

Indian Opinion

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THE CLASS AREAS BILL.

DEBATE IN THE ASSEMBLY. MR. DUNCAN'S SPEECH

THE long expected debate on the Class Areas Bill took place in the House of Assembly on Wednesday night (April 2). Mr. Duncan (Minister of the Interior), in moving the second reading said that the Bill was one which had given rise to a good deal of misrepresentation both in South Africa and perhaps still more outside South Africa. The Bill had been misrepresented both as regards its scope and its intention from two entirely different points of view. On the one hand it had been represented as being intended for the ruin of the Indian population of South Africa and for their degradation, while on the other hand it had been criticised inside South Africa as bringing no improvement and being of no use and not being worth the trouble of passing. Both these points of view fundamentally misunderstood the objects, scope and intention of the Bill.

In the first place the Bill was not intended to ruin the Indian community or inflict degradation in any sort. On the other hand, in his opinion—and he hoped the House would accept that opinion—it was going to effect a very considerable improvement in the relations which existed now between the European population of South Africa and the Indian community. It was the real intention to relieve a certain amount of the present causes of race and trade friction which now existed and to help in bringing about a state of things in the relations between the European population and the Indian population in which we could proceed calmly and sanely to consider what those relations were and how they should be arranged so as to meet the needs of both sections of the community.

PECULIAR FEATURES OF THE PROBLEM

The Government intended in this Bill to deal with the Asiatic or Indian question according to the peculiar requirements of South Africa. We had in this country a state of things which he did not think existed in any other part of the world where a European race and an Asiatic race had come into conflict or into relations with each other. We had a state of things far more complicated than existed in the State of California or the Province of British Columbia in Canada, because we had here a European population who had brought civilisation to this country and on whom the maintenance depended—(hear, hear)—surrounded by a much more numerous native population, who had to be governed and conducted into civilisation by the efforts of the European civilisation. Therefore, he (Mr. Duncan) asked the House to consider our circumstances here, which were peculiar and different from those of other countries, where similar friction and trouble was taking place. They intended to legislate in this matter with every consideration for the alien people who were being affected by their acts. (Dr. Forsyth: "They are not aliens if they are born here.") It was the duty of the House, continued Mr. Duncan, to give the fullest regard to the claims of justice, particularly where those affected had no direct voice in the legislature of the country. At the same time, they did not intend to be deterred by any threats of resistance in South Africa, or by any threat of political action

outside South Africa—(cheers)—or by any retaliation which might take place outside South Africa. It might interest members to know that a law had recently been passed in the Indian Legislature by which retaliation had already been effected, not for what they were proposing to do in this Bill, but for the Immigration Act of 1913.

When the Bill was passed it was generally understood—and he thought the Indian community had accepted that position—that the Immigration of Asiatics into South Africa should cease. It was understood that there should be no discrimination by name against the Asiatics, but that this end should be attained by administrative action. During the present year a law had been passed through the Indian Legislature and put into force, whereby persons, not being of Indian race who visited India from any of the British Dominions, would be subjected to the same restrictions in regard to the rights of landing in India as Indians were in the particular Dominion from which the visitors came. He, therefore, warned South Africans intending to visit India as to what they might expect. Mr. Duncan contended that this Bill aimed at meeting the requirements of South Africa, with every consideration for people of Asiatic race. He was talking as if this Bill referred only to Asiatics; but, as a matter of fact, the Bill had been brought into the House because of the pressure of the Indian population in Natal and the Transvaal mainly, and it was a criticism against the Bill that it did not name Indians or Asiatics in express terms, but in this respect they were following the Immigration Act of 1913, and he maintained that it was a sound principle not to discriminate against any particular race by name.

WHAT IS THE "MENACE"?

The Bill had been brought into the House because of the pressure of the Indian inhabitants on the European population in Natal and Transvaal. The Bill had, as he had said, been criticised because it did not solve what many people in this country talked about as the menace to the European race by the competition and the presence of the Indian population in South Africa. He wanted first to ask the House to look calmly and sanely at this so-called menace. What is it? What was it in effect now and in its effects in future? In a matter of this kind they were not justified in thinking only of what was happening to-day, and he would ask hon. members who considered that this Bill did not go far enough to consider calmly what this menace was that we heard so much about in South Africa. He regarded this so-called menace as arising not from the increasing number of Indians or Asiatics in South Africa, but from the fact that a large Indian population, which was here in South Africa and which for the most part had been brought here by South Africans for their own purposes—(hear, hear)—was now arriving at a stage of civilisation and education when it was beginning to make itself felt in competition not with the unskilled labourer of the land, but with the skilled trades, and with commerce and professions generally.

ADVANCE OF THE INDIANS

What was being felt as an Indian menace was due to a gradual rise in civilisation, in efficiency and in education of Indian people who had been here for many years. He knew that it was serious. He knew that in many country towns in Natal and the Transvaal the European trader who used to flourish there had disappeared and that the competition was being felt in a manner which he would be the last to deny as being serious. He would like hon. members to reflect that this seriousness was not a matter that was going to last for ever: the seriousness of the competition of these people was a matter for this generation, and perhaps a little longer than this generation, but if the European population of South Africa increased and expanded as it ought to do, as we wish it to see it do, and as it must do if it held its own, then this competition, this friction, this impact of the Asiatic people who were now in South Africa would not be a serious matter after this generation had passed away.

What we had to deal with now was the impact, the competition and the friction which existed at the present time, and would exist for some considerable time to come. Immigration, as he had said, had already been stopped. He would give the figures disclosed by the Census of 1911 and the Census of 1921. In the Transvaal the Indian population, according to the 1921 Census, was about 15,000. The increase between 1911 and 1921 was 1,500 males and 2,500 females. Looked at from a percentage point of view, that might appear to be a big increase, but there were special reasons why this increase had taken place. In regard to Natal the number of Indians who were brought over under indenture during the years from 1860 to 1911, when importation was stopped, was about 152,000. The present Indian population in Natal was 140,000.

Colonel Creswell: How many of those indentured went back?

Mr. Duncan: I cannot tell the hon. member that, but no doubt a large number did go back. He went on to say that between the years 1911 and 1921 the figures showed a decrease in the Indian population of 500 males and an increase of 8,000 females. During the same years the European population in Natal increased from 98,000 to 136,000, or just under 40 per cent. In quoting these figures he asked hon. members in this matter to look ahead. They had to deal with a problem which was caused not by any increase from outside of people whose racial and social and commercial friction they had to deal with, but the gradual rise in the scale of civilisation, education and efficiency of those who were now here.

AIM OF THE BILL

This Bill, Mr. Duncan explained, aimed at the separation under carefully guarded conditions of the parts occupied for residential or trading purposes of those who came under its provisions. What the Bill aimed at was not what was sometimes called segregation. They did not aim at or think possible a scheme for putting this particular class of people somewhere right away from us across some imaginary line where no relations between them and the European community would be possible. What was aimed at was a separation for residential and trading purposes, for one or other or both, of the particular class affected by this Bill from the rest of the community. The object of that, as he had said, was not to ruin this particular people, not to make it impossible for them to live decently, but to avoid the racial and social friction that went on and that was being felt and producing the reaction all over the Union, owing to the fact of people of the Asiatic race gradually penetrating into areas which were occupied for residential and trading purposes by European members of the community.

When they had a particular area where European people had acquired plots of ground and built houses, and where people of the Asiatic race started acquiring ground in that particular area, they got at once the social friction in an acute form. "This Bill," remarked Mr. Duncan, "is intended to remove that; it is intended to remove the evil which comes from this racial and social competition." Proceeding, he said that, while the Bill prevented that, it did not intend to overlook the claim that the person of Asiatic race had to be allowed to live according to his own standards and his own ideals, and live according to those ideals and standards in a place which gave him an opportunity of doing so.

THE PROBLEM ELSEWHERE

There was this incompatibility of the two races. It was quite useless for that Legislature to shut its eyes to that. The laws of the country had to take account of these feelings and ideas among—it might not be the most enlightened section of the people—but the mass of the people. Among the people of South Africa there was that incompatibility. We were not the only people in the world who had these feelings and these troubles. He had mentioned the case of California and British Columbia, where they had similar difficulties. Even the Indian people themselves were not exempt from class feelings. There were Indian people who refused to have anything to do with other Indians.

TO AVOID FORCE

In the U.S.A. they had a large white population and a large negro population—brought in to be exploited as workers. (Labour members: Hear, hear.) There thenegrowasgiven certain rights. He could go to the polling booth, use a hotel or ride on a tram-car just as the white man could. What was the result? What the law allowed, custom by violence denied. Force came into play. The law gave a certain equality, but custom backed up by force denied what the law gave. In South Africa they had to pass laws which could be in accordance with the fundamental feelings of the people of the country. The main purpose of this Bill was to do away with a certain clash which was taking place now owing to the penetration of one race's residential and commercial quarters by the other. The Bill was brought in to allow the alien race to make its living under decent conditions but in a manner which would not interfere with the feelings of the other race. The serious problem of the Asiatics in South Africa should be considered with calmness and sanity. It had been pointed out as an argument against this Bill that it was to bring about a state of things comparable to what used to be known as the ghetto. It was going to produce certain quarters in Natal which would be inhabited by a certain class of people who would be denied the conditions under which people would live decently. A great deal of argument had been founded on that.

NOT PRODUCING SLUMS

He fully recognised that to condemn a section of the community to live in our towns in insanitary conditions where people could not live decent lives, was fundamentally wrong, and was going to react on the whole community. But this Bill did not carry any implication of that kind. It did not aim at producing slums. What it aimed at was a separation of the residential and, if necessary, the trading quarters of the particular race and the other section of the community. The separate areas set apart under this Bill would be such as to enable the people who were going to live there to live decent lives without the risk of degradation to themselves or the rest of the community. The case of Vrededorp had been quoted. It was argued that conditions in the areas divided under this Bill would be similar to those of Vrededorp. It was

true that the Asiatic Commission reported very strongly against the conditions in Vrededorp, but the fundamental thing to remember was that Vrededorp was not an area which had been set apart for Asiatics. Vrededorp was simply a slum of Johannesburg. It is not the only slum but perhaps one of the worst there. One of the greatest obstacles in getting things done in Vrededorp was the fact that many of the properties were owned but not inhabited by Indians, who let their property out at exorbitant rents to natives and coloured people under conditions which were almost a menace to the public health. The property was owned by well-to-do Indians, but they did not live there. They could not bring that as a charge against Indians, because there were many European landlords who acted in the same way. He wanted to make it quite clear that Vrededorp was not an example to quote against this Bill.

The Bill was couched in general terms and applied to classes having certain common racial characteristics. Europeans, Cape Coloured persons and natives were excluded because they were provided for under the Native Areas Act. The explanation why the Cape Coloured person was excluded was quite simple. The Cape Coloured person was in the main the product of a mixture of the European and the native, the European was responsible for his existence in South Africa.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLOURED PERSONS

He was one of the South African people, a member of the South African community. The European population of South Africa could not dissociate itself from the coloured man. It was responsible for his existence and must be responsible for his education and civilisation and must find a place for him. Europeans were also exempted. As the Bill was originally published there was no exemption of that kind at all. He thought it was possible that the objects of the Bill might have been achieved by proclaiming a European area as well as a non-European area, but this provision had given rise to objections from certain sections of the European population, because they felt that they were being separated from the rest of the European population on certain grounds.

POSITION IN THE CAPE

It was therefore thought better, in order to avoid fears and apprehensions, to exclude European people from the scope of the Bill. There had also been a certain amount of agitation against the inclusion of the Cape Province. It had been pointed out that the Asiatic Commission which inquired into the relations of the European and Asiatic peoples had reported that in the Cape Province this problem gave rise to no acute position. Pressure had been brought to bear upon him to except from the scope of the Bill certain parts of the Union, particularly the Cape Province and the Free State, and he would have no objection to considering favourably an amendment to that effect. They did not want to bring this Bill into force in places where it might give rise to uneasiness and apprehension and where it was not required.

Mr. Duncan said he wished to show the effect of this Bill as compared with the laws in force at present. In Natal the state of separation contemplated in this Bill did not exist in law, but in many parts such separation did exist in fact owing to the administrative action of the authorities responsible for the issue of licences. The question of residence had, however, become acute and in many towns what he might call residential penetration had caused much friction and trouble. In the Transvaal there was still in force the Volksraad law of 1885, whereby areas might be set apart for Asiatic residences, but it had been held by the courts that this

did not apply to trading premises and the result had been that as many Indians lived on their trading premises the law had to a large extent been nullified.

IN THE TRANSVAAL TOWNS

The difference between the Transvaal Act of 1885 and this Bill was a very important one. Under the the Transvaal Act Government was empowered to set apart areas in which Asiatics should be compelled to live. The effect was that if in any particular town it was wished to set apart a special area for Asiatic people the Municipal authorities pointed out as remote an area as possible, whereas under this Bill before an area could be proclaimed the Government must first be satisfied as to the suitability of an area proposed to be set apart and as to the existence of adequate amenities, sanitary and water services, etc.

Mr. Duncan proceeded to outline the clauses of the Bill, pointing out that in regard to any proposed Class Area there must be full investigation by a Commission before proclamation. After the proclamation of an area no person belonging to a different class could hold ground in that area. On the other hand persons belonging to the class affected, would still be able to hold properties and to renew leases relating to property outside that area.

Mr. Waterson (Lab., Brakpan): That is leaving the present position just as it is.

Sir Abe Bailey (S.A.P., Krugersdorp): Or a little worse.

The Minister, continuing, said that existing licences outside the area would not be affected, but no new licence could be granted. An exception was made mainly to cover the case of hawkers who would be deprived of their livelihood if confined to a class area.

As far as his experience went, the Asiatic hawker did not compete with any European hawker (cries of "oh"). It was provided further in the Bill that if a particular area were inadequate for the people who had to live there, it could be extended. It was also provided that in certain eventualities the Governor-General might suspend the provisions of the Act.

That, he (Mr. Duncan) thought would be a very useful lever on the urban authorities to see that they provided proper areas for the people who had to live there. Clause 9 provided that where an area was set apart as the residential or trading area, or both, there should be established an Advisory Board. These provisions, remarked Mr. Duncan, were drawn with the object of bringing about residential, commercial and social separation, and doing away with what was in an increasing measure the cause of friction and difficulty, and which might even lead to violence.

SMUTS-GANDHI AGREEMENT

He would mention one particular criticism levelled against this Bill and that was that in bringing forward the Bill the Government had been guilty of a breach of faith in regard to the agreement between the Prime Minister and Mr. Gandhi. He had examined very carefully the correspondence which passed at the time when this agreement was made, and which had been examined by a Select Committee in this House in 1919. This charge of a breach of faith was based, as far as he had been able to make out, on two grounds. One was that it was alleged—and he thought, correctly alleged—that a general undertaking was given at that time on behalf of the Government that if and when the immigration of Indians in South Africa was stopped the Indians who were actually here would be given due consideration of their rights. As far as that was concerned he did not regard this Bill as any breach whatever of that undertaking.

The charge, however, went further and alleged that an undertaking was given on behalf of the Government of the Union at that time that vested

rights would be respected, and under the term "vested rights" were included the right of Indians who were now trading here or those who might succeed them as traders here or any other traders who might be trading here, to go on trading under the same conditions, and in the same parts as they were trading in now. He would like to make it quite clear that this term "vested rights," employed by Mr. Gandhi in his correspondence with the Government at that time, was never intended by him, and never understood by anybody else, as carrying any implication of that sort. What he was dealing with at the time was the question of the rights of certain traders who had been allowed to trade on the gold-fields against the strict terms of the law, and he was dealing with the question of what should be done in regard to these men, whether the law had been strictly applied to them and they should be turned off, or whether the rights they had built up by acquiescence should be respected. When the Act of 1919 was under consideration that point was brought up, and that Act made careful provision to respect the vested rights of traders which had been acquired in opposition to the law, merely because of the fact that they had been so acquired and enjoyed.

After that the Asiatic Commission went into this particular question and reported on it, and they also had the impartial testimony of Sir Benjamin Robertson, who came here from India to assist the Asiatic Commission in its work.

CLAIM TO EQUALITY

In conclusion, Mr. Duncan said that he would like to remind the House that this is not a problem they had to be afraid of. It was certainly not a problem that was going to be solved by injustice and oppression. They had to remember that they were dealing with people who had settled in this country for a comparatively long time, with people who built up large business interests in this country, with people who had brought up their children here. He knew that their claims went much further. He knew that they claimed full political and social equality. That was a claim that we could not possibly allow at the present time.

The conditions of South Africa were such that we were in every way precluded from undertaking any claims of that kind, but we were going to use the powers of the State and the powers of this House to set apart separate areas where these people were to live, and these areas must be such as to enable them to live decent and wholesome and clean lives. It would not be to anybody's interest, and least of all our own, to force them into places where they could not live decent and civilised lives. Alluding to the policy of repatriation, he observed that he could not even consider the question of compulsory repatriation, but where those people desired to go back to India we should make it easy for them to do so.

A HARMFUL FALLACY

About 2,200 Indians had gone each year in the last three years. Replying to a question by Colonel Creswell, Mr. Duncan said he could not say what the cost had been. But that policy he thought could be developed and extended. He had found very considerable opposition among people who talked most about the Asiatics—from the point of view of the labouring classes—that they were a menace to the country. That line of argument was based upon a fallacy which had done a lot of harm in South Africa. He thought it was a matter of common sense and common knowledge that labour educates a man, and if he was content to remain in that state of life it would bring about some development. Honourable members must make up their minds that it was desirable to encourage Indian people to go elsewhere, either back to India or somewhere where they were more welcome than they were here.

NOT A PANACEA

This Bill was not going to be a panacea or to solve what was called the Indian menace. That could only be solved in one way—by the European population of South Africa so expanding that the number of Asiatics would cease to give any fear to the European. If it was applied carefully, as it was intended to be, the Bill would bring about a small but a useful improvement without any serious harm or injustice to any section of the community, without that aggravation of racial and social friction so much in evidence to-day. If they did not stop that friction the consequences would be grave. He thought it could be stopped without any degradation or injustice to a section of the community.

COL. CRESWELL'S SPEECH

Colonel Creswell said he had listened with pleasure to the candid way in which the Minister had set out what he had to say in praise of this Bill. The Minister said it with a modesty which many of them thought the occasion required. As the Minister said, it was not a panacea. It was going to have an extraordinarily small effect in dealing with this problem. The Bill purported to deal with a very acute state of feeling, a very acute situation, which, as the Minister said, was felt more in Natal than elsewhere in the Union.

DID NOT TOUCH CAUSES

The position which arose to-day was that when they had this Bill before them a close examination showed that it did not touch the causes of the effects which were complained of. The principal influences which desired legislation of this sort were those connected with the trading community. But if they were going to relieve the trading community it could surely only be by placing some disabilities on their competitors.

Ineffective and innocuous as he agreed this Bill was in the main, it had produced a tremendous outcry not only in India, but from the European sections concerned. He agreed that there was a great deal of prejudice in the country, but joined issue with the Government in the way they were dealing with the question. If they were going to deal with this matter in the presence of the acute tension and feeling and growing race antagonism which the Minister had spoken about, they must be careful to try to deal with the causes and to avoid anything in the nature of eyewash.

ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

What they feared was that the Government in dealing with this problem showed a lack of sympathetic understanding of what seemed to the Labour Party the roots of this problem. He wished to approach this subject with as little party polemics as possible, and he urged that they ought to voice their disagreements as clearly connected with their convictions. He thought they all were in agreement with the sentiments expressed by the Minister when he laid it down that it was their duty to maintain European civilisation in this country, although he was bound to say that the Government's conduct often seemed to be in conflict with their words. He also agreed that this was a serious problem, which would be more easy to handle if the European population increased.

He wished to avoid giving offence to his Indian fellow-subjects in this for he recognised that they had a high civilisation when his ancestors were going about stained with the juices of berries. But he maintained we had in this country one supreme problem arising from the contact of the European race with a black race barely emerging from barbarism. Through the short-sighted action of our predecessors another population element was introduced into Natal in 1860. This introduction was due to the dominant

influence in the Colony, and was against popular sentiment. (Hear, hear.) In the next generation a number of the coolies thus imported started to invade other occupations, and ousted Europeans in some of the humble walks of life. The voice of the European workers was unheeded.

NOT ON THE RIGHT LINES

Col. Creswell went on to say that this Bill was, in the Labour Party's opinion, the best the Government could do, inspired by the same principles and ideas to deal with it along lines which were compatible with the commercial idea of life, the ideas of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, never mind what was the standard of life of the employees. This Bill, as far as it went, was little or no solution. It did not go on the right lines. It was going to leave the present position absolutely unchanged. There would be no material change in the position of the trader in the towns of the Transvaal or elsewhere. The people who were so anxious for immediate relief would find that this Bill afforded them no relief.

It seemed to him to disregard the real facts that we ought to recognise and the end at which we ought to begin. The Bill would be utterly futile and useless for the small towns. The only thing that it had in it was that it indicated that there should be as little social friction as possible and that the process which to-day existed in Natal, where to a certain extent they inhabited different areas, should go on. He noticed that the Minister in his speech hardly spoke about what was the real root of the matter—economic friction. He thought the Prime Minister had every man in South Africa behind him in the attitude which he took up on this question at the Imperial Conference, but he supposed that no one realised more than the Prime Minister that that was an attitude which could not be maintained for all time.

THE RULING MAXIM OF COMMERCE

They should pay for their labour what it demanded, and never mind about how it lived. That was the ruling maxim of commerce in South Africa. To continue with such a policy was going to lead to the elimination of white civilisation in this country. He suggested that the first line of attack on the problem which this Bill was designed to solve was by municipal legislation and the rigorous enforcing of public health laws. If they began in that way, and were less inspired by the commercial idea, they would set up a standard of life not only among the Asiatics but among Europeans which would be compatible with European standards. Let them make their economic standard compatible with their standard of civilisation. If they had a larger and more prosperous wage-earning community in this country they would be able to restrain Asiatics or Europeans from unfair competition.

COL. CRESWELL'S AMENDMENT

The Minister had told them that some 17,000 Indians had been repatriated. He understood that many of those who had gone back were living in great distress. We had brought these people here and we were responsible for their position. We could not expect to remedy it at the expense of somebody else. This Bill, in his opinion, was going to effect nothing, but he did not want to see the matter laid aside, he wanted it to be thoroughly dealt with. Colonel Creswell then moved an amendment that the order for the second reading be discharged and the subject matter be referred to a Select Committee.

MR. STRACHAN

Mr. Strachan (Lab., Maritzburg), speaking in support of the amendment, said that he could endorse practically every sentence which the hon. member for Stamford Hill had uttered. The Minister had asked them to consider this Bill calmly and sanely. He (Mr. Strachan) thought the appointment of a Select Committee would enable them to do that.

A QUESTION OF SELF PRESERVATION

He maintained that the competition of Indians in Natal was such that it was necessary that something more should be done than social and trading segregation. He was pleased with the principles of this Bill and that the Government were doing something, but it was a question of self-preservation with the Europeans in Natal, and he only welcomed this as a first step because this Bill only touched the fringe of what was perhaps the greatest problem in this country to-day. When Mr. Mackenrian introduced a motion in favour of Asiatic segregation the attitude of the Minister of the Interior was sympathetic, but he found that a good many of the representations as to the so-called menace had been exaggerated and he threw as much cold water on the proposal as possible. The Municipality of Maritzburg had been striving to set apart an area for a native location, but the proposal had always been defeated by the objection of people in the neighbourhood of the site proposed. Similar difficulty would be experienced if it was sought to carry out this Bill.

DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH

Mr. Blackwell: "How will you solve this difficulty?"

Mr. Strachan: "It is a matter for the Select Committee." Proceeding, he said the people of Natal were not satisfied with mere sympathy from the Government, and their supporters finding that they were losing political ground because the Government persistently refused to tackle the Asiatic question had brought pressure to bear upon the Prime Minister. He wished that the Indians had been allowed to spread from Natal into the other Provinces so that more interest would have been taken by the House in this question. The Bill did not go far enough, and it did not tackle the question in the proper way. The hon. member called attention to the economic competition which existed in trades in Natal between the Indians and Europeans. He had not concluded his speech when the debate was adjourned until the following day.

THURSDAY APRIL 3

Mr. Strachan (Lab., Maritzburg, N.), in continuing his speech said that where he found exceptional fault with the measure was that there was no provision or protection whatever to those who had only their labour to sell. The worker and the producer were not protected under the Bill at all.

He quoted from the Asiatic Commission's report of 1921, to the effect, "in fact, many of the witnesses stated that they had no objection to the presence of the Indian, so long as he remained a labourer, and did not embark upon Commerce or other pursuits."

It reminded him of a congress he had attended in Natal, the purpose of which was to get rid of Asiatic competition and trade in South Africa, and it had become very evident that all that was desired was to get rid of one particular unfair competition in trade, and not to do anything at all in so far as the competition was against those who had only their labour to sell.

The Minister seemed to have a limited idea of the inroads Indians were making in Natal, if he spoke only of hawkers. (Mr. Duncan demurred.) No fewer than 1,461 persons were described as Indian employees in the employ of the Durban Corporation, and the great majority worked at a trifling wage, only 23 getting £5 per month or over.

"That is why they are employed," said Mr. Strachan, "and that is why the Indian competitor will beat the white man every time."

The lowest wage, he went on to say, was 5s. per month. Coming to the South African Railways and Harbours Administration, he said that it employed 31 Indians in the Cape, and 2,104 in Natal, and none in the other Provinces. The rates paid in the Cape varied from 2s. 6d. to 4s. 10d. a day with free food and lodging. Some who were engaged on more important duties were paid from 5s. 8d. to 8s. 8d. a day.

He submitted that many of the Europeans in Natal at the present time would be only too glad to work at the same remuneration. It was a question whether they would be of the same servile type of labour as the Indians were, but it would be going some way towards maintaining the white race in Natal.

Mr. Duncan's opinion seemed to have changed considerably since 1922, when he had taken strong objection to dealing harshly with the Indian trader and at the same time had taken exception to those who insisted that the labour should not be interfered with. The Minister had said in that year that in dealing with these problems they must deal with the Asiatic problem as a whole. That was one of the reasons why they on those benches desired that the measure should be sent to a Select Committee. That Bill was class legislation to the extreme. If it was the intention of the Government to protect the trading community something should also be done to stop the unfair competition by Indian people. Mrs. Naidu was reported to have said that if the Government of South Africa insisted upon South Africa being a white man's country, the Government of India would insist on India being a brown man's country. If some exchange could be arranged, he felt it would be to the advantage of both countries. He hoped the Minister would agree to sending this Bill to a Select Committee in order that a more reasonable measure could be put before the House.

MR. ROBINSON'S OBJECTIONS

Mr. Robinson (S.A.P., Durban Central) said he would like to join in the appeal made by the hon. member for Stamford Hill that this Bill should not be made a party measure. In dealing with questions of colour the House had always put party considerations on one side, and members had been free to say frankly what they thought. He would like to correct the statement made by Colonel Creswell, who seemed to suggest that the party of which he (Mr. Robinson) was a member was responsible for having done nothing to relieve the distress caused by the Indian immigration. It was not the fact that the Indian Government had put an end to the importation. They in this country wanted the Indians to finish their indentures in India, but to that the Indian Government refused to accede. The credit for stopping the importation was due to the far-seeing statesmanship of the late General Botha.

He (Mr. Robinson) could not agree to the proposal for the appointment of a Select Committee. They had had Commissions on this subject, and the salient facts connected with the question were already available to anybody who cared to study them. He thought they should discuss this matter on the floor of the House, when each one could give what he conceived to be a solution of the difficulties.

SOME FIGURES

He would cite a few figures, which he thought were illuminating. The Indian population of Natal in 1911 was 133,420; in 1921 it had risen to 141,649—an increase of six per cent. only. In 1919 there were 628 trading licences, and in 1923 licences had only increased to 629—an increase of one in 4 years. In 1920 the total value of property in Durban was £13,546,000, and of that the Indians owned £856,000. At the present time the total value of property was £17,409,000, of which Asiatics owned £1,098,000. The next point he wanted to deal with was what was known as the Asiatic infiltration into the areas usually occupied by Europeans.

WAGES IN NATAL.

In 1921 there were only 63 Asiatics residing in European areas. At the present time the number had risen to about 400. The average weekly wages paid to European workers from 1895 to 1921 in the Union were: Cape Peninsula, 64s. to 131s.; Bloemfontein, 80s. to 140s.; Port Elizabeth, 61s. to 120s.; Witwatersrand, 107s. to 172s.; and Durban, 75s. to 142s. The average increase had been maintained well in Durban. The average increases in European wages in 1920 and 1921 were as follows: Witwatersrand, 57 per cent. in 1920, 54 per cent. in 1921; Cape Peninsula, 94 per

cent. in 1920, 75 per cent. in 1921; Durban, 91 per cent. in 1920, 78 per cent. in 1921. Boiler-makers were paid at a higher rate in Durban than in any other town in the Union. The proportion of coloured employees to whites in the Union was: Free State, 21 per cent., Transvaal, 58 per cent.; Cape, 62 per cent.; and Natal, 75 per cent.

The points which emerged from these figures were that they had not been any alarming or anything like a considerable increase in the number of trading licences held by Indians in Natal, but there had been a very serious decrease in the number of white persons employed in Natal. There was a very manifest indication that the Asiatics themselves were deliberately choosing to reside in European areas. Could the House disregard the alarm felt over the measure by every Indian in the country and also the fact that the people who had been pressing for the introduction of the measure were dissatisfied with it?

"I cannot," declared Mr. Robinson, "vote for a measure that is going to be the means of placing these people in such conditions of life that they will amount to living in a Ghetto. It is impossible to constitute areas in any of the principal towns of Natal where it can conscientiously be said that Indians will be placed on reasonably fair conditions such as it is possible to allocate to whites."

AN APPEAL FOR DELAY

The Durban Town Council had reached the conclusion that it had not an area suitable for an Indian settlement. It was not possible to give them areas in Durban which the Minister desired they should have. Where Indians had already taken possession he was convinced that nothing could be done to oust them. Where, for instance were the Indians to be placed at Maritzburg?

Mr. O'Brien (S. A. P., Maritzburg, S.): We will find a place for them.

Mr. Robinson (proceeding) appealed to the Government to delay the passing of the Bill, on the ground that if the municipalities could not grapple with the problem the Government could not. What had been done to induce the Indians to expatriate themselves voluntarily? Only £25,000 a year was set aside for this purpose, but it would be cheap to spend ten times that amount. Greater inducements should be offered Indians to return home, and the Indian Government should be consulted on the question. Another solution of the problem was a larger European population. Mr. Robinson repeated that he could not vote for the measure, although it had been introduced at the repeated request of Natal. All the miseries of locations would follow the segregation of Indians. Mr. Robinson then put in a plea for Mauritians and St. Helenans, that they be excluded from the operations of the Bill. (Hear, hear.)

MUCH FUSS ABOUT LITTLE

Mr. P. G. W. Grobler (Nat., Rustenburg) said that the agitation about the Bill was so much ado about nothing, because the effect of the Bill would be very little indeed, and he felt that so little good would be achieved by the measure that it had not been worth creating all the agitation which had resulted. The Transvaal in the olden days had always tried to keep Asiatics out, but had not succeeded, as a result of the opposition of the Imperial Government. The Transvaal then had tried to keep Asiatics in certain areas, but owing to the effects of the pernicious Milner—Chamberlain policy, it had been prevented from carrying out that policy.

As a matter of fact, a great many of those, who now sat behind the Government, in those days supported the Milner policy—and now their chickens had come to roost.

The only reason why he would vote for the second reading of the Bill was because the principle of segregation which he favoured was taken up in the measure. But beyond that the Bill could have little effect. Why so much agitation should be caused he did not know, as in

the first place the responsibility was placed on municipalities, while furthermore, if necessary, the Minister could appoint a Commission to go into the matter of the areas which it was desired to set up under the Bill, and even then the Governor-General-in-Council could refuse to accept the recommendations of the Commission.

What was more, the Bill would not apply to existing areas or dwelling places of Indians, but only to future areas. In point of fact, the existing state of affairs would not be touched at all. Existing rights would not be interfered with.

THE BIG TOWNS ONLY

He complained that the Bill did not say one word about the rural areas, so that Indians who were dissatisfied with conditions in urban areas might go to the rural areas and there come into competition with traders and others.

Mr. Grobler went on to say that while nobody desired to do an injustice to the Indians, the civilisation of the Indians was different from that of Europeans and was in conflict with it. In fact, the question they were dealing with was the preservation of the white race, and it was for that reason that certain measures had to be taken.

The Indians must not run away with the idea that the Europeans looked down upon them and wanted to treat them unjustly. He hoped that the Minister would pay attention to the warning of the Chamber of Commerce that the Indians should not be placed anywhere where they would be unable to make a decent living. They were in South Africa and must be treated fairly and justly.

The best solution of the whole difficulty, whatever the cost, would be to buy out the Indians and let them go back to India. But as matters were, they must not shut their eyes to the fact that the Indians were here and would stay here, and would eventually make themselves felt in the political life of the country; the difficulty in future would be not only economic, but also political.

From *The Cape Times*.

(To be Continued)

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

An Emergency Conference of the South African Indian Congress (Fourth Session) will be held in Durban, on Easter Monday, 21st April 1924, and following days.

President-Elect: **MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU.**

Business :

1. Report and Financial Statement.
2. Revision of Rules.
3. Class Areas Bill.
4. Education.
5. Election of Officials.
6. General.

OMAR HAJEE AMOD JHAVERI,

President.

V. S. C. PATHER,

Hon. General Secretary.

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‘ઈન્ડિયન ઓપીનિયન’ ના લખાણને દર સાઉથ આફ્રિકાને રૂા રૂી ૧૫-૦ દ્વારાપારને માટે રૂી. ૧૫-૬.

NATAL COLONIAL-BORN INDIAN ASSOCIATION

The adjourned meeting of the above Association will be held on Sunday the 20th inst. at Rawat's Bio Hall, Victoria Street, Durban, at 2. p.m. sharp. All persons wishing to participate must enrol themselves prior to the meeting.

Agenda :

1. Adoption of Constitution.
2. Election of Officials.
3. General.

S. L. SINGH,

Protm Secy.

Box 1770. Durban.

પ્રારંભીક નોટીસ

સાઉથ આફ્રિકન ઇન્ડિયન કોંગ્રેસની એક ખાસ બેઠક ડરબનમાં તા. ૨૧ એપ્રિલ ૧૯૨૪ ના ઇસ્ટર મન્ડેને દિવસે અને તે પછીના દિવસોએ શ્રીમતી સરોજની નાયડુના પ્રમુખણ નીચે મળશે.

કાર્ય: (૧) રીપોર્ટ અને હિસાબ. (૨) ધારાઓ, (૩) ક્લાસ એરીયાઝ બીલ, (૪) કેળવણી, (૫) અમલદારોની ચુંટણી (૬) સામાન્ય ઉમર હાલ આમદ ઝવેરી

પ્રમુખ

વી. એસ. સી. પથર
એન. સેક્રટરી.

અંકવાહીક પંચાંગ

વાર	ખ્રીસ્તી	હીંદુ	મુસલમાન	પારસી	સુર્યોદય	સુર્યાસ્ત
	૧૯૨૪	૧૯૮૦	૧૩૪૨	૧૨૯૩	ક. મી.	ક. મી.
	એપ્રિલ	ચૈત્ર	રમળન			
શુક્ર	૧૧	સુદિ ૭	૬	૫	૬-૧૬	૫-૪૬
શનિ	૧૨	" ૮	૭	૬	૬-૧૭	૫-૪૪
રવિ	૧૩	" ૯	૮	૭	૬-૧૭	૫-૪૩
સોમ	૧૪	" ૧૦	૯	૮	૬-૧૮	૫-૪૨
મંગળ	૧૫	" ૧૧	૧૦	૯	૬-૧૯	૫-૪૧
બુધ	૧૬	" ૧૨	૧૧	૧૦	૬-૧૯	૫-૪૦
શુક્ર	૧૭	" ૧૩	૧૨	૧૧	૬-૨૦	૫-૩૯

શ્રી ઈન્ડિયન સ્ટીમ નેવીગેશન કંપની

સ્ટીમરોની ખબર

સ્ટી. "કારાપારા" એપ્રિલ તા. ૧૪ મીના અરસામાં મુંબઈ જવા ઉપડશે.

સ્ટી. "ખંડાલા" એપ્રિલ તા. ૨૭ મીના અરસામાં ઉપડશે.

સ્ટી. "કરોઆ" મે તા. ૧૧ મીના અરસામાં ઉપડશે. વધુ ખુલાસો

શેખલ હીમેટ, ૩૭૦ પાર્કન સ્ટ્રીટ, ડરબન, એ સજે મળવાથી અથવા લખવાથી મળી શકશે.

ઇન્ડિયન ઓપિનિયન.

પુસ્તક ૨૨ મું.

ફ્રીનીક્સ, શુક્રવાર, તારીખ ૧૨ એપ્રિલ ૧૯૨૪

અંક ૨૫

કલાસ એરીયાઝ ખીલ

પારલામેન્ટમાં ચર્ચા : મી. ડકેનનું ભાષણ

લાંબી મુદત થયાં રાહ જોવાઈ રહેલાં કલાસ એરીયાઝ ખીલ ઉપર યુનીયનની આમની સભામાં બુધવાર તા. ૨૭ એપ્રિલની રાત્રી ચર્ચા શરૂ થઈ હતી. મુલકી પ્રધાન મી. ડકેને ખીલું વાંચન રજૂ કરતાં જણાવ્યું કે :

આ ખીલના હેતુ અને અસરને વિશે એ તદ્દન ઉલટાજ વિચારોથી સાઉથ આફ્રિકામાં અને એથી પણ વધારે સાઉથ આફ્રિકાની બહાર એસમબ્લુની ઉત્પત્તિ થયેલી છે. એક તરફથી એમ કહેવાયું છે કે આ ખીલનો હેતુ સા. આ. ની હિંદી વસ્તિનો નાશ અને માનભંગ કરવાનો છે અને ખીલ તરફથી સા. આ. માં એ ખીલને વિશે એવી ટીકા કરવામાં આવેલી છે કે, એથી કંઈ પણ સુધારો થઈ શકે તેમ નથી અને નકામું હોઈ તેને પાસ કરવાની તકલીફ થવી બર્થ છે. બંને વિચારો ખીલનાં મુળ હેતુ અને અસરને વિશે મંબીર-બુદ્ધ કરનારાં છે.

પ્રથમ તો આ ખીલનો હેતુ હિંદી કામનો નાશ કરવાનો કે તેનું કાંઈ પણ રીતે માનભંગ કરવાનો છે જ નહિ. ખીલ તરફથી આ ખીલ સા. આ. ની યુરોપીયન વસ્તી અને હિંદી કામ વચ્ચે જે સંબંધ હમણાં વરતે છે તેમાં મોટા સુધારો કરી શકશે. મુળ હેતુ હાલ જની દવેષ તેમજ વેપારમાં જે ખટરાગ વર્તી રહ્યો છે તેને કેટલેક દરજે ઓછો કરવાનો અને યુરોપીયન અને હિંદી વસ્તી વચ્ચેના સંબંધને વિશે એવી સ્થિતિ બાંધવાનો છે કે જેથી એ સંબંધ કેવો હતો અને બંને કોમોની જુરરીયાતને અનુકુળ આવે એવી રીતે તેને કેમ ગોઠવી શકાય તેનો શાંતિથી અને હદાપણથી વિચાર થઈ શકે.

સા. આ. ની વિચિત્ર જરૂરીયાતો

આ ખીલ વડે સરકાર હિંદી સ્વાધને સાઉથ આફ્રિકાની વિચિત્ર જરૂરીયાતો અનુસાર હાથ ધરવા મગે છે. યુરોપીયન અને એશીયાટીક જાતી અરસપરસ વિરોધમાં આવી પડેલી હોય અથવા એક ખીલ સાથે સંબંધમાં આવેલી હોય તેવા દુનીયાના કોઈ પણ દેશના કરતાં આ દેશની વસ્તુસ્થિત જુદાજ પ્રકારની છે. આ દેશની સ્થિતિ કેશ્વિર-નીવાના રાજ્યમાં અથવા કેનેડાના આંદોલન કોલમ્બીયા પ્રાંતના કરતાં વધારે મુંઝવણભરેલી છે. કારણકે આ દેશની યુરોપીયન વસ્તીએ આ દેશમાં સુધારો આજુકો છે અને પોતાના કરતાં સંખ્યામાં ઘણીજ મોટી નેટીવ વસ્તીથી તે વીંટળાયેલી છે કે જેમને યુરોપીયન સુધારા વડે સુધારવાની છે અને તેઓની ઉપર રાજ્ય ચલાવવાનું છે. તેથી અન્ય દેશોમાં જ્યાં આવી જાતના વિરોધો અને તકલીફો ઉપસ્થિત થાય છે તેના કરતાં આ દેશમાં સંજોગો જુદા પ્રકારનાં અને વિચિત્ર છે. આ બાબતમાં પરદેશી પ્રજાએને લાચુ પડનારા કાયદાઓ ધડવામાં આવે તે પ્રજાઓ તરફ સંપૂર્ણ ખ્યાલ આપવા ધ્યાનને ખીલે. (મી. ફોરસાઇથે અહીં કહ્યું કે :

આ દેશમાં જન્મેલા લોકોને પરદેશી ન કહી શકાય). મી. ડકેને જણાવ્યું કે જે લોકોને આ દેશમાં કાયદા ધડવામાં ખીલકુલ અવાજ નથી તે લોકોની ઇન્સાફની માગણીઓને ખાસ ધ્યાન આપવાની આ સભાની ફરજ છે. પરંતુ તે સાથે સાઉથ આફ્રિકામાં આ ખીલની સામે ચલાવી કંઈ પણ ધમકીઓ વડે સાઉથ આફ્રિકાની બહાર રાજદ્વારી પગલાં લેવાની કંઈ પણ ધમકી વડે અથવા સાઉથ આફ્રિકાની બહારથી કંઈ પણ સામે પ્રહાર કરવામાં આવે તેથી અને પાછા હટવાનો પણ ધરદો રાખતા નથી. સખોને એ જાણવા જેવું થઈ પડશે કે હાંદુસ્તાનની ધારાસભાએ એક કાયદો પાસ પસું કરી નાખેલો છે કે જેથી આ ખીલથી અને જે કરવા પ્રતિદો રાખીએ છીએ તેની સામે નહિ પણ ૧૯૧૩ ના ઇમીગ્રેશન કાયદાની સામે ધા થઈ રહ્યો છે.

એ કાયદો પાસ થયો તે વખતે સામાન્ય રીતે એમ સમજાયું હતું કે સાઉથ આફ્રિકામાં એશીયાટીક આવાત બંધ થશે. અને હિંદીકોમે એ સ્થિતિ રિવકાલી લીધેલી. વળી એમ સમજાયું હતું કે એશીયાટીકો સામે કાયદામાં નામથી બેઠ નહિ પાડવામાં આવે પણ અમલથી એ હેતુ સાધવામાં આવશે. ચાલુ સાલ દરમીયાન હિંદુસ્તાનની ધારાસભામાં એક કાયદો પાસ કરી અમલમાં મુકાનો બંધ જેથી આંદોલન સંસ્થાનોમાંથી હિંદુસ્તાનની મુલાકાતે આવનાર હિંદી જાતી સિવાયના અન્ય લોકોની ઉપર હિંદુસ્તાનમાં ઉતરનાનાં સંબંધમાં એવા પ્રતિબંધો મુકી શકાશે કે જેવા એ મુલાકાતીઓ આવેલા હોય તે પાસ સંસ્થાનમાં હિંદીઓ ઉપર મુકાતા હશે. આથી હિંદુસ્તાન જવા ઇચ્છનારા સાઉથ આફ્રિકાને ચેતવણી લેવાની છે.

આ ખીલનો હેતુ એશીયાટીક જાતીઓ તરફ સંપૂર્ણ ભક્ષ આપવા સાથે સાઉથ આફ્રિકા (જરૂરીયાતો પુરી પાડવાને છે. આ ખીલ ટ્રાંસવાલ અને નાટાલની હિંદી વસ્તીની બીડથી ધારાસભામાં લાવવું પડ્યું છે અને તેમાં એશીયાટીક કે હિંદીનું ખાસ નામ કેમ દાખલ કરવામાં નથી આખું એવી તેને વિશે ટીકા થા જ. પરંતુ આ બાબતમાં સરકાર ૧૯૧૩ ના ઇમીગ્રેશન કાયદાનેજ અનુસરી રહ્યા છે. આ કાંઈ પણ ખાસ જાતીનો તેના નામ (બેઠ નહિ પાડવો એ ઘણીજ ઉત્તમ નીતિ છે.

“એશીયાટીક ભય” શાથી ઉપજ્યો

સાઉથ આફ્રિકામાં હિંદી વસ્તીની હજી અને હરીફાઈથી યુરોપીયન પ્રજાને ભય ઉપજતો કહેવાય છે તેવું આ ખીલ સમાધાન નથી કરતું એવી ટીકા કરવામાં આવે છે. આવી બાબતમાં આજે શું થઈ રહ્યું છે તેનોજ માન વિચાર કરવો વાજબી નથી. જે માનવંત સખો એમ માનતા હોય કે આ ખીલ જોઈએ તેવું અસરકારક નથી તેઓએ સાઉથ આફ્રિકામાં આ “ભય” કે જેને વિશે એટલું બધું સાંભળવામાં