

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

THE anti-Asiatic Ordinances recently passed by the Natal Provincial Council which are awaiting the assent of the Governor-General-in-Council have been subjected to much criticism both in England as well as in India. In the House of Commons, states a Reuter's message from London, Colonel J. C. Wedgwood (Labour) asked whether Mr. Churchill would do anything to prevent the enactment of three pieces of anti-Indian legislation recently submitted in the Natal Provincial Council. Mr. Churchill replied that it was for the Union Government to decide whether assent be given to the Ordinances to which Indian organisations objected, if they were passed by the Provincial Council. Colonel Wedgwood asserted that the Ordinances had been denounced by both Indian and English newspapers in India, and he asked whether Mr. Churchill could not advise the South African Government. Mr. Churchill, in reply, said he refused to be led into a course of strife and friction with the Union Government.

Reuter (London) in a message dated July 10, states:—

The *Times*' correspondent at Bombay says sober Indian opinion is variously perturbed at the apparent prevalence of the anti-Indian views of the Colonial Office, and says Mr. Churchill's refusal to allow Indians to settle in the Kenya highlands is regarded as a breach of the resolution passed at the Imperial Conference. The *Times of India* denounces Mr. Churchill's refusal to intervene to prevent the sanctioning of three pieces of anti-Indian legislation in Natal, as "an exhibition of political cowardice and complete lack of sympathy with the races of the Empire."

Thakur Pravinsinghjee left these shores last Monday by the s.s. *Karagola* when a crowd of Indians was present at the wharf to see him off. Thakur Pravinsinghjee has, during the short period of his stay in this Colony given a number of lectures in the different parts on religious and moral subjects which were appreciated by Indians generally. His short visit has been a useful, instructive and interesting one and it is generally regretted that it was so short. Thakur Pravinsinghjee will be remembered by the Natal Indians for the useful services he has rendered to his brethren whose good wishes he carries with him.

considerable time very strong, and in adopting methods to drive Indians out of that Island the white Colonists were very little concerned whether their methods were civilised or uncivilised. That strong feeling has by no means abated is clear from the report of the *Post* correspondent at Sydney of a meeting of colonists of Fiji, which passed a resolution objecting to the recognition of equal status for Indians in Fiji. Speakers at that meeting, it is reported, resented the efforts of the Imperial and local Governments to force Fiji to become practically a dependency of India, advocating that the first step towards the preventing of local friction was the prohibition of Asiatic immigration in Fiji.

The Hon. Mr. Sastri is now in New Zealand where he is expected to remain until July 27.

Reuter (London) in a message dated July 11, states:—

The question of the position of Indians in the Kenya Colony was again raised in the course of a debate in the House of Commons to-day on the Colonial Office Vote. Mr. Wood said he at present preferred to say nothing, except that he and Lord Winterton were consulting on the matter, and hoped to reach an agreement generally acceptable to each of the constituent parties.

Excluding the Moplah convicts, the total number of prisoners in India taken in connection with the recent political movement amounts to 3,815, says a Reuter's message from Simla.

At a meeting held in Johannesburg of the Hindi community a body known as the Bengal Association has been formed. The following officials have been elected:—Chairman: Mr. Ramdial Singh; Secretary: Mr. Rama Prasad Dukhie; Committee: Messrs. Ramlal Singh, Seonath, Seoprasad Singh, Ramadhir, Ramidhan, Raghoobeer, Shaha, Harduth Shaha, Suryamana Singh, Kalechian Mahto, Lalbehary. A vernacular Hindi school, it is understood, will be shortly opened under the auspices of the above association to impart Hindi education to all young and old desirous to learn Hindustani.

Mr. V. G. Naidoo, Grahamstown, on the eve of his departure for India was recently presented by the

illuminated address in recognition of the services he had rendered as one of the leading members of that body.

### POLITICAL COWARDICE

THE reply given by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons to a question put by Colonel Wedgwood in connection with the recent ordinances passed by the Natal Provincial Council will be viewed with the deepest regret by Indians in this country. It was little expected that Mr. Churchill would be so blunt as to say that "he refused to be led into a course of strife and friction with the Union Government." If this be the attitude the Colonial Office is going to adopt, British Indians resident in the Union will be left entirely at the mercy of the local Government. Under the circumstances the application of the term "British" to Indians of India would be meaningless. Mr. Churchill seems to be more concerned about the Union Government being vexed than the ill-treatment of a hundred and fifty thousand of His Majesty's British subjects by that Government. Rather than vexing the Union Government he is prepared to let the latter "go to the dogs." But he seems to forget that it is not only the hundred and fifty thousand but the whole of India, on whom the existence of the British Empire is largely dependent, that is being injured. The *Times of India* quite correctly describes the attitude of Mr. Churchill as "exhibiting political cowardice and complete lack of sympathy with the races of the Empire." Non-co-operators in India are held to severe criticism by the so-called sober section representing the co-operators. But Mr. Churchill's reply has rendered the cause of the former all the more stronger and even the latter it has made to pause for a moment in amazement as to whether the ground they are treading in implicit faith is sound or if it going to give way and cause their destruction.

### INDIAN QUESTION IN NATAL

#### QUESTION IN UNION PARLIAMENT

In the House of Assembly last Tuesday Mr. Marwick (S.A.P., Illovo) is reported to have asked the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Patrick Duncan): (1) What municipalities, if any, in Natal have been asked by the Minister to express their views as to the feasibility of adopting the scheme for the voluntary segregation of Asiatics recommended by the Asiatic Inquiry Commission, or as to any way of dealing with the problem of Asiatic residence in the towns of Natal; and (2) whether, in view of the indiscriminate erection of Indian shanties immediately outside the Borough of Durban, and in the vicinity of Sydenham, Mayville, South Coast Junction, Matati, Hillary and Pinetown, the Minister will endeavour to put into operation, through the Administrator of Natal, such provisions of the Public Health Act as will avail to improve the squalid and insanitary conditions brought about by Indian tenement in the areas referred to?

The minister's reply was as follows: I have not asked any municipalities in Natal to express their views on the voluntary segregation of Asiatics; (1) the Administrator of the Province of Natal was, at his own request, appointed local authority for the areas mentioned in the question, in terms of Section 8 of the Public Health Act, No. 36 of 1919, by Proclamation No. 23 of Jan. 26, 1921. Action under the Public

Health Act in the direction referred to in the question is a matter for the Administrator.

#### ASIATICS' LICENCES IN NATAL

Mr. Marwick asked the Minister of Interior: (1) What is the total number of applications for new retail and other licences granted by the Licensing Officer for the Province of Natal to Asiatics during the years 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922; (2) what is the number of applications for new and other licences granted by the same authority to Europeans for the same periods; (3) what is the number of retail licences transferred by Asiatics during the above periods; (4) how many Asiatic storekeepers have gone insolvent during the above periods in Natal; (5) whether there has been an increase in the number of applications from Asiatics retail licences, and if so, to what extent; (6) how many of the applications granted to Asiatics were opposed during these periods; (7) what is the total number of licences now held by Asiatics throughout Natal; (8) how many appeals were made to the Appeal Board under para. (1) and what was the result in each case; and (9) what was the total number of prosecutions against Asiatics in Natal for contravening the Shop Hours' Act (Natal) during 1921?

The reply given was as follows:—(1) 106 in 1919, 102 in 1920, 106 in 1921, and 68 to date in 1922; (2) 168 in 1919, 127 in 1920, 228 in 1921, and 190 to date in 1922; (3) 100 in 1919, 100 in 1920, 93 in 1921, and 35 to date in 1922; (4) 38 in 1919, 19 in 1920, 27 in 1921, and 49 to date in 1922; (5) the average is 100, but 122 applied in 1921, and 94 for the half year ended June, 1922; (6) 36 in 1919, 24 in 1920, 29 in 1921, and 18 to date in 1922; (7) the total of all kinds in rural areas is 1,050; (8) the numbers upheld, set aside, and referred back to the Licensing Officer respectively were: in 1919, 8, 15, and 1; in 1920, 22, 6, and 4; in 1921, 7, 5, and 1; in 1922, 2, nil and 1; (9) the information is incomplete at present. Returns have been called for, but will not be available for some time.

### INDIANS IN KENYA

#### TEST OF BRITISH SINCERITY

#### MR. H. S. L. POLAK'S INTERVIEW

The position of Indians in Kenya Colony was the subject of a long interview which Mr. Henry S. L. Polak gave to a representative of the *Associated Press* of India at Simla recently. After explaining the difficulties that beset Indians in Kenya, Mr. Polak expressed his disappointment that Indian opinion seemed not fully alive to the enormous seriousness of issues involved, and warned that unless India carried on a sustained campaign, both on the platform and in the Press and through representation to the authorities, the cause of Indians abroad might be irreparably lost. Mr. Polak is the Honorary Secretary of the Indians Overseas Association in London and is thoroughly acquainted with the latest developments in Kenya, being in constant touch with the East African Indian National Congress. Mr. Polak said that he last visited Kenya in 1917. The population of Indians in that Colony he estimated at 30,000, which was approximately four times the number of European settlers.

Q.—Do the Indians enjoy any municipal or political rights in Kenya?

A.—None but the Europeans do.

Q.—What are the fundamental issues involved in the position of Indians in Kenya?

#### TRANSFER OF LANDS

A.—I will state them one by one. First, that the power of the Governor to veto transfer of lands as between persons of different races should be with-

drawn. This veto was conferred upon the Governor in 1915, when Indians were asked not to engage in political activities. The 1915 Ordinance was a distinct and deliberate breach of the pledge made to the Indian community by Lord Elgin in 1908, that His Majesty's Government would be no party to any legislation affecting the ownership of land in the then protectorate differentially affecting Indians. In the same despatch Lord Elgin said that for reasons of administrative convenience—a convenient phrase which was never defined—it was decided to confer original grants of Crown lands in the highlands to Europeans only. He was however silent on the question of land transfer. Practically all the Crown lands have been granted to Europeans. Thus, Lord Elgin's pledge to the Europeans, though it did not injure the Indian community, has been fulfilled. It would appear from Mr. Churchill's utterances, that what the Colonial Office is now anxious to do, is to further extend that pledge to the Europeans by prohibiting transfer of lands in the highlands, whilst at the same time breaking a contemporaneous pledge to the Indian community. It has a differentiation and a breach of faith which the Indian community is not prepared to accept or condone, because it is one of the vital points, arising in the present controversy.

#### POLICY OF SEGREGATION

The next matter in dispute is in connection with the policy of segregation. I need hardly mention that as a matter of course Europeans and Indians generally do not live in the same quarters because of difference in social customs. To this extent, therefore, there is already voluntary segregation between the two communities, but what Indians do take strong objection to is the endeavour on the part of Europeans to secure a statutory prohibition against them to reside or even trade in the areas which are described as European areas and which, of course, include the best parts of the existing townships. The Indian community cannot possibly accept any system of compulsory civilisation inherited by them. They have no objection to the system of voluntary separation, as at present prevails, but they do insist, and rightly, that those Indians who desire to reside in areas known as the "European quarters" and who are prepared to abide by general sanitary regulations and other bye-laws applicable to all classes and races alike, should have no restriction placed upon them in any way, merely because they are Indians. This proposal should, in my opinion, entirely meet the situation arising from differences in methods of life.

#### QUESTION OF FRANCHISE

The third complaint concerns the question of franchise. The entire adult European population is under the existing law automatically enfranchised, but no Indian has a vote. The Indian claim is that without depriving any of the existing voters of his franchise, law should be altered so that in future all persons, of whatever race possessing the necessary qualification, should be included in a general electoral roll. This would mean that for some years to come European voters would always be in the majority, but it would give a stimulus to Indians to qualify themselves to exercise the franchise in order to obtain in future an adequate representation of their interests in the local legislature.

#### AGAINST INDIAN IMMIGRATION

The fourth point of controversy arises out of the attempt by the Europeans to close Kenya against Indian immigration. To my mind, though all other issues are of primary importance, this is the most important of all. Presently what is being attempted is to establish in Kenya the same conditions as prevail in the Union of South Africa with which, as you are aware, I am from long experience very well acquainted. The Europeans feel that if they can cut off Indians from East Africa they will have succeeded in creating

what Mr. Churchill described as a characteristic British Colony. I have never yet been able to understand what he means by the phrase. There are all kinds of British colonies which differ in structure radically from each other. If the phrase means the characteristic methods of British administration, there is no reasonable ground for complaint, but if it means that this Colony, like the self-governing Dominions, is to be made a preserve for the white men who are to be maintained in a position of perpetual domination over other races, as seems to be the desire with regard to Kenya, then it is a clear breach of the underlying principles of equality. The resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1921 is a challenge to India, declaring that she has in fact, no imperial status, that her immigrants have no status even in regard to those parts of the British Empire which are under the immediate jurisdiction of the Colonial Office. Mr. Churchill's speech at Kenya Club defines fundamental issues between Great Britain and India. Hitherto the general impression has been, and I must confess that until I studied the matter very carefully, it was one that I myself shared—that it was the self-governing Dominions that were the principal culprits in the matter of differentiation against Indians, whether as immigrants or as residents. It was becoming increasingly clear having regard to constitutional developments, that there were genuine grounds for the position taken up by the Imperial Government that they should not directly interfere with a self-governing Dominion. But even there, it had to be recognised that Great Britain had just as great a right and responsibility to protect British subjects from India emigrating to or residing in these self-governing Dominions, through the usual diplomatic channels, as she would have undoubtedly exercised in regard to foreign countries, if those conditions prevailed there.

The case of Kenya, however, has thrown a fresh light upon the situation and has made clear that British Government itself is responsible in a Crown Colony, ruled from Downing Street, for a policy of differential racial legislation and methods of administration in regard to Indians. The British case is all the worse when one remembers the fact that Indians in Kenya were prior emigrants and relations between India and Kenya are centuries old and when one finds Sir John Kirk, perhaps the greatest authority on the East African question, stating publicly, that but for the influence of the Indian traders, who had settled in East Africa, the British flags would not now be floating there. What Mr. Churchill says, in fact, is that it is not desirable that Indian culture should be allowed to continue to spread in East Africa, though British trade there owes its origin to the enterprise of Indian traders, and he has adopted the handy altruistic European cry that this is in the interests of the native population. Those who are acquainted with the relations of the average European planter with the natives of the country, will recognise how very flimsy, to say the least of it, is the argument that Europeans and Natives in East Africa have a common interest. It is a piece of characteristic hypocrisy, and the Indians in Kenya very strongly protest against persistent attempts to malign them and their relations with the native population.

Q.—What is the ulterior motive of Europeans in professing to make common cause with natives and trying to get rid of Indians?

A.—The fact is that European planters, as a class, are anxious to see that Indians and Natives did not make a common cause to establish the civil and political rights of non-Europeans, and they believe that if they can get rid of Indians, they will be able safely to control the Native population, and will not have to encounter strong opposition to the maintenance of a position of racial privilege.

Q.—How do the relations between Indians and Natives stand and how do these compare with those between Natives and Europeans?

A.—The natives are on friendly terms with Indians, but they are ordinarily afraid of the European settlers.

#### TEST OF BRITISH SINCERITY

Continuing his narrative, Mr. Polak said:—"I have considered that the case of Kenya is the true test of British sincerity with regard to doctrine of equality of citizenship for Indians abroad. The resolution passed at the last Imperial Conference is not happily worded, but those who are acquainted with the history of those negotiations, are aware that the principle of control of immigration, which was agreed to at the previous conference, applied only to the self-governing dominions and to India as a Quasi Dominion. Mr. Churchill and the colonial office are now under the stimulus of the European settlers in Kenya endeavouring to extend the principle even to Crown Colonies where any small European minority may demand for its own purpose and in the alleged interest of native population that Indian immigration should be prohibited whilst European immigration should remain unrestricted. That is an interpretation of the resolution to which I am sure India will not agree. We know that the very reverse of the doctrine of equality of citizenship as regard Kenya is being postured by the Colonial Office. It would be interesting to know what steps the Colonial Office has taken to give effect to the principle of equal citizenship for Indians in the overseas Crown Colonies and Dependencies by the removal from the statute book of all enactments differentially affecting Indians or doing away with methods of administration imposing special disabilities upon them. I venture to hope that the Government of India will request the British Government to submit a categorical statement of the steps that have been taken to give effect to this principle in the territories under the immediate jurisdiction of the Downing Street. There has been ample time for something to be done as it is nearly a year since the resolution was adopted with Mr. Churchill's signature appended to it.

#### OBJECT OF VISIT TO INDIA

Question:—What is the object of your visit to this country? Would you like to say anything about present day politics in India and would you particularly suggest a course India should adopt to secure redress to Indians abroad?

Answer:—I have come to this country in a private capacity not participating in any controversial political matters but I cannot refrain from expressing the utmost disappointment that for various reasons into these matters I need not go. But public opinion appears to have been diverted from the acute and vital problems which affect directly the question of India's status within the Empire and equally directly the welfare of Indian communities abroad. This attitude has greatly hampered all those who like myself are engaged in endeavouring to bring about a rapid and reasonable settlement of the Kenya controversy. It seems to me not to be useless and untrue to say that the acquisition by India of complete control over her own destiny should precede an attempt to secure justice for Indians abroad. Take the case of Japan which should meet all such arguments. Japan is a completely independent and aggressive country, but she in spite of her self-governance has not yet been able effectively to protect the interests of Japanese resident abroad. Status is not a matter that can be separated by water-tight compartments. There must be advance in status on all lines simultaneously and if there be a check along any lines of advance, it necessarily affects progress in other directions. I would earnestly implore Indian public opinion to concentrate here and now upon this question of Kenya. If the British Cabinet are induced by Mr. Churchill (and fortunately Mr. Montagu before leaving the Indian Office prevented this tragedy and I very hopefully feel that the Government of India and Lord Peel will also succeed in doing so) to decide against India in regard to the

question of highlands and more particularly on the question of Indian immigration in Kenya, I am afraid, that irreparable disaster will have been done to Indo-British relations and Indian community in Kenya and other parts of East Africa will be faced with certain ruin and perpetual subordination of Indian interests at the hands of European settlers. It is, therefore, urgently necessary that public opinion in India should be concentrated upon the case of Kenya and that the Government of India's hands may be strengthened in the representations that they have continued to make to the Secretary of State on the subject.

#### NEED OF STRONG PUBLIC OPINION IN INDIA

Q.—I think public opinion is already sufficiently emphatic about the position of Indians abroad, but what else do you suggest should be done to make it more emphatic?

A.—I want a ceaseless campaign both in the Press and on the platform to show that India is alive to the gravity of the situation and that she would not have outsiders to imagine that she is apathetic. I suggest that a strong deputation should wait on the Viceroy and thus strengthen the hands of the Government and of public men in England who are helping India's cause.

Concluding, Mr. Polak uttered a word of warning; within next few months he said a decision one way or the other must be taken by His Majesty's Government and unless Indian opinion is alive to the enormous seriousness of the issues involved, a fundamental error may be committed having gravest possible consequences.—*Bombay Chronicle*.

#### THE PROBLEM IN EAST AFRICA

*The Round Table* for the last quarter deplors the race-hatred and intolerance that have obscured the main issues which are really economical and sentimental. The present situation is only of recent growth; and before the war the racial question was not much in evidence. With a few minor exceptions, the Indian community consists mainly of shopkeepers, artisans and clerks with a sprinkling of lawyers, doctors, and other professional men. Though Indians from the Malabar coast have traded with Mombasa since the 15th century, they never, so far as is known, penetrated to the hinterland before the opening of the railway; and their trade with it was carried on through slave dealers and other desperadoes. The railway imported into the hinterland a number of coolies, clerks and contractors who were mostly repatriated.

The movement for equalising the status of Indians began during the war, when practically the whole white population was on active service. The idea of Indians having colonies of their own was suggested soon after the armistice, first broached by Sir Theodore Morrison; and then no enthusiasm was shown for the scheme by the public or the Press in India. The question of the equality of status for Indians in East Africa is not an isolated one; but Kenya is the Achilles' heel of the whole problem. Lord Milner's Commission published a report in 1920, which was tacitly accepted at the time, and according to which Europeans were to have a preserve of the Highlands and the Indians were to have two representatives on the Legislative Council; and the principle of segregation was upheld.

The one really strong point that the Indian can put forward is, not the military aid rendered by India in the war, but only his follow-citizenship. The first demand of the Indians is the right to hold any position, however eminent in the Civil Service and the local military forces; his second demand is for equal political franchise; and the third is to acquire land and property in the white highlands; and in his demand for the abolition of segregation the Indian

is chiefly affected in his national pride. And lastly the Indians demand the right to enter the country in unrestricted numbers. The Indian question resolves itself into four main points—(1) absolute equality of each race (2) Segregation demanded by Europeans provided the restriction is not based merely on racial grounds (3) The Indians' right to acquire lands in the white highlands, and (4) Indians' right to penetrate the country in unlimited numbers.

Finally there is the stand-point of the Negroes, the original inhabitants of the country; and there is the danger of the tribes becoming inculcated either with Pan-Islamic or with Pan-Negro doctrines. The greatest danger to be avoided is to abstain from any semblance of racial arrogance.—*Indian Social Reformer.*

MALVERN INDIAN SCHOOL

ANNUAL SPORTS AND PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

The breaking up ceremony of the Malvern Indian School took place on Saturday, the 1st inst., in the presence of a very large number of parents, residents and visitors. Around the new schoolroom were displayed examples of the work of the scholars, and these were very much admired, and undoubtedly reflected very painstaking efforts on the part of the staff. The programme consisted of sports, recitations, dialogues, and boxing exhibitions by scholars, the whole of which were admirably carried out.

During the interval the visitors and the children were served with light refreshments, this concluding the first portion of the programme.

On resumption the headmaster Mr. G. Mungar, read his report which showed a large increase of pupils since the new extension was put by the Malvern Indian Progressive Association. He thanked the officials of the said Association for their keen interest in the school. He also thanked the ladies and gentlemen of the district for their generous donations to the prize list. Special mention must be made of a pleasing little dialogue in Tamil between two little children, Govindoo and Kallasam, having reference to kindness to animals. The part taken by these children was the subject of great applause. Rampirra also recited "Suppose" in an excellent manner, and got hearty applause. Two little tots, Chinama and Jug-thumba, recited "Politeness" and "Ba, ba, Black Sheep," respectively, with actions in the most attractive manner, which were also applauded. The prizes were distributed by Mr. M. C. Naidoo, who accompanied them with a few encouraging remarks.

In the lower classes each and every child received a prize of a picture book or a toy. A valuable collection of books was sent by Mr. H. C. Ballance, Inspector of Schools, and Messrs. T. W. Griggs & Co.; Mr. A. B. Naidoo (merchant, Durban), three sets of brassware; Mrs. Merrison, Escombe, six large tea cakes.

Messrs. R. M. Naidoo and M. C. Naidoo addressed the children, and congratulated them on their work, wishing them all a happy holiday. At the same time they paid a glowing tribute to the headmaster and staff for the excellent standard of the school. The function closed just before dusk.—(Contributed).

INDIAN GIRLS' SCHOOL

The annual prize distribution at St. Aidan's Indian Girls' School, Sydenham, took place on Thursday, June 29, at 2.30 p.m. The parents and friends of the children, and the European friends of the mission, expressed great pleasure in the performance of a dramatised version of the fairy tale, "Snow White," which was presented by about 40 of the girls. Kalir-spathie Lalla acted the title role with simplicity and

charm, her clear and expressive enunciation being commented upon by all present, while Amelie Clari-vette as the proud and jealous Queen, Margaret Lasarus as the gallant Prince, and Dolores Powell as the faithful Carl, the huntsman, all fulfilled their parts in a pleasing manner. The Seven Dwarfs, "crusty and old," dressed in scarlet coats and hoods, were much admired, as were also the 24 Forest Children, whose flower dresses of different coloured crinkled paper were most effective.

Miss Howard, the Headmistress, gave a highly satisfactory report on the progress of the school, during the past year, and Mrs. Ellis, Matron of the Girls' Home, reported on the domestic training of the girls.

The prizes were distributed by Miss B. W. Wilson, of St. Aidan's Mission, Durban, and former Head-mistress of the school, in the absence of Mrs. Potter, wife of the Rev. J. P. N. Potter, Acting Superintendent of the Mission, who was unable to attend owing to illness.

The proceedings concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.—Contributed.

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