINGH

Enthusiastic optimism has been expressed by the Press and certain Legislators of British Guiana in regard to the mechanisation experiment now being carried out at the Mahaicony—Abery Rice Expansion area. It is definitely too early to express an opinion one way or the other on the future possibilities of success as far as mechanising the industry is concerned with the present type of equipment.

As far as the scheme proper is concerned, undoubtedly the site chosen is ideally suited for mechanisation; the general lay-out appears to be properly planned, the drainage, the soil and water requirements are apparently good, but the same cannot be said of the machines, tractors, reapers and threshers which are generally speaking somewhat unsuited for the type of work that is required of them. For

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will not consider it an imposition to represent the case of the Indians in this Colony, Trinidad, and Jamaica, also Surinam to the Indian and United States Governments.

Dewan Bahadur, P. K. Pillai and V. N. Tigray, Delegates from India, in their 1923 Report to the Indian Government on a Scheme for Indian Emigration to British Guiana, made the following observations:—
"It is admitted on all hands that but for them (the East Indians) the sugar industry of the Colony would have collapsed years ago; and that they have saved the Colony from utter ruin and bankruptcy."

In the West India Committee Circular of August, 1944, a condensed account of the Sugar Estate Workers Committee's Report was published. This Committee which was composed of the Official Receiver and Public Trustee as Chairman, with the Conservator of Forests and the Deputy Colonial Treasurer of the Colony as Members, found "that male resident piece workers normally work on an average of 2.3 days per week, and female resident workers of 1.45 days per week. That the actual number of days worked by non-resident labourers is not known, but is roughly 3 days per week by males and 2 days per week by females."

In our opinion no more incomplete and biased report could have been

submitted to a Government by an incompetent Committee composed of three Government Officials. This is a British Crown Colony and we have grown accustomed to its methods and pray Almighty God to deliver our people from this bondage.

In 1923, the production of sugar was approximately 100,000 tons; in 1930, the actual tonnage was 127,764 and in 1942, the quantity was increased to 191,767 tons. As mentioned in our leading article on 7th October, under the Caption "The Rice Industry," the Sugar Producers are planning to increase production in 1945 to 250,000 tons. But according to the report of the Sugar Estate Workers Committee mentioned above, workers on Sugar Estates do not work on an average three days per week.

Since the Sugar Producers are so ungrateful to their workers and since the majority of Government Officers and Sugar Planters continue to libel their workers, would it be unkind to suggest to all workers on Sugar Estates to work less than three days per week from now on?

We conclude this appeal to our friends in India, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America to arrange for the Repatriation of our Nationals to their Motherland as soon as possible after the European War is brought to a victorious end.

(To be continued)

Indians Want A Square Deal

BY THE WATCH DOG

By now it must be clear to the most casual Indian observers that they (the Indians) are being subjected to a continuous barrage of attacks from almost every quarter. The local and Imperial governments and the vested interests have used every ingenuity at their command to marshal the forces against them in order to maintain a status quo of semi-slavery condition as exists at present.

Hypocritical pronouncements have been made in all quarters including the Legislative Council by responsible men stating that they were friends of the Indians, but what do we find? Behind those false statements lie the surgeon's knife which cuts clean, but leaves an ugly scar after never to be forgotten by Indians. The question of Universal Adult Suffrage is an outstanding one.

Quite a number of wrongs have been committed against the Indians and the time is not distant when they shall have to take action to correct them. This naturally may lead to a

clash of interest between the Indian and some of the other races inhabiting the colony, the local and Imperial Governments and the vested interests. As can be seen the task is an enormous one; but it will have to be faced squarely and boldly if the existing conditions of Indians are to be changed. If as a result of our aspirations we happen to clash with those opposed to our progress then we shall have to present open battle on the issues, maintain an attitude of continuous charge and be on the offensive until the battle is won.

The politicians and champions of the Indians will have to face the issues with unending energy, and avail themselves of all methods, backed up by the full weight of Indians and a righteous cause. There can be only one answer to such an issue and that is God is always on the side of those who have a just and true cause and with His help victory is certain.

Letter to the Editor

Uitvlugt Pasture
W. C. Dem
10, Oct. 44

The Editor,
"Indian Opinion"

Sir,

Can you oblige us space in your valuable columns to publish the disadvantages we the Pasture Workers of Pln. Uitvlugt are suffering.

There is no well-pipe at the Pasture for the Pasture Workers, and our wives and women-folks have to go to the Estate pipe the only available water center, a distance of about 200 rods before they can get any drinking water. Complaints have been made before the previous Attorney of the estate who had promised to run pipes at the Pasture especially for the pregnant women. The pipes were ordered, but when they came they were utilised in the estate by some other influential Boss, thus depriving hundreds of workers from obtaining a long-felt want. Is this justice to the poor workers who

are responsible for all the luxuries enjoyed by the management?

There are no latrines for the Male workers of the Uitvlugt Pasture. They have to use the railway-line parapet, the open pasture, and the cane fields as latrines without any privacy or sanitation. Is not this a disgrace to the management and a breach of the Medical Health? Cannot the Department of Public Health and Sanitation see that the management build proper latrines for the Pasture workers, so as to improve the sanitary condition of the area and prevent the spread of Hook-worm and Typhoid which is causing such abnormal number of deaths?

Whenever the women and children of the workers go to the hospital for castor oil; they are always told by the dispenser that there is no castor oil, and eventually they have to buy castor oil, from the district drug store whenever they are in need. Is this not a shame to the management, to have an estate hospital and no supply of castor oil? Is it not justifiable that these women and children should get a little castor oil when they need? I do hope in future that the management would see that the estate hospital keep a good supply of castor oil for the use of the Workers.

Thanking you for space,
Yours Faithfully,
PASTURE WORKERS

Rambros Misir

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Three More Indian Students For the United States

MESSRS. KAILAN, SINGH AND NARAYAN

Three more Indian Students are preparing to leave the colony for the United States of America. They are Messrs. Tappie Singh, Hewley Kailan and Omkar Narayan.

Mr. Kailan is a son of city businessman William Kailan and the late Mrs. Kailan.

Mr. Singh is the younger son of Hon. Dr. J. B. Singh and Mrs. Singh of 273 Lamaha Street. He is also the younger brother of Dr. Hardutt Singh of the City Hospital.

Mr. Narayan is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Sase Narayan of Essequebo.

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Woman And The Vote

The vital question of adult suffrage today, while being of extreme importance to the male population of British Guiana, is of equal significance to all women of this country. The existing law does not qualify many women to vote, since very few could possibly meet the property qualifications. The present struggle for adult suffrage is also, one might say, a struggle for the women to vote, although a woman suffrage amendment was added several years ago. This amendment, as we are well aware, did not enfranchise more than a handful of women.

The majority of women in this country still occupy a relatively minor place in society. Their function is still one that does not reach very far outside the confines of the home. Early marriages, too many children, and the meager education permitted women hinders many who have abilities equal to men. Women are encouraged enough to become more educated and to take part in political meetings and organizations as are the men.

We must remember that the women should have as vital an interest in the economical and political problems of the country as any other residents. There is no reason why they should not take active part in the policy-making work of the government. But, they need encouragement. They must be urged to attend meetings—to participate—to contribute ideas—to read—to learn more.

With the enfranchisement of the people of British Guiana, the women will be in a more favourable position to take active part in public affairs. There is no reason for a government in the twentieth century not to include women representatives. Women take active parts in the Government of England, Russia, China and the United States. In India the women are co-operating with the National Congress for the freedom of India. Saro-

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AGENTS

jini Naidu has been president of the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru's wife, sisters and daughters have taken active parts in politics and demonstrations, all of which should indicate to the women of British Guiana that it should be nothing unusual for them to participate in public affairs.

We must keep in mind that approximately 50% of the population consists of the female sex. That means that this large potential voting force must be prepared to understand the problems of the country, to take an active part in the passing of laws.

The women of this country must fight hand in hand with the men for the rights and reforms that are needed. The women must try to educate themselves and to do their best to educate their daughter as equally as they educate their sons. The women of British Guiana must prepare themselves and their daughters NOW for the work they must do in the future.

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Mechanisation of The B.G. Rice Industry

Continued from Page 1

the scheme to be successful the entire mechanized equipments will have to be brought up to modern types of caterpillar tractors and reaper-thresher combines.

Regarding the drainage of the area and the outlet to the sea, I am not too certain that the proper arrangements have been made to deal with heavy rainfall particularly at planting and reaping seasons or periods.

The rainfall in British Guiana is very high at times and this will play the most important part in the success or failure of mechanization. It is therefore important that tractors equipped with more buoyancy be used. The reaper and thresher should be a combined unit, a factor which will considerably reduce the cost of production and will also bring these operations up to modern methods and considerably accelerate speed in the combined operation of reaping and threshing.

Cost of production figures were not available when the representatives of the Press visited the scheme but from the general outlook one can observe that the overhead cost would be very high. This aspect is a very important one and should not be lost sight of.

I hardly think there is anyone in British Guiana who will dispute the fact that mechanization of our industries especially rice is highly desirable but the main draw-back had always been the capital available for laying out the land, proper drainage, irrigation and the right type of equipment.

A number of residents in the Mahaicony—Arary area are today

cultivating large tracts of rice lands by mechanised systems, some of them using much more modern units than the ones used at the new government scheme so that the idea of proof as to whether rice can be successfully cultivated mechanically is so much tommy rot. That the new system now on test will reduce the cost of production is also so much tommy rot. Both of these factors have long been proved by some of the residents of the Mahaicony area in regard to cultivation costs. What is required is organised planning and the laying out of lands best suited for the cultivation of rice with proper access to the area; adequate drainage and irrigation facilities, pumping equipments and mechanised units for planting, reaping, threshing and bagging of the padi.

Organisation of cooperative farmer's units to control and operate these machines etc. and to profitably market the produce through a cooperative body is also very essential.

The tribute that is today being paid to Messrs. Seaford, Gadd and others are really to be showered on Indian men who have pioneered mechanization of the rice industry and proved its value.

Today we feel it our duty to pay tribute to men like the Judgeo brothers and Kisoona Dyal for their single-handed enterprise in paving the path of the future greatness of the rice industry of British Guiana against terrible odds particularly drainage and irrigation and lack of proper communication and access to the area cultivated.

(To be continued)

India And The British Commonwealth

BY SIR GIRJA SHANKAR BAJPAI

Agent General for India In The United States

In a recent editorial, *The New York Times* wrote: 'The (British) Commonwealth is stronger and more unified than it has ever been, and it has a new significance as a pattern for... synthesis of self-government and co-operation which must be worked out if we are to have nations that are reasonably satisfied and a world that is reasonably secure.' India has been promised self-governing Dominions as soon as the war is over and her political leaders can agree upon a constitution to be framed by themselves. Will a place of sovereign equality within the commonwealth give India satisfaction? Will it give her reasonable security? Answers to these two questions, however speculative, are not without significance for the peace and stability of the postwar world....

The Congress party of India has declared for complete independence from the British Commonwealth; it stands for a severance of all political ties between the commonwealth and India. There political groups, perhaps less known in this country but not without influence in their own, would wish to remain part of it. Even for the Congress, Mr. Gandhi is known to have held the view at one time, that once independence were granted, India might decide, of her own freewill, to preserve

the old connection in mutual self-interest. The present atmosphere of impassioned controversy is scarcely conducive to a detached judgment of what constitutes self-interest. The most hardened dogmas have been known to soften under the impact of realistic reasoning. Within the commonwealth, there is more than one historical precedent to encourage the hope that erstwhile foes can become staunch friends.

(To be continued)

A Deserving Appeal

The Members of the Anjuman AJMA. AY IJT AHADUL ISLAM OF PLN. VERSAILLES beg to inform all MUSLIM brothers, Sisters and friends that they are embarking on the building of a Madarsa to educate their children in Urdu and Arabic. They therefore beg to appeal to all Muslim brothers, sisters and friends to assist them in this worthy cause and long felt want. Collectors appointed by the Anjuman would be visiting the different districts and a notification to every district would be served in due course.
MOHAMMED AZEEZ (President)
AJMA AY IJT AHADUL ISLAM OF VERSAILLES.

Inter-Racial Amity

BY THE WATCH DOG

The various races inhabiting British Guiana have each been striving to uplift itself in the different walks of life but unfortunately in their doing so they have crushed each others toes so much that they have gradually grown suspicious of one another.

The two important racial units that really counts in B.G. are the Indians and Africans; the Chinese, Portuguese and Europeans are in such a small minority that strictly speaking they do not enter into the picture; but what do we find in the racial picture, the Africans are continuously being used against the Indians and vice versa, as it were each one of these races endeavouring to gain ground at the expense of the other.

Now if there is going to be any degree of advancement in the general development of the colony; it is essential that all the races inhabiting the colony especially the Indians and Africans cooperate and work in

harmony. This of course is a difficult task especially so, since the administration itself appears to be fostering a cleavage between the races.

Nevertheless if the problem is to be solved successfully; it will need careful thought and scrutiny on the part of the leaders of the Indian and African races; sacrifices will be demanded on the part of both of them. A give and take policy will have to be pursued so that certain privileges and conditions enjoyed by one will have to be gradually given up to the other.

This whole problem has ceased to be a mere sociological one, it is now a full grown political issue and can only be solved by the politicians ingenuity. The Indians are prepared and awaiting; they are always willing to extend the Olive branch to the other racial units and interests for the betterment of the colony, provided there is going to be absolute sincerity on the part of the others.

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