

# Indian Opinion

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## INDIAN VOLUNTEERS

☉ CORRESPONDENCE on the question of Indians volunteering for service abroad has appeared lately in the papers. Mr. Jack Moodley wrote as under to the *Natal Mercury* :—

I am prompted to address you on the subject of the recruiting in our midst as the appeal for men to go to the seat of war is only made to members of the European community. This is a time when in the circumstances under which the great war is being waged against the Godless Germans, and, in view of the fact that many of my countrymen from India to-day are taking a part with the other Colonies and Dominions of Great Britain there can surely be no objection to our participation therein. I am an Indian who was born and brought up in Durban, and feel equally as strong as any other subject of Great Britain, that our duty lies in our being prepared to sacrifice everything in the interest of humanity at large. The question of the moment for us is: Will our services be accepted as if we were Europeans, subject to the same conditions? If the Government declines to accept our offer there are surely many public-spirited men interested in the Indian community to finance us to enable us to travel and join the forces that are being raised in England.

Chris. L. John writes :—

I am a Colonial-born Indian, and, with many like myself, who are born in South Africa, am prepared to enlist in any of the corps now in course of formation. Will you, or those in authority, please inform the public, through your columns, whether our services under the same conditions as apply to the Europeans will be acceptable.

Mr. R. C. Samuelson, solicitor, an old friend of the coloured races, made a stirring appeal for trust in the coloured residents of the Union :—

We see the Empire engaged in a world-wide and most critical struggle on behalf of peace, justice, righteousness and honour; we see millions of her sons and her daughters of all classes, creeds and colours being allowed to, encouraged to, and taking part in this tremendous struggle, and we quietly pat our backs as good and wise boys for refusing and neglecting to help in the struggle by enlisting, preparing and training a good proportion of the vast coloured population of the Union of South Africa and sending them forward as soon as possible, to wipe out the Germans in East Africa, or add to the strength of the Allies in Europe. The excuses we make with regard to this subject are puerile, and have no foundation; in fact it is much like hiding your nose in the sand and making yourself believe that your body is hidden. Our natives are as a race loyal to the backbone to England, and the only way to recognise this fine virtue and to keep it from dying out and giving place to the opposite disposition, is to, at this most

opportune and most suitable period of the Empire's history, give all our coloured races in this sub-Continent a chance to rush to the fray alongside the other Imperial forces, and thus be made to feel that they are trusted to back the same horse as others are, whereby they will be able to exercise that most manly and man-making ambition, which says that our highest and noblest duty is, if need be, to fight and die for King, country and home.

Surely these coloured races of ours are every whit as good as all the other coloured races who are at present fighting on the side of the Allies, except that they require training, and that could be effected in a short time—in six months a mighty and effective host would be ready. Just imagine a force of, say 10,000 Indians, 10,000 coloured people, 20,000 Basutus, and 500,000 Zulus and other aboriginals of the Union of South Africa being trained and added to the Allies! May we be men in time and think and work for the good of the Empire and the Union of South Africa, without fear, without suspicions, but with perfect faith in our natives and all our coloured peoples and in ourselves! Then and only then will this land prosper, permanent peace and satisfaction cloak the land, and we will be justified in feeling that we are worthy descendants of our sires, and have the fine spirit of British principles, which will before long rule the world.

Supporting letters have appeared from day to day and Reuter telegraphed from Capetown on the 24th ultimo, stating:—As a result of representations made through various sources, the British Indian Association at Johannesburg has been notified that the Imperial Government will be pleased to accept the services of a contingent of Indians from the Union for ambulance purposes overseas. The movement has been taken up eagerly locally, and no fewer than 60 men have already enrolled.

Mr. M. S. J. Pillay, of Capetown, informed an *Argus* man that those who had volunteered locally wished to serve the Empire absolutely unconditionally; are prepared to go anywhere, perform any service, and, if the Government wish it, have no desire to be armed. Several military officers, including Captains Gregory and Cramer, have notified their willingness to train the men.

The *Natal Witness* states that five Indian cooks—fine, well-built fellows—called at the recruiting depôt, and offered their services for Flanders.

"They could hardly speak a word of English," said Sergt. Bishop, "but they were keen, and I told them I would communicate with headquarters, and let them know the result of their offer later on. The men thereupon withdrew."

## From the Editor's Chair

### A PENNY PAPER

WITH this issue we commence a new departure. We have decided, after careful consideration, to reduce the price of our paper from three pence to one penny. There are three reasons for this decision. The first is that by reducing the price, we bring it within the reach of the poorest man to obtain a copy of the paper for himself. Secondly, it allows us to make certain changes in our staff which will be a substantial economy. Thirdly, this is a further step in the direction of making the paper purely a record of matters relating to South Africa. With our reduced space we shall have nothing to spare for unnecessary matter. Articles of a more or less general character will not as a rule find a place in our columns for the simple reason that we cannot find room for them. Such articles and also news from India which we have hitherto published can be found much better in the excellent range of very cheap newspapers and reviews that are published in India. Anyone opening our paper now will not expect to find anything but matters that vitally affect the community in South Africa. By a careful condensation of news and reports, we shall give the cream of the week's happenings in a readable form easily understood by all. Whilst, therefore, the paper will be exactly half the present bulk for one third the price to the reader, it will contain much more than half the news and the matter we give will be of greater value. We hope that the change will meet with the approval of our supporters, and we have confidence in asking for a continuance of their interest in the work we are trying to do for the community. We are making this change when there is no lack of matters which seriously affect us. On every side there are indications of danger to the life of the community. It behoves everyone to take an interest in the various matters which are constantly cropping up and make an effort to understand them. We on our part shall endeavour to help by all the means in our power.

### THE GRAND OLD MAN

ONCE more it is our duty and very great pleasure to join in the congratulations which will be showered upon India's Grand Old Man on Saturday next. The Bombay University, in conferring upon the Honourable Dadabhai Naoroji the distinction of Doctor of Laws, has honoured a man whom India loves. At the same time the University adds something to its fame as an educational institution by adding Dr. Dadabhai's name to its roll of honour. On this, the ninety-first anniversary of his birthday, he is able to look back upon a long life of usefulness for his country. Many of his dreams have not materialised and his thoughts must be mingled with sadness; and yet he must have cause for gratitude. A life spent in an effort to uphold the honour of India, whilst fighting strenuously for its rights, must be filled with happy recollections of those of his countrymen who worked with him. And amongst his friends he is able to count many past and present friends of India amongst Europeans. May the memory of all that is pleasant and encouraging be his at this time! We have no doubt that the various public bodies in South Africa will once again send across the sea hearty greetings to the old "war-horse" who has "done his bit" and now looks on whilst others take up the burden. May India never be in want of such men! As a humble mouthpiece of our countrymen in South Africa we send a loving greeting and pray that his life may yet be long spared to the Motherland.

### AN EXTRAORDINARY RULING

THE Transvaal Immigration Board has delivered a remarkable ruling as to procedure and its functions. From a report we have before us, the Principal Immigration Officer appears to have made a somewhat violent attack upon those Indians desirous of bringing their minor sons into the Transvaal who failed to bring with them a certain form, known as D.1.91, duly completed. He stated, *ex parte*, that this form had been adopted by the Department after consultation with Sir Benjamin Robertson when in this country. But, at the same time, he admitted that the completion of this form was not a statutory requirement, but merely a matter of departmental convenience. Upon these representations, the Board declined to hear any evidence in certain appeals that were then before it, and adjourned the hearing thereof for four months in order that form D.1.91 might be completed by a magistrate in India, and thereafter produced before it. What the Board appears to have virtually done is, wholly illegally, to have excluded all evidence save form D.1.91, which is not a statutory document at all, and to have placed the appellants in jeopardy unless this document be produced within a certain time, obviously too short, having regard to existing conditions in India. It is astonishing that a Board, presided over by gentlemen of legal training, should have placed itself in the illegal position of declining even to hear and consider evidence that would be good evidence in a court of law. The Indian community will not sit still under the insult of the implied disbelief in Indian testimony, the more so as the magistrate in India will only be able to complete form D.1.91 after such testimony has been placed before him. We fully agree that, in the majority of cases, it would be eminently desirable for form D.1.91 to be before the Immigration Officer and the Board, but we deny that there should be a hard and fast rule in this matter. We can readily conceive of many legitimate cases where it will be impossible to procure completion of this form. Apart, however, from that, if the Government had wished to adopt this procedure, they surely should have publicly notified the fact, both in the *Gazette* and in the press, and even through the principal Indian organisations. Nothing of the kind, however, has been done. Yet more, we know, as a fact, that the Immigration Officer at Pretoria, until after the Immigration Department Inquiry Commission, was admitting and registering large numbers of minors who did not come provided with any magistrate's certificate at all, whether on form D.1.91 or otherwise. Thereafter, he accepted, and the Board admitted, even up to and prior to the date on which the aforementioned extraordinary dictum was promulgated, appeals where no magistrates' certificates whatever had been submitted; and in other cases, again, he had accepted, and the Board had also admitted, duly authenticated magistrates' certificates, giving the necessary details, but not on the form D.1.91. It is an amazing perversion of facts, therefore, to allege, as has been done, that the Indian community is well aware of the requirements of the Transvaal Immigration Department, when, in point of fact there has never been, and there still is no, consistency in its procedure, for it has followed, and is still following, three separate procedures, two of which have nothing to do with Sir Benjamin Robertson's alleged recommendation. But if the procedure of the Board is startling, how much more so is its view of its functions. We find the Chairman saying: "The best way for them (intended immigrants) to prove their claims to the satisfaction of the Immigration Department or the Board, was for them to comply with the rules and regulations that were made by the Department. The Board had every right to take cognizance of the requirements of the Department, and the Department had even the right to insist upon these requirements being complied with." In other words, instead of the Board being a Court of Appeal from an appellant against the decision of an Immigration Officer, as was

obviously the intention of the law, it considers that its function is to assist the Department against the appellant, and in spite of the law. It appears to regard itself as the mouthpiece of the Immigration Department and almost as a sub-division of it, instead of being an impartial body. It is absolutely wrong to say that intending immigrants should comply with the rules and regulations made by the Department. The Department cannot make rules and regulations. The only rules and regulations by which the general public and the Indian community are bound, are those promulgated under the statute by the Governor-General. We shall be glad indeed to assist the authorities, so far as possible, in procuring form D.1.91 duly completed, because we feel that to do so would ordinarily be a great saving of time and trouble, but we shall be no parties to arbitrary and autocratic demands, to illegal procedure, to the co-operation of Immigration Boards and Immigration Officers, or to exaggerated allegations against the Indian community.

### (Natal Immigration Difficulties

We have been supplied with the following details in connection with an Indian's application to the Immigration Officer for a revision of his domicile certificate:—

Devat Sadool first arrived in Natal in 1895. Two years later he obtained from the Immigration Officer a document which certified that he was a resident of this country. In 1901 he went to India and returned with his wife in 1902. Since then he has resided in Natal, earning his livelihood in the jewellery trade. Of his residence in this Province he has ample proof in the way of receipts and licences, and also personal testimony. Desiring to again visit India, he prepared to sail by the s.s. *Chakdina* on the 21st ultimo. On the 17th ultimo, therefore, he paid a visit to the Immigration Office with a view to changing the document in his possession for another. We are not informed of his reason for wanting to change the document, but we suppose he wanted to bring it up to date. The Immigration Officer took evidence and requested the man to call next day, which he did, only to be again asked to call the following day. When he turned up the third day he was again asked to call again another day which he did. He was then asked to call at two o'clock the same afternoon. He was not then given any instructions but, on arrival at two o'clock, he was told to bring two witnesses. As the steamer was sailing on the following day and he had his preparations to make for his family and himself, he was compelled to seek the assistance of a lawyer who interviewed the Immigration Officer, who eventually informed the legal man that he would consider the matter. The next morning was the date of sailing. The solicitor communicated with the Immigration Officer by telephone and the request was made that Devat Sadool should call at the Immigration Office. When he arrived, it was just upon one o'clock, the hour of closing. The Officer then simply asked the clerk to note down the particulars of the documents and return them to the man. There was, therefore, nothing further that he could do and he sailed for India the same day feeling that, on his return, he may have difficulty in securing a landing.)

The Natal Indian Association has received the following communication from the private secretary to his Excellency the Viceroy of India:—"His Excellency asks me to convey to you and the members of the Natal Indian community his cordial thanks for your kind congratulations upon the extension of his term of office. He is glad to find that his services to India have been so warmly appreciated, and to feel that he has behind him the good wishes of Indians both here and abroad."

### News in Brief

We present with this issue as a special supplement a portrait souvenir of the Honourable Dadabhai Naoroji on the occasion of his ninety-first birthday.

The *Bombay Chronicle* states that, at a meeting of the Senate of the University of Bombay to be held in the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall of the University on Friday, the 6th August, Dr. Harold H. Mann would move—

"That the Senate approves of the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate that the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws be conferred on Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji on the ground that he is, in their opinion, by reason of eminent position and attainments, a fit and proper person to receive such a degree."

There are 101 Indian names on the Parliamentary voters roll for the Division of Durban, 95 being for the Central, 2 for the Point and 4 for Greville. We believe that there are no Indian voters in the other divisions of Natal.

According to the Annual Report of the General Manager of the South African Railways, the number of Indians employed at the end of the year was 3,064, as against 3,616 at the end of 1913, a decrease of 552. There has been a constant wastage in this class of labour since the complete cessation of Indian immigration in 1911.

Great indignation among the progressive members of the Winterton district is shown (says the *Natal Mercury*) at the intention of an Asiatic storekeeper, who for years has been storekeeping about five or six miles from the village. It is his plan to transfer his licence to a building, which has been erected, and which after every wind has caused the comment to be made, "Is it still standing?" It is on the farm Sophia's Rust, belonging to Mr. Jacob van der Merve. The farm adjoins the Government erven of Winterton. It was one of the inducements of the Government, when advertising applications for the lease of the Winterton Settlement Blocks, that no Asiatics were to be allowed on the settlement, and this principle has been adopted throughout. But the principle is in danger if such licence be granted within a few feet of the Winterton village reserve. Influential petitions against this were signed by about 100 of the progressive and deep-thinking members of the district. Another petition signed by most of the Winterton settlers was also got up against the transfer of the licence.

The following appears in the Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries:—The Indian labour supply is much as it was in former years; some managers contend that since the Indian strike the Indians are not working so well as formerly, others say they notice no difference. The Indian coolie is docile and better at semi-skilled labour, such as setting timber, than the native. His wages will rise now that further recruiting in India has been stopped, as it is unlikely that the supply of locally born Indians will equal the demand by the mines and agriculturists. Many of the children are acquiring a smattering of education, which will make them unwilling to do unskilled labour.

Mr. Holden, speaking at a meeting of the Durban Chamber of Commerce, said everybody was going to benefit by the successful termination of the war. But what did they find? They found that there was a small circle of people called upon in every instance to contribute, and, whatever the funds were, it was the same small circle. There were among them a number of foreigners, Germans and other enemy subjects, carrying on business at the present time, and also other aliens, whose country was not engaged in the war, and a great many of them were not contributing to any fund. They

had also in their midst a large Asiatic community carrying on a profitable business among themselves, and those men were able to pay up handsomely, as they found recently in connection with the Turkish Red Crescent Fund, when they got thousands. What had they done for the British Empire? "So far as he (the speaker) knew, they had done nothing. For that class of individual it was no use looking for voluntary subscriptions, and the only way was for the Government to undertake the responsibility and impose taxation, as would affect all in an equal proportion, and out of that taxation contribute South Africa's share to the war. (Hear, hear.) He was not arguing racialism, but that those who benefited should bear a proportion in the liabilities.

[NOTE: Mr. Holden has evidently not taken the trouble to enquire as to what the Indian community has done in this matter. Indians have contributed many hundreds of pounds to the Mayor's War Relief Fund, the Governor-General's Fund, Red Cross Funds, etc. Amongst the contributors were the humblest hawker and labourer. There are very few Indians even amongst merchants able to contribute on a scale such as the members of the Durban Chamber of Commerce can, but there is no need, on that account, to sneer at the Indian community in the above manner.—Ed. I.O.]

## The Indenture System

Mr. C. F. Andrews, in the course of a letter to the *Civil and Military Gazette*, says:—

Now that the indenture system has been practically abolished within our own doors and in Natal, I trust that the time is ripe for Englishman and Indians alike to work together towards the final abolition of the very small remainder. Separating off, as your editorial did, the emigration of coolies to Ceylon, Burma and the Straits Settlement (which is a different problem), I doubt if the emigration to the far distant colonies, such as Fiji, Trinidad, Jamaica, etc, amounts to more than 10,000 each year. This is an absurdly small figure compared with the 315 millions of India. Yet this indenture question, numerically so insignificant, stirs up more bad blood each year in this country than almost any other single question. Why not then have done with it? Why not clear it away once and for all. Why should such an open sore be allowed to go on getting worse and worse?

If it be said that the abolition of indenture will increase the congestion of population, the answer is that large areas of India are still not populated enough, and how short-sighted it is, with the present scarcity of labour in India itself, to be sending out picked, able-bodied coolies abroad under conditions which approximate to slavery! If it be said that the abolition of indenture will seriously injure the colonies—again the smallness of the figures contradicts the statement. The colonies can get their labour more naturally, if not quite so cheaply, from nearer quarters. I did not hear of a single planter who had closed down his estate in Natal since emigration from India had ceased. In any case the numbers are so very small that hardships to individuals could be overcome. If it be said that we should do nothing till the War is over, I would answer that probably the most important contribution we can make to the cause of the King-Emperor is to abolish without any further delay evils which rankle in the minds of Indians themselves and lead to a sense of injustice and degradation.

Writing editorially on the indenture system, the *Bengalee* remarks:—A system that favours and perpetuates immorality of the grossest kind stands self-condemned. A great and a righteous Government should not countenance it.

## અહવાડીક પંચામ

વાર	ખ્રીસ્તી ૧૯૧૫ સપ્ટે	હીંદુ ૧૯૭૧ શ્રાવણ	મુસલમાન ૧૩૩૩ શવાલ	પારસી ૧૨૮૪	સુર્યોદય ક. મી.	સુર્યાસ્ત ક. મી.
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મંગળ	૭	" ૧૩	૨૬	૧	૬-૯	૫-૪૫

## હીંદુસ્તાનની સ્ટીમરો અને ટપાલ

સ્ટી. અમકુશી - તા. ૨૦ ઓગસ્ટના રોજ કલકત્તાથી આ તરફ આવવા ઉપડી છે.

સ્ટી. કાઠિઆવાડ - કલકત્તા માટે અત્રેથી તા. ૩ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં ઉપડશે.

સ્ટી. ગુજરાત - કલકત્તાથી તા. ૧૦ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં અત્રે આવવા વડી છે.

સ્ટી. અમટાટા - તા. ૧ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં જંગબાર રસ્તે મુંબઈ જવા અત્રેથી રવાના થશે.

સ્ટી. પાલમકોટા - તા. ૨ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં ડરબનથી જંગબાર રસ્તે થઈ મુંબઈ જવા ઉપડશે.

સ્ટી. પંડુઆ - તા. ૧૮ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં જંગબાર રસ્તે મુંબઈ જવા ઉપડશે.

સ્ટી. અમલોટી - તા. ૯ સપ્ટેમ્બરના અરસામાં કલકત્તાથી આ તરફ આવવા ઉપડશે.

## Indian Opinion

### NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

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### ગ્રાહકોને વિનંતિ

હવેથી ઇ. ઓપીનીઅનનું લવાજમ ૬. આફ્રીકાના યુનીઅનને માટે એક વરસના પોસ્ટેજ સાથે ૦-૫-૬ રાખ્યું છે. યુનીઅન બહારનું લવાજમ પોસ્ટેજ સાથે ૦-૬-૬ છે. જેમનું લવાજમ અમારી પાસે જમા છે તેમને આ નવા લવાજમના દર પ્રમાણે મુદતમાં વધારો કરી આપવામાં આવશે. આ જાહેર પત્રથી અમારા ગ્રાહકો કે જેનું લવાજમ અમારી પાસે જમા કરી તેમણે સમજી લેવું કે અમે તેમને મુદતમાં વધારો કરી આપ્યો છે.