

Indian Opinion

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EDITORIAL —

Livestock.

The consumers of meat have been very fortunate in getting approximately 800 head of cattle from Brazil. We are informed that His Excellency Sir Gordon Lethem played a great part in securing these 800 head of cattle which arrived via the Rupununi Cattle Trail about a fortnight ago.

For over four years the consumers of all kinds of meat—beef, mutton, chicken, etc., have been finding it very difficult to obtain an adequate supply of meat. Up to this day all butchers have to ration their customers and the Government of British Guiana seems quite satisfied with the present state of affairs.

According to the latest figures supplied by the Supplement of the Bureau of Publicity and Information the number of cattle, sheep and goats slaughtered for 1943 was 8,699 and 1,406 as compared with 6,743 and 1,525 in 1944. While the number of sheep and goats increased by 119, the number of cattle decreased by 1,956 in 1944. The importation of the 800 head of cattle we believe is the first herd to be increased by double the number, no doubt, later on in order to meet in part the domestic requirements of the people of this Colony.

Now, what are the potentialities of British Guiana in regard to the rearing of LIVESTOCK? Are we going to be

The Department Of Agriculture

BY THE WATCH DOG

British Guiana depends almost entirely on Agriculture for its economic existence.

On its agricultural policy depends

the prosperity or poverty of the inhabitants of the colony.

The agricultural policy that is being pursued by the present Director of Agriculture and the Advisory Committee as far as the policy concerning the technical personnel of the Department is concerned is wholly unsatisfactory and is rotten to the core.

The Director of Agriculture is a foreigner as far as British Guiana is concerned and a "bird of passage" as is generally understood by us. The senior staff of the Department is composed of similar men, much to the detriment of the inhabitants of British Guiana.

The majority of people of British Guiana have been asking for some time past that they would like to have Prof. J. S. Dash—Present Director of

Continued on page 4

Notice

The Annual General Meeting of British Guiana East Indian Association will be held on February 11, 1945 at 1 p.m. at the Pavilion of B.G. East Indian Cricket Club, Thomas.

All motions and resolutions must be sent in 10 days prior to the meeting. All Indians are invited.

AGENDA:

- Presidential Address.
- Secretary's Report.
- Treasurer's Report.
- Any other business.

AKBAR KHAN,
Hony. Secretary.

told by the 'EXPERTS' of this government that it is not practicable to supply our own meat requirements without going 'hat in hand' to our Brazilian neighbour for Cattle?

We pointed out in this column in December 16 that in 1933 we exported 458 head of cattle. Efforts were then being made to build up an export trade and had it not been for the action of certain vested interests supported by the Department of Agriculture, the Local Government Board, and the Drainage and Irrigation Board, this Colony would have been exporting thousands of head of cattle and other products.

It is within our personal knowledge that thousands of peasant farmers can raise tens of thousands of cattle, sheep, goats etc., on the Coastlands if this Government will give them an opportunity to do so but it appears quite plain to us that it is not the policy of the present Government to encourage a prosperous peasantry. Large tracts of land lie waste in Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo that have been actually applied for by a number of peasants

acting in co-operation, only to be told by the officers of this Government that the lands cannot be given to them. In some cases the lands are held, not beneficially occupied, by large Companies and in other cases, although Crown lands, can be leased to the applicants, various excuses were given to the applicants. Are these facts not known to Sir Gordon Lethem? If the Governor pleads ignorance, then we respectfully suggest to him to get the facts from the District Commissioners of Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo and from the Department of Lands and Mines.

Finally while the Government may put itself on the 'back' that a good job was done to get beef cattle from Brazil and while certain consumers may be happy to get a little more weekly, the cattle farmers, Peasants and Indians hope and pray that they will be given a better opportunity to make themselves a little more independent by their own initiative and work provided the opportunities are afforded them by this Government which is supposed to be working for their welfare.

Letter To The Editor

Pln. Albion, (William Burg)
Corentyne Berbice
23rd January 1945

The Editor:
Indian Opinion

Sir,

May these few lines be published in the columns of the Indian Opinion.

As an Indian, it behoves on me a duty to let you know of the dissatisfaction prevailing in the Magistrate's Court on the Corentyne Coast.

The Magistrate comes to Court, a negro policeman calls the names of persons having cases. The barefooted Indian is in the court yard, the sun is hot; he tries to get a little shelter to shade himself. His name is called, he takes a little time to enter the Court; the Magistrate queries, "what were you doing so long? Your case is struck out, I can hear it no more." If you are a defendant then you have to stand to hear noxious insults.

This is not all. Indian names at times puzzle the negro officer and instead of calling Gopaul, he calls Bhupaul; instead of calling Ramsaroop, he says Ramrop; for Jasmal, he may say Basmat and other names too numerous to mention. This erroneous calling of names places one in a difficult position, though he is there, he knows not who is called.

Another open remark from the Bench is, "have you any lawyer to defend you? I will not hear your case if no one appears for you." Woe be unto the person, Mr. Editor, if no one appears for him.

I do not want to enumerate and challenge the Magistrate's findings, but we would ask in all sincerity, having seen what is happening.

Does the Magistrate suffer from inferiority complex, or racial prejudice, which?

The Rt. Hon. Lord George said "Justice is essential to every British citizen" but I have seen no justice for the poor man when he has to seek it against a well-to-do one.

I should suggest, Mr. Editor, that the people's representatives should select the magistrates rather than allowing the few Government officials to select men who are incompetent for the post.

Rumour says the magistrate does not want to stay in the Corentyne district. If this is true, why not transfer him and let him be pleased rather than keeping him in a place where he does not like to be.

Does not this make him angry?

Will Government look into this matter and rectify the many evils that I have mentioned.

Thanks for publication.

I am
Yrs. truly
"CATCHUP."

The Viceroy-Gandhi Correspondence

The following correspondence has passed recently between H. E. the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi:

'Dilkusha',
Panchgani,
15th July, 1944.

Dear Friend,

You have no doubt seen the authentic copies, now published in the Indian Press, of the statements given by me to Mr. Gelder of the News Chronicle. As I have said to the Press they were meant primarily to be shown to you. But Mr. Gelder, no doubt with the best of motives, gave the interview premature publicity, I am sorry. The publication will nevertheless be a blessing in disguise, if the interview enables you to grant at least one of my requests contained in my letter of 17th June, 1944.

I am,
Yours etc,
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.

His Excellency the Viceroy,
Viceroy's Camp,

New Delhi,
22nd July, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of 15th July. I have seen the statements you made to Mr. Gelder, and your subsequent explanation of them. I do not think I can usefully comment at present, except to repeat what I said in my last letter that if you will submit to me a definite and constructive policy I shall be glad to consider it.

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd.) W. AVELL

M. K. GANDHI, Esqr.

MR GANDHI'S PROPOSAL

As at 'Ashram', Sevagram,
Camp Panchgani,
27th July, 1944.

Dear Friend,

I must admit my disappointment, over your letter of 22nd instant. But

I am used to work in the face of disappointment. Here is my concrete proposal.

I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that in view of changed conditions mass Civil Disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August, 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian Independence is made and a National Government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that, during the pendency of the war, the military operations should continue as at present but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But I am in your hands. I shall continue to knock so long as there is the least hope of an honourable settlement.

After the foregoing was written I saw Lord Munster's speech in the House of Lords fairly represents my proposal. This summary may serve as a basis for mutual friendly discussion.

I am
Yours Sincerely,
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.
His Excellency the Viceroy.

(To be continued)

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The Economic Aspect Of Disunity

BY C.B. JAGAN, B. SC, D.D.S.

Much is being said these days about sectionalism and disunity, not only in British Guiana, but in various parts of the world. We are always told that in India the Hindus and Muslims and the feudal princes have separatist tendencies and therefore cannot bring about a united India. In Jerusalem we are reminded of constant Jewish-Arab strife. A few years ago, a militant Germany made invasions on the pretext of protecting the interests of German minorities. Could it be that this disunity is sometimes fostered directly or indirectly by an interested third party? The United States of America, more than any other country may be said to be the "melting pot" of nationalities. In the large cities like New York and Chicago, one soon becomes aware of the more-or-less isolated immigrant group districts within the city—the Chinatown, the "Black Belt", the Polish, Greek, Irish, German and Jewish neighbourhoods. Each group may have its lobby in Washington, engaging in the "Politics of Protest." This sectionalism or isolationism, nevertheless, does not prevent a united prosperous America, yielding to the average American possibly the highest standard of living anywhere in the world.

WHAT OF BRITISH GUIANA?

Let us now take a look at home. The population of British Guiana consists chiefly of East Indians and Africans; and to a lesser degree of Portuguese, Chinese and Anglo-Saxons. For our consideration, let us first begin with the rural population. The rural population consists wholly of Indians and Africans with the exception of a few shopkeepers, sugar estate managers and overseers. Their occupation is chiefly farming—whether sugar, rice or vegetable. Their principal aim is to either get increased wages in the sugar estates or increased prices for their produce. In this, both the Indian and the African have common goals. First and foremost is their common objective of

an increased standard of living. A hungry African will be quick to wrongly antagonize and find a scapegoat in a well-fed Indian, and VICE VERSA. To insure that unity, therefore, would mean more jobs, increased wages and less profits to absentee-landlords.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MATTER

Let us now look at the urban population. Not being a manufacturing country, the urban population is engaged chiefly in clerical jobs, either with the government or with merchants. The Europeans hold most of the "key" positions either in government or in business. The Africans, as a group, were the first to become "educated," so that today they are in the majority in the Civil Service and in the teaching profession. The "Senior Cambridge" Indians of today are looking with hungry eyes at these jobs, and fear of insecurity grips the heart of the present day job holders.

The Indian politicians are adding flame to the fire by asking for adequate representation in the civil service commensurable with their numbers. One group becomes antagonistic toward another because of the scarcity of jobs. Add to this the Chinese and Portuguese groups looking for the same jobs within the city and the antagonism increases. A sharp parallel can be drawn with the conditions in India.

BRITISH INFLUENCE IN INDIA

Before the British went to India, the Muslims were the chief craftsmen and guild workers. As British industry and imperialism forced India into an agricultural country, the Muslim craftsmen were forced to the land and agriculture, where they became indebted to the Hindu landlords and money lenders. When the British opened up colleges for the training of clerks, the Hindus were the first to acquire this "education," and so, as a group, they became the first job-holders and the majority in the Indian Civil Service. Thus the jobless Muslim group began to assume an antagonistic feeling toward the job holding Hindu group. This antagonism was inevitable with the changes brought about by British imperialistic policy. The problem of inter-racial or inter-group unity becomes therefore closely associated with the economic status of the country. Economic insecurity leads to distorted reasoning, which in turn leads to antagonism.

To be Continued.

Mackay Memorial Private School Scholarship

ABU HATIM THE WINNER

Student Abu Hatim, has commenced his studies at the Central High School from the reopening of the new term beginning from the 8th, January 1945.

Farewell function sponsored by the Niroshni Industrial Institute took place at the Mackay Memorial School Hall, at which student Abu Hatim received a warm ovation from the President M. E. Rahat N. D. D. C. and other members of the community, F. Ali M. Amin, H. Gibbs, Teacher Joolcharran, Catchist Goberdhan, M. S. Khan, and J. Khan.

He was also the recipient of a tie and a bottle of shampoo, the products of the said institute.

The Committee was loud in their praise of Mr. J. C. Luck, Principal of the Central High School, for the support and co-operation he gave in support of the movement.

The Niroshni Industrial Institute takes the pleasure of thanking the users of their products in order to provide funds to pay expenses of free tuition and text books for two years Scholarship afforded the winner.

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Eviction Of Mothers In Britain

HEARTLESS PERSONS

The question of the eviction by landladies of expectant mothers and mothers with young children was raised by Mr. John Dugdale (Lab. West Bromwich) in the Commons on October 20, when he characterised landladies guilty of such practices as "poisonous reptiles."

Mr. Dugdale said that in some cases, after the mothers or expectant mothers had been told to go, the landladies cut off the electric light supply or took out the electric light bulbs. A small minority of landladies had been guilty of petty, mean actions such as these. It was very difficult for a young woman to stand up to these "tough old landladies."

Recently, said Mr. Dugdale, the Labour Party on the Birmingham City Council raised this question and asked that a resolution be passed that access be afforded to water, light, heat and lavatory accommodation from all expectant mothers and mothers with children under two.

"The Conservative chairman of the Birmingham City Council—the leader of the Conservative Party—refused to accept this amendment because, he said, there was no evidence," Mr. Dugdale added. "But actually quite a number of applicants for corporation houses in Birmingham are women such as I have described."

He hoped that the Government would find a method of making it an offence to turn out expectant mothers, and mothers with young children from lodging houses, and so that they would give them as much protection as is afforded to people under the Rent Restrictions Act.

In reply, Miss Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, asked that the utmost publicity should be given to cases such as Mr. Dugdale described. It was difficult to get facts on the question and she urged that people should come forward and tell about cases of which they had personal knowledge.

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The Department of Agriculture

Continued from page 1.

Agriculture retired, removed or promoted from British Guiana, the Imperial Government to send him wherever they choose as they do not feel that they have a competent enough officer in him to fill the position in this neglected Crown Colony. Perhaps the Sugar Planters will give him a job!

Apart from sugar production being increased, the people's industries have all been on the downward trend.

Recently His Excellency had to beg Brazil to ship about 800 head of cattle to British Guiana. Not only cattle, but coffee, coconuts, citrus fruits etc. are all short produced for local requirements. Had British Guiana a competent Director of Agriculture and other personnel this colony would not be dependent on our South American neighbours and Dutch (Guiana etc. We should export rather than import.

Prof. Dash must be promoted or retired

(To be continued)

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and

COMMISSION AGENT

18 Water St, Georgetown.

Notice

The Mackay Memorial Private School of Sans Souci Wakenaam will be reopened for the second year and the working Committee solicits the assistance of friends and well wishers.

Subscription and/or donations will be gratefully received by the Secretary Mr. R. E. Baochus, Sans Souci, Wakenaam.

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