

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

THE following is a copy of the letter received by the hon. Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress from the Minister of the Interior in connection with the Boroughs Ordinance:—

Office of the Minister of the Interior,
Pretoria,
11th December, 1924.

Sir,—Referring to the interview which your Congress had with Ministers on the 9th instant, in regard to the Natal Boroughs Ordinance, I am directed by the Honourable the Minister of the Interior to inform you that after giving their earnest consideration to your representations and going fully into the whole question, the Cabinet have decided to recommend to the Governor-General-in-Council that he gives his assent to the Ordinance.

Yours faithfully,

W. D. NORVAL,
Private Secretary.

Mr. V. S. C. Pather,
Joint Honorary Secretary,
Natal Indian Congress,
P. O. Box 670, Durban.

At a recent meeting of the Durban Town Council the Finance Committee recommended:—

That authority be granted for the purchase from the Royal Mint, Pretoria, of 15,000 medals with the Prince's head on one side, and the present Borough Seal on the other, at a cost not exceeding £17 14s. 2d per 1,000, plus 30 per cent. for the addition of a ring and pin.

At a meeting of Norwood (Johannesburg) property owners and residents it was decided to form an association to be called the "Norwood Anti-Asiatic Association" and a committee was appointed forthwith. The aims and objects are to eject the Asiatics from Norwood where, it was stated, they were busy turning the pleasant suburb into an "Indian Bazaar." The discussion was very heated and went along the lines of "dealing with" white persons who dealt with Indian traders.

A Reuter's message from Calcutta states:— "Swaraj Week" will be extended until Dec. 14. The purpose of the week is to carry on an intensive campaign for raising money for work in the rural districts and villages, which Mr. Das expresses a desire to organise on a co-operative basis with a view to stopping "the exploitation of rice, jute and other country products by foreigners." Mr. Das announced that hitherto one lakband 60,000 rupees have been collected, but he appeals for three lakhs, without which, he says, it will be impossible to carry on the campaign in the villages.

Delhi, Dec. 9 (Reuter).—The Government of India has passed a resolution dealing at length with the circumstances attending the racial disturbances at Kohat on Sept. 9 and 10, in which 10 Moslems were killed and 20 wounded, 10 Hindus were killed and 8 wounded, and 3 police wounded. These dis-

turbances were attributed at the time to the feeling engendered by the circulation of a blasphemous anti-Moslem poem, and the murder of a Moslem boy by a Hindu. The resolution now passed confirms the view that the firing by panic-stricken Hindus caused the rioting, and commends the action of the local authorities. It does not agree with the criticism and that the crowd should have been fired on, adding that at no stage could the firing have been profitable. It is pointed out that a most useful aid in quelling disturbances, namely, British troops, was not forthcoming at Kohat. The evolution of an alarm scheme to prevent Communal riots is also recommended.

Pretoria, Dec. 12 (Reuter).—The *Pretoria News* had an interview with Mr. Boydell, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, who confirmed the statement that the Cabinet is considering a new design for Union postage stamps, but added that nothing definite had been decided. Asked if it was likely that the King's head would be replaced by some South African token, Mr. Boydell said that was quite likely. He hoped that political capital would not be made of that, and pointed to the fact that the Australian stamps did not bear the King's head.

A Reuter's message from London states:—

A deputation from the Chambers of Commerce waited on the Postmaster-General and urged him to re-introduce the penny postage. Sir William Mitchell-Thompson agreed that trade would benefit thereby, but said a decision rested with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whom he promised to submit the arguments in favour thereof.

A Virginia married couple who put up at a New York hotel brought an action for damages against the hotel proprietors as the result of their experiences. They testified that detectives entered their room at night and questioned their marriage, only believing the truth when the marriage certificate was produced. The husband was awarded £200 damages, and the wife, who said the incident made her ill, necessitating a doctor's attention, was awarded £500. The hotel proprietor pleaded a mistake on the part of the hotel clerk.

The population of the Australian Commonwealth at the end of September was 5,835,000, showing an increase of 2 per cent. during the past three years.

The Johannesburg correspondent of the *Natal Mercury* gives the following interesting account of a recent Rand insolvency:

The troubles of a company director were revealed in the Johannesburg Insolvency Court; when Harry Cohen, the trustee, explained to a meeting of creditors the position existing in the insolvent estate of Barend Andries Meintjes Meintjes, who was a director and shareholder in two companies called W. R.

Levin and Co., Ltd., and W. R. Levin and Co. (Hides), Ltd. These firms, in which he had invested £15,000 and £5,000 respectively, dealt in produce and general merchandise, chiefly the former, and owing to unfortunate investments and depreciation in stocks consequent upon the fall in prices after the Armistice, the companies went into liquidation. Meintjes lost everything, the creditors receiving about a shilling in the £ in full settlement. It appears that the directors had personally guaranteed several accounts due by the companies, including one of £45,000. Judgment was obtained by them against Meintjes for this sum. According to the schedules filed by Meintjes, his liabilities amounted to £45,291 and his assets were £150, leaving a deficiency of £45,141. The liabilities including the sum of £45,000 due as guarantor. Meintjes submitted the following offer of composition: "Payment of all costs of sequestration and administration; all assets realised to be distributed among the creditors." It was unanimously resolved that the offer should be accepted.

A BETRAYAL

ON the 9th instant, a deputation waited upon the Prime Minister and other Members of the Union Cabinet in Pretoria and submitted a very exhaustive statement, which we published in our last issue in extenso, embodying our community's objections to the Boroughs Ordinance which was passed by the Provincial Council a few months ago and which awaited the pleasure of the Governor-General-in-Council to pass it or reject it. The Prime Minister gave the deputation the assurance that their representation would receive the Government's serious consideration and they returned to the Garden Colony fully confident that the Government meant to do the right thing inasmuch as the said Ordinance was class legislation pure and simple. The measure is so comprehensive that, by its various provisions, seeks to strangle our community out of existence. Alas! What do we see, that a week after the deputation had met the Minister and after the community had been lulled into false security comes the news that the Governor-General has given his assent to that Ordinance. What a duplicity! Why receive a deputation of our community at all, if the Ministers had already made up their minds to pass it. The receiving of the deputation was but a farce of the worst description. It is inconceivable that the present Government, which comprises chiefly of the Nationalist party, a freedom-loving people, should deny to a section of the South African community, which is voiceless and voteless, the fundamental elements of that freedom and sanction the taking away of the very small rights it had hitherto possessed and enjoyed. It is well for that party who are a very religiously-minded people and who have a great faith in the word of God, to remember that they as the present rulers of this country derived their authority from Him who is the common Father of us all and that He expected of them to use that authority fairly and justly to all sections. As surely as the sun rises from the East, they will be asked to give an account of their stewardship to Him who gave them that authority. Need we remind them of the fate that befell the unjust steward in the Holy scriptures? It behoved them to hold

the scales of justice evenly and inflict no injustice on any class or race of people under their jurisdiction, especially on those who are unrepresented in the legislatures of this country.

We felt we had a right to ask them to safeguard our rights under section 147 of the South Africa Act which vested in the Governor-General-in-Council all matters specially or differentially affecting Asiatics throughout the Union. The Ministers of the Crown were the custodians of our rights, as we had not the Parliamentary franchise. But they have abandoned their trust, betrayed and sold us. The rights, which the Boroughs Ordinance deprives us of, have been guaranteed to us under the settlement arrived at between Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts after that memorable passive resistance struggle, which meant untold hardship and misery to our people. That settlement provided that there shall be no further encroachment upon our existing rights. We make bold to say that the Government in passing the Ordinance have committed clearly a breach of faith. What trust could we have after this in the white man's word? One would have thought that at this season of the year, when the Christian Government will be in a few days' time commemorating the nativity of the Prince of Peace, who brought into this world "Peace on earth to men of goodwill" will exercise a little of that goodwill to others. Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. But, no, there is no Christianity left in them. It is said that even a worm will turn when trampled upon. Is our Community going to take this beating lying down. We hope not. Let them be up and doing. Let them leave no stone unturned to have their voice heard.

THE BOROUGHS ORDINANCE

NATAL MERCURY ON THE INDIAN DEPUTATION

The *Natal Mercury* in an editorial writes:—
"The Prime Minister's reply to the Indian deputation which was received by the Government on Tuesday will probably be widely approved in Natal; but we are by no means sure that it is as satisfactory as it may appear at first blush to supporters of the anti-Asiatic policy of the Provincial Council. The object of the deputation was to protest against certain provisions of the Boroughs Ordinance which Indians think are directed against their interests and what they consider their rights. General Hertzog is reported to have told the deputation that Natal was "acting within its rights in the matter of this Ordinance," and that it was "hardly within the province of the Union Government to interfere with those rights." The Prime Minister added that if the Government did exercise its veto it would have to substitute "some other machinery to meet the wishes of the people," which may be taken as a plain intimation to the Indians of Natal that they cannot expect a more sympathetic attitude on the part of the Hertzog Government than that of the Provincial Council of Natal. It is fairly clear, however, if General Hertzog is correctly reported—the proceedings, of course, were not formally open to the Press—that the Government does not intend to exercise its veto, but will endeavour to throw the whole responsibility for the Ordinance upon the Province of Natal. This may be superficially satisfactory to the members of the Provincial Council, who supported the clauses in the Ordinance which are obnoxious to the Indians; but it marks an important departure from the policy of General Hertzog's

predecessors. General Smuts always held that the assent of the Union Government to a Provincial Ordinance made it a party to the legislation in question. Where the electors of the Province were solely concerned, as in the case of certain taxing measures in the Transvaal, the Government would not as a rule interfere; but in matters affecting other interests the Government must share fully the responsibility of the Provincial Councils. In particular in regard to this question of legislation designed to impose restrictions on the Indian community, General Smuts took the view that the Union Government must not shirk responsibility. That meant in some instances that the Union Government would not allow the Provincial Council to go so far as the latter wished; but it also meant that when any legislation passed by the Provincial Council received the assent of the Governor-General-in-Council the whole of the Union stood behind Natal in the matter. General Smuts insisted repeatedly that though a particular question such as this might concern one Province primarily and principally, one Province could not stand alone in dealing with authorities outside the Union, whether in Downing Street or in Simla. Hence though in some instances Natal legislation was vetoed by the Union Government, the legislation which was assented to was defended and maintained with the whole weight and authority of the Union Government and Parliament. General Smuts' view in this matter is assuredly the right view. The Natal Provincial Council is a subordinate legislature and for all its acts the Union Government is responsible to the world outside the Union. General Hertzog would no doubt protest very speedily and emphatically if Lord Reading addressed a remonstrance in reference to the Boroughs Ordinance to Sir George Plowman direct instead of approaching him through his Majesty's Ministers of State at Pretoria. Yet that would be a perfectly logical corollary to General Hertzog's attempt to throw the whole responsibility for the Ordinance upon Natal and to evade his own responsibility in the matter.

ASIATICS AND THE FRANCHISE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION'S ATTITUDE

His Worship the Mayor and Councillor H. H. Kemp recently interviewed the Minister of the Interior, and now says the *Natal Advertiser*, the latter has drawn up a history of the granting of the municipal franchise to natives in Natal boroughs. This he has forwarded in the form of a letter, to the Minister.

From this letter it appears that in 1905 the Natal Legislature passed the Natal Municipal Corporations Bill, which laid it down, in respect of the non-European vote, that "Every person so qualified shall be entitled to be enrolled as a burgess except . . .

"(c) Any person disqualified for the parliamentary franchise by Act No. 8 of 1896 or any other Act, unless he shall be exempted in the prescribed manner from the operation of such Act. The provisions of this sub-section (c) shall not apply to the class of persons mentioned therein whose names are rightly contained in any burgess roll in force at the date of the commencement of this Act, and who are otherwise competent and qualified as electors."

THE ORIGINAL PROVISION

The 1896 Act referred to laid it down that no person was entitled to inclusion on the voters' roll who, not being of European origin, are natives or descendants in the male line of natives of countries which have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions founded on the parliamentary franchise, unless they shall first obtain an order

from the Governor-General-in-Council exempting them from the operation of the Act.

In 1907 negotiations were proceeding concerning the Municipal Corporations Bill, and the secretary to the Prime Minister of Natal notified the secretary to the Natal Municipal Association that "there yet remains the future question of the municipal franchise disqualification clause (Section 22 (c), and with regard to this point the Prime Minister has impressed on His Majesty's Government the necessity of allowing this provision to be retained."

The Executive Committee of the Natal Municipal Association expressed the unanimous view of the Natal local authorities on this point in the following resolution:—

"With regard to the sections dealing with the disfranchisement of Asiatics, it was resolved that the Government be urged to insist on the inclusion of the sections as appearing in the Bill."

THE INDIAN VIEWPOINT

In 1907 the Municipal Association was notified "that the Secretary of State for India regrets that no concession is being made as regards Section 22 (c), which, as it stands, will debar from municipal franchise all Indian ratepayers at present enrolled. The Secretary of State for India also points out that at present Indian traders can be deprived of their licences on insufficient grounds, and have no local remedy, and he considers that the Dealers' Licences Act should be amended so as to allow the right to appeal to the Supreme Court by persons whose licences are withdrawn by Licensing Boards, and, failing such amendments, regards it as essential that Indian ratepayers should remain in possession of the municipal franchise."

The Municipal Association, however, still stood firm for the inclusion of the sections dealing with the disfranchisement of Asiatics.

Subsequently the Natal Legislature passed an Act (No. 22 of 1909), which provided that an applicant for the renewal of a dealer's licence, or a person who had duly lodged an objection to such renewal, may appeal to the Supreme Court or to a Circuit Court against any decision given under Section 6 of the Wholesale and Retail Dealers' Licences Act (No. 18 of 1897) by a Town Council, Town Board or Licensing Board, and that such Court may order that the renewal applied for be granted, or that it may not be granted, or may in any case remit the application for re-hearing.

From this Mr. Kemp draws the conclusion that the Secretary of State for India's point being fully met, the matter of Indians remaining in possession of the municipal franchise was left to the discretion of the Natal Parliament. Natal Ministers, however, were willing to submit to and recommend the deletion of the section in question, and the Bill was then to be allowed to go through as containing no class legislation. The Natal Municipal Association urged that the original Bill be allowed to stand over and the Government of Natal acquiesced.

REASONS ADVANCED

Later the association again considered the matter and again urged that the law be amended on the lines of the Bill of 1905, their reasons being:—

- (1) The fixed policy of the association since its inception and as referred to above;
- (2) The principle laid down by the Natal Parliament in Act No. 8 of 1896, and in the Municipal Corporations' Bill of 1909, and by the Natal Provincial Council in Ordinance No. 11 of 1914;
- (3) The Transvaal Municipal Elections Ordinance No. 8 of 1912, which disallows entirely the non-European's vote, and which Ordinance was approved by the Governor-General-in-Council; and
- (4) That there is nothing in the Union Act to debar the Provincial Council enacting that non-Europeans shall not exercise the municipal franchise.

Mr. Kemp points out that under the Treaty of

Vereeniging, in the Transvaal the franchise was restricted to white persons who were British subjects, but the white inhabitants of Utrecht and Vryheid did not obtain the same favoured treatment when their areas were detached from the Transvaal. This point, he thinks, is one which is not to be lightly disregarded.

ASIATIC HEALTH AND HOUSING

"The Asiatic population resident on the environs of Durban is greater in number than the population of Asiatics within the borough. Living as they do in dirty, dilapidated tin huts, without adequate means of ventilation and light and huddled together on areas regardless of air space or any other sanitary conditions, they are a great menace to the public health of Durban, and the position of affairs can only be contemplated with the gravest apprehension. In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease such as plague, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to enforce the necessary preventive measures. As this class of the community mingle daily as food vendors and servants with the rest of the community, they are a grave and constant menace to the health of Durban generally, and, in my opinion, it is urgently necessary that, with the least possible delay, the matter should be radically dealt with."

Thus writes Councillor H. H. Kemp, says the *Natal Advertiser*, in the course of a lengthy memorandum on town planning and Indian housing which he has forwarded to the Town Clerk. He suggests that those heads of departments who are reporting on draft regulations for submission to the Minister of the Interior should also report on the necessity of obtaining further powers to deal with areas contiguous to Durban.

CANNOT FIND THE MONEY

Having stressed the delay in putting the Union Public Health Act into force, with the resultant increased expenditure now involved—an expenditure beyond the means of health committees—Mr. Kemp urges that suburban areas maintained in the present unsatisfactory state tends to keep landed property in Durban unduly expensive and deprives the borough of rates which it should be drawing from these suburban areas. Private owners, he thinks, can do little towards improvement, and he stresses the need for good lines of communication traversing these areas. The buildings have been erected without any regard for regularity, and the so-called roads—which are really veld tracks—are irregular and bad, being impossible for use by wheeled traffic; while overcrowding exists in poor buildings owned and occupied by the non-European classes.

Piecemeal attempts at improvement are, in the opinion of Mr. Kemp, doomed to failure. Sanitation and intercommunication cannot be provided in existing circumstances. Many of the houses are unfit for human habitation; the narrowness, closeness, bad arrangement, or the bad condition of the streets and houses or groups of houses, together with the want of ventilation and proper conveniences, as well as other sanitary defects, and dangerous and injurious to the health of the inhabitants both of the area and its vicinity, and these evils cannot be effectively remedied otherwise than by general roads and houses within the area.

EXPROPRIATION NECESSARY

Mr. Kemp holds that the position should be dealt with *de novo*, and he thinks expropriation is indicated. Who will undertake the task? Durban is prejudicially affected, but legally has no *locus standi*, while the financial responsibility is too big for the Health Committees. Whoever has the task, the

principle of recoupment must, the Councillor thinks, be approved.

Dealing with the housing of Indians, the memorandum goes on to refute the contention in a letter from the secretary for Public Health that the "Minister cannot accept the implication that the Government has any special obligations in regard to the housing of Indians as distinct from other sections of the community, nor is it clear on what grounds the same implication is made in regard to the Provincial Administration," it is pointed out that the responsibility for the public health of the Union is on the Minister. Durban Town Council can only deal with Indians within its borders, but a housing scheme for them would be nullified by numbers of Indians living in insanitary conditions just outside the borough boundaries. The housing question cannot be tackled except in a comprehensive way, and Durban alone cannot carry the burden. The Public Health Committees have neither the power nor the money.

TOO MUCH LAISSEZ FAIRE

"It is no use for the Minister of Public Health to fold his arms and tell us that he is not the keeper of the Indians outside the borough of Durban," goes on Mr. Kemp. "We have had too much of the policy of *laissez faire* from the Union Government and the Provincial Administration in the past in reference to the outside districts, and the results are now pressing heavily upon the community."

"The Minister stated, and rightly so, that the Town Council have powers to acquire land and carry out housing schemes outside its area of jurisdiction. That is true, but the Minister is also perfectly well aware of the fact that these powers have been accorded by Parliament for the benefit of the people of the borough and not for the strangers without our gates. This is well exemplified by the following resolution of the Town Council of November 6, 1924:—

"That in order to enable the Town Council to provide additional accommodation for the housing of natives employed and residing within the borough of Durban with the least possible delay, and to secure land for the establishment of a native village in terms of Act 21 of 1923, the application of July 31, 1923, to the Union Government for a loan not exceeding £200,000 be renewed."

MANY BILLS FOR COMING SESSION

ASIATIC MEASURE PROBABLE

The Pretoria correspondent of the *Natal Advertiser* reports:—

The members of the Government have compiled quite an extensive programme for next session, which in all probability will be a long one, not only because of the Government's contemplated legislation but because the slogan, "It is the duty of the Opposition to oppose," will be put into active operation. Following are some of the more important Bills to be introduced:—

Mr. Tielman Roos (Minister of Justice and Irrigation) will have a Bill to amend the insolvency laws, another to amend the law with regard to criminal procedure, a Bill dealing with the sale of liquor on diamond diggings and relief works, and a Bill simplifying extradition between the Union and the Belgian Congo and other northern territories. The Bill with regard to Government attorneys will be re-introduced, and Mr. Roos will have a Bill which contemplates the creation of an irrigation board on the lines of the Railway Board.

General Kemp (Minister of Agriculture) will have a Bill dealing with a levy on sugar and ostrich feathers, also a consolidating measure regarding branding of cattle, a Bill dealing with the auctioneering business, and possibly a Bill concerned with

veterinary matters. There will also be a Bill amending the co-operation laws.

Dr. Malan (Minister of the Interior, Public Health and Education) will produce a new electoral Bill, a Bill dealing with naturalisation, South African nationality, and a Union flag. There will also be a new medical Bill and possibly one touching the thorny question of Asiatics.

Mr. Piet Grobler (Minister of Lands) will have a further Bill dealing with land settlement and concerning, *inter alia*, the terms of payment of Government ground, a Bill about the Sundays River settlement (an adjustment measure), also one dealing with the land on the Oliphants River (a measure connected with discipline on church land settlements), and several minor Bills.

Col. Creswell (Minister of Defence and Labour) will have a couple of Bills on the organisation of workers, etc.

Mr. W. Beyers (Minister of Mines and Industries) will introduce a Bill having for its object the consolidation of the laws dealing with miners' phthisis, and an amending Bill dealing with weights and measures.

Nothing is known as yet about the proposals of the Minister of Finance or of those of the Prime Minister.

INDIAN LABOURER'S CLAIM

JUDGMENT IN COMPENSATION CASE

Judgment was given last week in the Durban Magistrate's Court in the application made under the Workmen's Compensation Act for £150 by Puckree, an Indian youth, against the Natal Soap Works, Ltd. The respondents offered applicant £54. The claim was in respect to injuries Puckree received in the course of his duties.

In giving judgment, Mr. B. Colenbrander pointed out that the question for decision was solely the amount due to applicant. Puckree, an uneducated, ordinary, unskilled Indian labourer, 16 years of age, at the time of the accident, was in receipt of a wage amounting in all to £2 per month. It was quite clear and not disputed, that the earning capacity would probably have increased during the three years next succeeding the date of accident to £3 a month. The measure of compensation, therefore, fell to be computed on the basis of half of three years' wages at the latter figure. It would require very strong circumstances to depart from the principal rules of the Act in measuring the compensation, and increasing them under the proviso of the first schedule, section 1 (b) of the Act. Applicant was an unskilled Indian labourer, only 16 years, and while his injury was admittedly a severe one—he had lost a thumb and two and a half fingers of his left hand—having regard to his status, age, and the probability of his being able, in spite of the disability to his left hand, to earn ordinary wages as an unskilled workman later on, said Mr. Colenbrander, he did not consider this to be a case in which the measure of compensation should be increased. In view of the circumstances in this case, he was of opinion that no deduction should be made in regard to the £11 3s. 0d. medical fees. The judgment would be for applicant for £54. The senior magistrate also intimated that there would be no order as to costs.

Mr. C. P. Robinson, for the respondent Company, said that he was not instructed to ask for costs. It was more to test the question of the amount.

Mr. R. E. Chapman was for Puckree.

COLOUR BAR ON STEAMSHIPS ADVOCATED

WHITE PASSENGERS' PROTEST AGAINST SAILING WITH BLACKS

A letter signed by a number of second-class passengers on the *R.M.S. Walmer Castle* and handed to Captain Stanley, her master, for transmission to the company's Board of Directors, has been sent to the *Sunday Times* for publication. It reads as follows:—

It was with the greatest astonishment that we, the undersigned second-class passengers, discovered that among us as passenger to South Africa is included a native of Dundee, Natal; and subsequent to a meeting of the male section called to discuss this unfortunate incident, a deputation of three was elected to interview Commander W. F. Stanley with a view to arranging, if possible, a transfer of this black man to some portion of the ship where he would not come in contact with the white men, women and children during this voyage.

The interview was granted by the Commander who received the deputation with great courtesy, but our surprise was accentuated on learning that he had no powers to interfere because of the fact that the company had bound itself by contract to carry this black man and to afford him second-class accommodation throughout the voyage.

That contracts to carry natives are entered into by the Union-Castle Company which provide facilities for social intercourse between the two races seems to the undersigned passengers a matter not only for deep regret, but for the strongest protest, as, apart from our desire to avoid this familiarity, we feel that the present state of black evolution and their predominance numerically over the white races in South Africa demand in our interest, and even preservation, that a line of demarcation be drawn which must not be overstepped.

DANGEROUS PRACTICE

It is unnecessary to explain the colour bar in South Africa, or the danger which will most certainly accrue to its white population if natives are to be imbued with a spirit of equality, and that the Union-Castle Company, which relies on its South African trade, should lend itself to this dangerous practice, constitutes a departure which must be viewed with the utmost concern.

That the undersigned passengers on board the *R.M.S. Walmer Castle* feel strongly in this matter is to define their feelings but mildly, and it is desired to place on record, not only their disgust, but the most urgent request that the company, at its earliest opportunity, will discuss the question of the carrying of Asiatics, African and American negro races, with a view to arranging that, when and where carried, these persons will be segregated from the white passengers throughout the voyage.

It is appreciated that by the time this letter is being considered by the board of directors the specific complaint will be automatically lapsed, but feeling this to be a matter of principle which, if ignored, will have disastrous effects on the white population of South Africa in the future, it was unanimously decided by all interested to send copies of this letter to the South African Press. It will also be appreciated by your board that the passengers interested in this complaint will automatically separate on arrival at their several destinations, which renders an acknowledgment of this letter or continued correspondence on the subject impossible, and, in view of this difficulty, we respectfully suggest that your reply be published for general information through the same channel.

Trusting that in the interest of the South African European public you will give this protest your most careful consideration. (Here follow 59 signatures.)

INDIANS IN AUSTRALIA

DENIAL OF FRANCHISE UNCONSTITUTIONAL

A Lawyer friend from Melbourne writes us follows to the Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri : I desire to bring under your notice the state of the law in Australia with regard to the franchise as affecting your countrymen.

Section 41 of the Constitution of Australia reads as follows : " No adult person who has or acquires a right to vote at elections for the more numerous House of the Parliament of a State shall while the right continues be prevented by any law of the Commonwealth from voting at Election for either House of the Parliament of the Commonwealth."

In spite of this very definite Section, the Commonwealth passed the Commonwealth Election Act, 1918-22, which provided as follows :—" No aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa or the Islands of the Pacific (except New Zealand) shall be entitled to have his name placed on or retained on any roll, or to vote at any Senate Election or House of Representatives Election, unless so entitled under Section 41 of the Constitution."

You will see that the Government has passed an Act which the Constitution forbids and it only requires the matter to be taken to the High Court of Australia, when it will undoubtedly be declared unconstitutional, as it has done something which it has no power to do unless the Constitution is altered, which has not been done.

Might I request that you will put me in touch with one of your fellow-countrymen in Melbourne who can be relied on to see that the necessary steps are taken ?

I understand that when you were here the Government promised relief but it has not carried out its promise.

What remains now is to force it to do what its law imposes.—*Servant of India.*

INDIANS IN FIJI

A correspondent writes to the *Natal Mercury* :—

The following significant letter received by me by the last Pacific mail from a leading member of the Fiji Legislative Council indicates that the equal status lever so pertinaciously exercised by the Indian politicians last year in the protracted Kanyat struggle is now being vigorously pressed in Fiji, and, being less in the public eye, with better hopes of mastery.

The letter is dated Suva, Oct. 20, and reads :—

" We still have our trouble with the Indian question, and, from confidential round-table interviews which we have had at Government House recently, I am afraid we are going to be used as a pawn in the game, and thrown as a sop to India. They are still on the old question of equal status, to which we are still absolutely opposed. But, unfortunately, we are ruled from Downing Street, and the bargain will be made for us there. We will protest, of course, but it is doubtful if much more will be done. Personally, I will fight to the end. And there are others of the same opinion."

THE SITUATION IN FIJI

The population of the Colony of Fiji consists of 85,000 Fijians, 60,000 Indians, and 4,000 of the ruling white race. It is, of course, the Europeans who have rescued the Fijians from barbarism and cannibalism to modern civilisation, and have made the Colony what it is to-day. The granting of equal status and the high privilege of citizenship to the immigrant Indian population of Fiji would, it is obvious, mean that the Europeans would become submerged by the numerical superiority of the Indians. They would then, naturally, leave by degrees the Colony that they have made in the Pacific, and what a jubilee as a British possession they have

been proudly celebrating so recently as October last.

The Indians—nearly all of the coolie class—would then possess the land, made possible for them by the enterprise of the European pioneers, whose heritage they would supplant. With this embryonic South Pacific British Dominion, sacrificed by Imperial political pedantry to the Asiatic, Fiji's young day would indeed be over, and night would fall.

The only chance for the Fiji Colonists, seemingly, is that the change of Government in Great Britain might change the critical character of the situation. It is well that South Africa, as an interested member of the British Commonwealth, should know what Indian intrusion in the government of the Crown Colonies is leading to.

SOUTH AFRICAN JANJIRA ANJUMAN ISLAM

The 14th annual general meeting of the above society was held at the society's hall, Beaconsfield (Kimberley), on the 30th November.

The following officials and members of the association were present :—Messrs. D. Hussen, S. A. Gaffoor, Ismail Haldaj, Hussen Mia Dawrey, Ismail Sharfoodien, Hussain Camroodien, Ismail Chenakar, M. Roshun, Abdul Hay, Panker, Abdullah Ohoglay, A. Halem, Kamaloodien, Bapu, Sahib Getay, Yusuff Ebrahim, M. Malim.

Several visitors were in attendance, including Mr. Ahmed Abdullah (the latter being a visitor from India).

In consequence of the death of Mr. M. Yacob, the late president of the society, Mr. M. S. Wookey was elected to the chair.

Mr. Mahomed Abdullah acted as secretary in the absence of the former secretary, who had resigned and left for India.

The proceedings were opened by Imamiin Hafiz Abdurrahim reading a chapter from the Holy Koran.

The chairman then referred to the great loss which the society had sustained as a result of the death of Mr. Mahomed Yacob, who for many years had been the president of the society. In the course of his remarks he referred to the valuable services which had been rendered by the late president, who at all times had been untiring in his efforts to further the interests of the society. A vote of condolence was unanimously passed, all standing as a mark of respect.

It was unanimously resolved that the widow and children of the late president be granted the right to occupy, free of rent, two rooms in the premises belonging to the society at Beaconsfield at the will of the society.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the balance-sheet, which showed a credit balance of £72 15s. 2d., was adopted.

The Secretary then read a letter which had been received from Mr. Mahomed Sayed, the secretary of the Board of Trustees in India, tendering his resignation. This was accepted with regret.

Mr. M. S. Wookey, who is about to proceed to India, was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Mahomed Sayed.

It was unanimously agreed that Mr. M. S. Wookey and another trustee in India should approach the Dewan of the State of Janjira and discuss with him the question of the funds belonging to the society which have not been paid over to the Board of Trustees, the result of such interview to be communicated to the society here.

The election of officers for the ensuing year was left over.

The meeting then terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair.—Contributed.