

Indian Opinion

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ANOTHER BEARER COMPANY

We understand that it has been decided by the authorities to recruit a second Indian Bearer Company. The conditions of service are the same as for the first company, already completed. Men desiring to enroll should apply to the O.C., Stamford Hill Camp, at any time. It is hoped that the employers of those wishing to enlist will co-operate and assist as far as possible, more especially in not insisting on the notice to leave being fully worked out. This is desirable in view of the short period remaining for training.

A Recruiting Meeting at Dundee

Capt. Dunning, who is recruiting for the Indian Bearer Company, is at present in Dundee (says the *Natal Mercury* Correspondent) and a meeting was held on Sunday afternoon. There was a good attendance, mostly of town Indians, though the mines in the district were also represented. The Mayor presided, and the meeting was addressed by Capt. Dunning and the Magistrate (Mr. Leslie). Interpretations into Hindustani and Tamil were done by Messrs. Godfrey and Naidoo. The Indians present seemed much interested, and asked for a little time to talk things over amongst themselves. Several present seemed inclined to join, and there is little doubt that Capt. Dunning will obtain some recruits from this town and district.

Donations Acknowledged

The Officer Commanding the Indian Bearer Company desires to thank the following for gifts gratefully received by the company: Messrs. R. Somasundaram, books; M. C. Anglia & Co., 1 box cigarettes; Shaik Himed, 1 tin Ramie biscuits; J. W. Price, Red Hill, periodicals; Parsee Rustomjee, 1 box milk, 1 box soap, 1 box candles, 1 gross matches; Rajkomar, milk daily; Mrs. Anama, 1 bag potatoes; Mrs. A. Francis, Greyville, 1 dozen tins of milk and half-dozen tins of jam; Messrs. A. F. Peters and Samidos, and the Indian staff of the Atheneum Tea-rooms, Maritzburg, 10 boxes of plums; the Merrivale Dairy, 10 gallons curdled milk; the proprietors of the *Natal Mercury* and of the *Natal Witness* papers daily; the proprietors of *Indian Opinion* and of *The Vveka Bhano*, papers weekly.

Proposed Flower Sale

We are informed (says the *Natal Witness*) by Mr. A. H. Peters that Messrs. Paul Devadossan and I. M. David have left their situations, and travelled by last night's midnight train to join the Indian Bearer Company at Durban.

A committee of local Indians will shortly be formed for the purpose of raising funds to purchase necessary comforts for the members of the Indian Bearer Company. It is proposed to hold a street flower sale shortly. Many prominent City Indians are not only identifying themselves whole-heartedly with the movement, but are willing to send their daughters to assist at the

sale. It is to be hoped that the Maritzburg public will contribute to the movement to assist in a noble and just cause.

Mr. Peters informs us that the Mayor is in sympathy with the movement, and will do everything to make the sale a success. Mrs. P. Davis (organising secretary, Patriotic League) and other ladies have also offered their help.

Comforts Committee Formed

A fairly well attended meeting, convened by the comforts committee, was held on Wednesday night in the Union Theatre, kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Rawat and Co.,

Mr. Robert Somasundram presided, and was supported by Messrs. Parsee Rustomjee, B. M. Singh, V. Lawrence, A. Christopher, Rev. and Mrs. Bone, and the secretaries (L. Gabriel and R. N. Sullaphen). A number of ladies representative of those who are working in the making up of comforts for the men, and also large numbers of the members of the Bearer Company were also present.

Mr. Somasundram spoke of the formation of the committee, pointing out briefly the necessity and the urgency, and that it was the wish of that committee to give every Indian who chose the opportunity to "do his bit" towards the cause in which they were all interested. He emphasised the sacrifices the men were voluntarily making, and risking, as they would do in some way or other, their lives in carrying out their duty. He asked those who were not going to the front to come forward and sacrifice a little, and they could do so either by subscribing towards the Oversea Contingent Fund, or by contributing towards the comforts of the men of the Bearer Company, or they could devote their time to carrying on the work of the Comforts Committee; whichever it was, it must involve some sacrifice on their part. He asked them to confirm the provisional committee that had been formed, and called for volunteer workers to carry on the movement.

Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, in moving the confirmation of the committee as now constituted, said that volunteer workers must not give in their names as mere ornaments, but must be honest workers, and remarked that a committee of which he was chairman had 100 members but only four constant workers.

The gentlemen present who gave in their names were Messrs. M. C. Anglia, Rev. Mr. Bone, Sookdeo, Washington, Harris, Emmamally, Tajmoon, Ernest, and others.

The Rev. Mr. Bone was elected treasurer.

The following gentlemen offered comforts and material for the making up of garments:—Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, 1 case soap, 1 case candles, 1 case milk, 1 gross matches, and any other necessities that may be required from time to time; Mr. B. M. Singh, 1 piece flannelette; Messrs. M. Rawat and Co., proceeds of one night's bio entertainment; Mr. M. C. Anglia,

proceeds of one night's bio entertainment; Mr. Tandree, sewing material; Messrs. Somasundram, Ballasam, Parshotam Dagee, 1 piece flannelette each; Mr. L. Panday, 1 piece calico; Mr. R. Bughwan, 100 cholera belts; Messrs. Emmamally, Tajmoon, and Naik, flannels. A sum of money was also collected from the audience. Other speakers were the Rev. Mr. Bone, Mrs. Bone, Messrs. Christopher, and Gabriel.

On the proposal of the chairman a vote of thanks was given to Messrs. Rawat for placing their premises at the disposal of the committee whenever required.

The meeting ended with the singing of the National Anthem and cheers for the success of the Allies.

Four Indians who joined the Ambulance Corps have left for Stamford Hill (says the *Natal Mercury's* Maritzburg correspondent). They are giving up positions worth £6 to £9 a month for the sum of 6d. a day, and are leaving their dependents to the care of compatriots and the few Europeans who are interesting themselves in the cause of the Indians.

Indian Subscriptions to the War Fund

The Finance Committee wish to acknowledge with thanks the following further subscriptions received from the Indian community:—

	£	s.	d.
Already acknowledged	162	13	0
Collected by Durban Indian Committee	59	16	6

Monthly Contributions.—Already acknowledged, £17 7s. 3d; Rajcoomar, £1; Indian community of Tongaat, per Mr. F. Rathbone (second sub.), £1 19s. 9d; total, £20 7s.

We understand that the Durban Mahomedan Committee of the Overseas Contingent Fund has so far collected the sum of £117 17s. as the first monthly instalment. The payments are promised for one year.

The Ladysmith Mahomedan Committee has obtained promises of monthly payments amounting to £22 15s.

Gift for the Troops

In response to a request from the South African Gifts and Comforts Organisation Committee, Capetown the Durban Women's Patriotic League is indebted to the following for one ton of gwaai for the native troops in Northern Rhodesia: Parsee Rustomjee, Field Street, Durban, for obtaining, packing, and forwarding one half-ton of tobacco; R. B. Chetty, Umgeni Road, Durban, who provided the half-ton of tobacco; Dawad Mahomed, Umbilo Road, Durban, and M. C. Anglia, Commercial Road, Durban, who obtained half-a-ton of tobacco from the Indian merchants; Mr. S. J. Kerdachi, Durban, packed in bessian and forwarded half-a-ton at his own expense.

With reference to the above handsome gift, the following letter has been received from the secretary to the Administration, Livingstone: "I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. O.C. 3/15 of November 4, informing me that the Indian community of Durban has presented one ton of gwaai for the use of the native troops operating on the northern border of this territory. I am directed to express the thanks of his Honour the Administrator for this gift, which will be transported to the border free of charge."

[NOTE: We print the above as it appeared in the *Natal Mercury*. It is a pity that in acknowledging such acts of generosity room could not have been found for a plain "Mr."—Ed. I.O.]

Indian Trespasser Sjamboked

A European, O. E. Bjorseth, manager of the tramways at Isipingo, took the law into his own hands when an Indian was caught trespassing on Beach Corporation lands, the result being that he was summoned to appear in the District Court on the 1st instant on a charge of assault. Mr. B. Cowley appeared for accused, who pleaded guilty under provocation.

Mr. Roberts said that would be a plea of not guilty. Thereupon accused pleaded guilty.

Complainant, who lives at Isipingo, said he was there about two weeks ago, when he passed accused's property, but in doing so picked some mushrooms from the roadside, and accused sent a native to fetch him back. The native took complainant back, and accused then struck him eight times with a sjambok. There was no reason why accused should strike him, as the mushrooms were by the roadside.

By Mr. Cowley: The road led to Isipingo bridge. Witness thought he had a perfect right to pick the mushrooms.

Sergt. Margetts, who prosecuted, said he did not mind admitting that complainant was trespassing.

Defendant, manager of the trams run by the Isipingo Beach Corporation, in evidence recalled the incident connected with the charge. He (accused) was told that the Indian was stealing mushrooms, and he sent a native after him. When the Indian arrived witness asked him why he took the mushrooms, and was told that others took them. Witness told him he had no right to do it. The Indian became abusive, and witness gave him two or three cuts with the riding whip on the legs.

Mr. Cowley said without some discipline it would be impossible to keep anything on the estate.

A fine of 10s. was imposed.—*Natal Mercury*.

Employment of Coloured Troops

In the House of Assembly on Monday, Mr. Fichardt (Ladybrand), said he protested with all his might against the monstrous thing the Minister of Defence was doing, namely, the arming and drilling of coloured men in South Africa. He referred to the Coloured Corps that had been raised. This arming of Coloured people would, he said, have a disturbing effect on the Natives. There was very considerable objection in South Africa to khaki, and it was going to be a thousand times worse if it was to be worn by Kafirs and Coloured people.

Sir Thomas Smartt (Fort Beaufort) said Mr. Fichardt had tried to introduce a very poisonous issue, and he hoped the House would repudiate, in the very strongest terms, the manner in which he had referred to the loyal Coloured population of this country. He (Sir Thomas) was sorry the Minister of Defence had not seen his way to enrol more of these people, who had a greater appreciation of the freedom enjoyed under the British flag than some other sections of the population.

General Smuts, in referring to Mr. Fichardt's remarks about the Coloured Corps, for inclusion in the East African Contingent, strongly deprecated the hon. member's allusion to these Coloured men. They were not barbarians, like the Askaris of Central and German East Africa. They were educated people, voters, and in many respects set a fine example to certain of their white population. It was no novel procedure to include Coloured corps, inasmuch as Coloured people had always been included by the Imperial Government in any forces fighting in Native wars. Why, therefore, should the Union Government now be blamed for a practice which had been followed for the last hundred years in the Cape?

Mr. R. W. Close (Rondebosch) defended the Coloured men as lovers of law and order, and said that their loyalty required no testimony in view of recent

events. He resented an undeserved attack on a body of honourable men.

Mr. Charles W. Malan (Humansdorp) condemned the Government's action in arming coloured men, which he declared was not in the interest of the country.—*Keuter.*

From the Editor's Chair

MORE ZULUM

CLOSE readers of our columns recently will not be surprised to learn that the Transvaal Immigration Officer continues to make demands that are illegitimate either on the grounds of law or policy. We pointed out last week how, in a case before the Appeal Board, he had endeavoured to go behind a Magistrate's Certificate on the form D.I.91, although the Government have distinctly undertaken to accept such a certificate as conclusive evidence of the facts set forth therein. We are now informed that minors, bringing with them from India such certificates, are detained indefinitely at the Port of arrival, and that instead of being admitted to the Transvaal upon the strength of the certificate they bring with them, they are only permitted to enter that Province upon depositing bail. This is a distinct and deliberate breach of the Government's undertaking and this being so the Government must not be surprised if Indians in future refuse to put themselves to the trouble of procuring a Magistrate's Certificate on form D.I.91, which, apparently, protects them no more than any other form of Magistrate's Certificate equally valid in law. Nor does this end the series of high-handed actions of which Mr. Cousins is guilty. One of the grounds of registration under Act 36 of 1908 is the possession of a Peace Preservation Ordinance Permit duly issued, of which the evidence is its production bearing the holder's thumb print. Mr. Cousins now attempts to investigate the circumstances in which that permit was issued to the holder, forgetting that *prima facie* evidence of its having been duly issued being already given, the burden lies upon him to prove that the document was not duly issued to the person presenting it. What he is actually trying to do is, by improper and unlawful inquisition, to oblige the applicant to commit himself to something that may be used against him in a Court of law, without being warned of the purpose for which the enquiry is made. In the face of *prima facie* evidence submitted to the Registration Officer he has no authority, legal or otherwise, to conduct any further investigation, unless he is already in possession of rebutting evidence, and we earnestly trust that applicants for registration, on the basis of a Peace Preservation Ordinance Permit, bearing the thumb impression of the person to whom it was issued, such person being the applicant, will decline to make any further statement or give the names of witnesses. We know, of course, that Mr. Cousins is a very able officer, but we do not know that he is better acquainted with the law and the practice on this point than his predecessor or the various special Magistrates appointed to hear Asiatic appeals under the registration law.

* The Indenture System (writes Mr. C. F. Andrews in the *Bombay Chronicle*) has now gone on under Government regulation, and with Government sanction, for over 55 years. All that time it has been a blot on the name of India. It has marked Indians who have gone out to the Colonies with the badge of semi-slavery. It can hardly be wondered at to-day, if the name of "Indian" ranks low in those Colonies, and they are unwilling to allow equality of citizenship. The common word for "Indian" in South Africa was "coolie." The first step towards any claim of equal citizenship is the abolition of the Indenture System.

Asiatic Trading at the Cape

The *Cape Times* has the following leading article upon the question of Indian trading at the Cape:—

The City Council discussed the vexed question of Indian trading licenses, and eventually decided to refer the question to Committee of the whole Council, evidently with a view to securing greater freedom of debate. It is a problem which bristles with difficulties, for on the one hand, there is the general desire, as we believe, to deal fairly by those Indians who have been allowed to enter the country, and on the other, there is the strongly held conviction that the Indian trader, by reason of his capacity to live at an absurdly cheap rate, is an unfair competitor with European traders. In its attempt to compromise between these two considerations a Committee of the Council brought forward a Report recommending that, in regard to new licenses, it is undesirable to issue an undue proportion to Asiatics, and that, inasmuch as the number of Asiatic licensees is already one in every three of the total Asiatic population, while the number of European licensees is only one in every 81 of the population, no new Asiatic licences be granted. Such a compromise, however, can scarcely be defended on political grounds, whatever may be said for it on grounds of expediency. An application for a license ought to be considered on its merits, whether the applicant is a European, a coloured man or an Indian, and we are glad to see that there is a considerable body of opinion in the City Council which takes this point of view, even if it is not exactly the popular point of view. Having once admitted the Indian to our hospitality, it is the business of the community to see that he receives fair treatment, and it would certainly not be fair treatment to refuse a license to an Asiatic applicant merely because a large number of his compatriots already hold trading licenses. Such a principle is unsound in itself, and would be capable of dangerous extension. The main objections taken to the Indian trader are that his standard of living is so low that he is able to exist on a wage which no European could consider; that he is consequently able to under-sell his European competitor; that the Indian as a class is a constant offender against the elementary laws of sanitation; and that too frequently he is dishonest in his business relationships. A certain amount of colour prejudice may also have complicated the case against him, but this, so far as the City Council is concerned, may be dismissed from the calculation. Now, the first of the objections we have mentioned is really dependent to a very great extent upon the other two. The Indian trader will probably always be able to under-sell his white competitor as long as his standard of living is as low as it is; but at least very much can be done in compelling him to adopt a hygienic standard not lower than that of European traders. Furthermore, if Indian traders are dishonest as a class, there are legal methods of dealing with their dishonesty and preventing it serving them as a means of cheap trading. Let the sanitary standard be raised, and the criminal code be tightened up if necessary, and two of the factors which are held to weigh most heavily in the indictment against the Indian trader would be in a fair way to removal. Such action would avoid the odium of class or race legislation, and would compel the Indian trader to conform to those requirements of business in a white community which are expected of the European dealer. Mr. Spracklen's proposal seems to us to meet the position very fairly. He suggests that the issue of licenses should be considered by a special committee who, in issuing licences, shall be governed by such considerations as the length of residence of the applicant in the Peninsula; the satisfactory character of the police and health reports; and the nature of the locality. The residential qualification is certainly one that should be considered. Generally, the effect of the legislation passed by the Cape Parliament shortly before Union has been that many of the Municipal Councils have made use of their powers in order to drive the Asiatic

out of business. If a single Municipality, like Cape Town, were to follow a more enlightened policy, the result might be to attract to the Cape Peninsula the Indian traders of the whole Province, and that is not a desirable possibility. It could be prevented by a residential qualification, but even here there arises the difficulty that such a qualification, if it were made generally applicable, might have a very unfortunate effect in restricting legitimate trade. Whatever the solution at which the Council arrives may be, we hope it will be governed by the consideration that the Indian, when he has been allowed to enter the country and settle here, ought to be treated fairly. Now that Indian immigration is prohibited, it is reasonable to suppose that the problem will in course of time solve itself, as the Indian may be expected gradually to conform to the higher standards of living of the community in which he resides.

Mr. V. R. Vartak writes as follows to the *Cape Times* :—

It is to be greatly deplored that some of the Councillors and the correspondents on "Asiatic Trading" should have happened to take up the attitude they have, especially in times such as at present. To me it seems a blunder to engender bitterness and excess by treating the Indian section of the lawful residents in South Africa with dislike and resentment. I do not know whether there is any season in which such an attitude can be said to be justifiable, but this much is certain, that presently it is out of season. When the Government, on the one side, is busy arresting sedition, it is painful to note how these people in their conception to earn a cheap applause are doing at this stage exactly the opposite by perpetuating bitterness and resentment in their midst. Your correspondents on this Asiatic subject have used, like the Councillors in question, abusive language. The Indians will not, although I assure you they can, use violent language at this stage at least. They will exercise patience. They have, I venture to say, more respect and sympathy towards the Empire in the present crisis. The Councillors, who share the responsibility of the Empire's welfare, should be more discreet and exercise a spirit of broadminded liberality, mutual forbearance, and a certain reciprocal respect. If they cannot do all this for the sake of the Empire, which they ought to, let them at least forbear from using abusive tone. If there is any time for the imperative necessity of respecting the pledges about equality of the Great Proclamation of 1858, and if there is any respect in the minds of the Councillors and their compatriots towards the declared policy of the Crown, that it should be one of righteousness, to a policy which has been firmly announced by the voice of the Great Queen, who then wore the Crown and which has since not very long ago been repeated by His Majesty King George V., that time is most specially now at this very critical stage. This is not a time when those pledges of equality, which the Councillors cannot but respect if they have real love for the Empire, should only be kept in the letter and be broken in spirit; this is not the time when distinctions of race, colour, and creed, abolished by our Magna Charta, are to be persistently, again and again, introduced under the plausible guise of being distinctions based on the distinctive merits and qualifications inherent in race, while the burdens of the Empire, which should be borne by all alike, are thrown heavily on Indian finances, not to say anything of disproportion. In the face of all these facts, it is curious enough that a portion of the Indian subjects of His Majesty is allowed in the Colonies to be deprived of their rights of equal citizenship in the undisguised interests of the white races against the dark in a way which, the responsible Ministers of the Crown gravely declared, furnished a just cause of war against the Boers. If all this sort of bitterness and resentment is to be kept alive so strenuously, what was the good of all the inquiry com-

missions which sat in the recent past and made promises and established rights of those who are already in the Colony? It is very deplorable, indeed, that certain Councillors and such of your correspondents as wrote, should ignore common sense and give vent to utterances which cannot be but calculated as detrimental to the interests of both the Indian people and the Empire. I regret, sir, to have to write on this subject in the way I have done, but as I believe in the ultimate wisdom, beneficence, and righteousness of the English people, I wish to warn my own people as well as others who indulge in abusive attitude of the necessity of abstaining from the folly of using violent and abusive language at this stage, as it would only tend to increase bitterness the more.

Cape Coloured Regiment

Capetown, Nov. 29.—Colonel Morris who is raising the Cape coloured men's battalion, has now had permission to add to his force a substantial percentage of married men between the age of 25 and 35. These will receive the pay and separation allowances of the West India Regiment—pay at 1s. a day rising to 3s. 6d. for the sergeants, and allowances to wives ranging from 1s. 1d. a day to 2s. according to the rank of the husbands. Children get 2d a day each, and if motherless 4d. Colonel Morris has already got 600 men out of the 1,000 wanted, and there are excellent reports of their quality, and the way they are shaping under training.—*Natal Mercury*.

News in Brief

We unfortunately omitted the name of Mr. Lawrence from the list of those present at the farewell reception to Messrs. Imam Sahib and Sorabji Rustomji. Mr. Lawrence was largely responsible for collecting funds in connection with the addresses, etc.

We learn that the Uitenhage Indian community cabled to the Viceroy a message of condolence on the death of the late Sir Pherozechsh Mehta and expressing sympathy with the family.

The Indian Sporting community held a reception to the members of the Indian Bearer Company, at the Union Theatre, last Thursday evening, with the special object of making presentations and giving a hearty send-off to those members of the sporting clubs who had joined the corps. Light refreshments were served.

We understand that Mr. Albert Christopher has been promoted to the rank of Staff-Sergeant of the Bearer Company.

The Natal Indian Association passed a resolution of sympathy with the family of the late Sir Henry Cotton.

The following resolution was passed by the Capetown Indians at a meeting specially called under the auspices of the Awakened India Society for the purpose of expressing sorrow at the deplorable death of Sir Henry Cotton :—

"That we local Indians representing all the sections resident in Cape Town and in the suburbs, unanimously record our deep sense of sorrow at the loss in the death of Sir Henry Cotton of a great devoted friend of India and a genuine helper in our cause of Home Rule. We further desire to say that no expression will sufficiently define our deep gratitude towards him for the untiring help he rendered us in our South African problem."