

Indian Opinion

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FURTHER PROTEST AGAINST ASIATIC BILL

MASS MEETING AT PRETORIA

AN enthusiastic Mass Meeting of Pretoria and District Indians was held at the Star Bioscope, Boom Street, Pretoria, on Sunday the 13th September 1925, at 3 p.m. The meeting was very largely attended. Mr. Hajeë Cassim Adam, the chairman of the Pretoria British Indian Association, presided.

The chairman in opening the meeting explained that they had met that afternoon to protest against the Asiatic Bill introduced by the Interior at the close of the last Session as well as the General Dealers (control) Ordinance recently passed by the Transvaal Provincial Council. He also drew the attention of the meeting to the debate on the Asiatic Bill that took place in the Council of States at Simla and urged that it was highly essential that a deputation should be sent to India from the Transvaal.

Among the speakers were Messrs. Govindjee Bhanabhai, (hon. Secretary of the Pretoria British Indian Association), A. A. Mirza, N. A. Camay, Vally Mahomed, Mahomed Ismail, R. Mooloo, Suliman Ebrahim, Nana Lal, Osman Alli and others.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were unanimously passed :—

1. That this mass meeting of Pretoria and District Indians enters its emphatic protest against the Areas Reservations, Immigration and Registration Bill as being humiliating, degrading and detrimental to the vested and potential rights of the Indian community apart from the fact that it violates the Gandhi-Smuts settlement of 1914.

2. That a deputation consisting of three delegates be sent to India under the aegis of the Transvaal British Indian Association to make strong representations to the Government of India and the Indian nation with a view to urging the Imperial Government to bring about an honourable and final settlement of the Indian question in South Africa to the satisfaction of the Imperial, Indian and the Union Governments and the Indian Nation by means of a Round Table Conference.

3. That this meeting respectfully requests His Excellency the Governor-General to withhold his assent to the General Dealers (control) Ordinance 1925 and to receive an Indian Deputation.

4. That this Mass Meeting hereby fully supports the Transvaal British Indian Association.

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

British Indian Association Cables India and England

The Transvaal British Indian Association (Johannesburg) has sent the following cable to India and England:—

"Asiatic Bill outrageous Making Indian life impossible. Violating Smuts-Gandhi settlement. Allocating segregated areas. Necessitating abandonment of present businesses and properties. Creating atmosphere such that Indians must leave South Africa ruined. Immigration Law so amended as to make Indians bona fide domiciled prohibited.

Indians' wives and children cannot enter Union after 1930. No security even for South African-born Indians. Dual domicile forfeited. Three years absence forfeits domicile. Transvaal General Dealers' (Control) Draft Ordinance 1925 will exterminate all Indian businesses. We respectfully beg Imperial and Indian Governments to intercede and negotiate for Round Table Conference among the Union, Imperial, and Indian Government."

Mr. Polak on the Asiatic Bill

"A Measure to Levy Blackmail"

There Can be No Compromise

Mr. Henry S. L. Polak has wired to India from London that the new Asiatic Bill introduced in the South African Assembly is entirely unacceptable. The original Bill was unacceptable in principle but the new Bill goes much further depriving Natal Indians of the right to own lands save for a restricted right in the coastal belt. This Bill apparently further commits a breach of the Gandhi-Smuts agreement by further restricting the emigration of wives of Indians and by extending the disabilities to Cape Indians. The Bill seems to be a measure to levy blackmail on the Government and the Indian people "I am of opinion" writes Mr. Polak "that there can be no compromise thereon."

Pariahs of the Empire

Mahatma Gandhi writes as follows in *Young India*.—

Lest we forget our status and proper place in the imperial economy, we receive a constant reminder now from England and now from South Africa, or some such place, of what we are. The Secretary of State for India puts us in mind of 'the sharp edge of the British sword.' The Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in India gives it as his deliberate opinion that what we are aiming at is 'unattainable.' Mr. Malan, the Union Minister in South Africa tells us that there shall be no equality between Europeans and Indians, and that therefore if he will not kill out the Indian settler, he will squeeze him out of South Africa and will reduce him to such a state that he cannot even think of equality. The Ghetto is his proper place, and menial labour his proper sphere of action. We must be, and remain a suppressed class of the world. To mention this evil is not to get rid of it. 'No Pariahs need apply,' is the permanent sign-board which is hung up in every Imperial Secretariat. What to do is the question. Pheroze Shah Mehta disapproved even of my going to South Africa. He said that nothing was to be done in South Africa until we had vindicated our position in India.

Lokamanya said much the same thing. 'Seek ye first Swaraj and everything will be added unto you' was his refrain. But Swaraj is a result of the sum-total of India's energy. The order of the day is work from without and work from within. It is a longdrawnout agony, but there is no new birth without the necessary pains of labour. We must pass through this inevitable life-giving, life-sustaining discipline, fiery though it is. Our countrymen in South Africa must do the very best without flinching. If they have the old spirit of resistance and cohesion in them, and if they think that the moment has arrived, they must take up the cross of suffering. They must be sole judges of their fitness and of the psychological moment for taking the plunge. They must know that public opinion of India is with them. But they will also realize that it is an opinion which is powerless to help them. They must therefore rely upon their own strength and capacity for enduring hardships and in the innate justice of their cause.

Indian Government Still Negotiating

A Reuter's message from Simla dated Sept. 14, states;—

In the Assembly to-day, numerous Indian members bombarded the Government with questions regarding the South African situation. Mr. Bhoré, replying on behalf of the Government, said they were still negotiating with the Union Government for a round-table conference, and they were still hopeful of a settlement. They were fully alive to the grave issues involved, and were trying to ascertain the wishes of the Indian residents in South Africa. The speaker added that the time for reciprocity measures had not yet arrived.

Some Interesting Statistics

The following are some interesting statistics of migration to and from the Union for the period 1920 to March 1925 which we have extracted from the report of the Director of Census and Statistics:—

During the five years 1920-1924, the European arrivals were in excess of the departures by 31,287. On the other hand, the Union lost on the balance 13,767 non-Europeans, mostly Indians returning to India.

The excess of European arrivals over departures for the last two years has been as follows:—

Year.	No. of persons
1923	1,220
1924	1,816

Influx of Lithuanians

The most striking feature of the immigration figures is the steady and increasing influx of poverty stricken Lithuanians. The majority of these return their occupation as "Commercial" and their finances as "below £40" or "unspecified."

During 1924 they formed 31.9 per cent. of the total non-British immigration and 9.3 per cent. of the grand total. They exceeded the number of the next highest foreign nationality by nearly 51 per cent.

The foregoing figures are for the twelve months of 1924, but it was not until about the middle of the year that the restrictions on certain classes of immigrants were removed. The full effects of the raising of the embargo would therefore, not be felt until the first quarter of the current year, when the percentage rose to 38.4.

The proportion of Lithuanian immigrants not only

increased considerably during the period, but exceeded the next highest nationality by 119 per cent. during the quarter.

The following is a summary of all arrivals into the Union for the period 1920 to March, 1925:—

	Europ'ns.	Non-Europ'ns.	Total.
1920	37,849	2,470	40,319
1921	32,293	2,816	39,079
1922	27,218	2,591	28,809
1923	23,951	2,493	26,444
1924	28,690	3,244	31,934

Total 153,071 13,614 167,585.
To this total must be added 6,509 Europeans and non-Europeans for the first quarter of the present year.

The departures were:—

	Europ'ns.	Non-Europ'ns.	Total.
1920	21,682	4,832	29,511
1921	24,078	6,438	30,560
1922	24,319	5,775	30,094
1923	22,731	6,047	28,778
1924	26,174	4,289	31,063

Totals 122,684 27,381 150,065
to which must be added 7,527 for the first quarter of the current year.

The arrivals assuming domicile and the departures relinquishing domicile were:—

	Arrivals.	Departures.
1920	22,095	9,846
1921	20,933	13,476
1922	13,235	12,675
1923	11,641	17,666
1924	5,606	5,648

Notes and News

WE reproduce elsewhere in this issue an important judgment delivered in the Pinetown Magistrate Court in the case of the local Health Committee who sued Mr. H. M. Wahed for the non-payment of rates levied by the Committee. This is a Health Committee formed under the Public Health Committees Ordinance, 1923 against which the Indian community protested on the grounds that Indians concerned were given no representation on the Committees and while the election of these Committees was to be made from and by the residents of the Districts concerned Indians in the Districts were debarred from having any voice whatsoever. Indians concerned are now testing the legality of the regulations made under the Ordinance. It was contended on behalf of the defendant in the case in question that the rating regulations were *ultra vires* of the powers conferred on the Committee by the Ordinance, in that, whereas the Committee were empowered under Section 17 of the Ordinance to levy a rate on immovable property only, they levied rates on the purposes to which the buildings were being put. It was further contended that Section 17 did not give the Committee the right to select by regulation the type of immovable property it desired to rate but it gave power to rate generally all immovable properties in its area of jurisdiction. Judgment was, however, given against Indians the magistrate holding that Section 17 of the Ordinance did not limit the powers of the Committee but gave them authority of a general nature to impose rates; that rating regulations were framed in accordance with the legislative power granted to the Committee and were therefore *intra vires*.

Section 17 of the Public Health Committee's Ordinance referred to in the above case reads as follows:—

"The Committee shall within its area exercise all or any of the powers and carry out the duties conferred or imposed on local authorities under the Public Health Act including the levying of rates and imposition of fees and charges for services rendered in, and recovery of such rates, fees and charges from the owners or occupiers of, immovable property within such area."

The case is now on appeal and the judgment of the Supreme Court will be awaited with interest.

At a meeting of the Public Health Committee of the Durban Town Council two interesting matters relating to the district surrounding the Indian Market were discussed. In the first instance it was resolved to recommend the Council to arrange for adequate police supervision at both ends of Victoria Street for the deviation of vehicular traffic in the early hours of the morning up to 9 a. m. The second recommendation was that the Market Master and the Borough Engineer be asked to report jointly on the utilisation of the site of the old Native Women's Hostel in Victoria Street as an Indian Bazaar for the sale of soft goods and merchandise, together with full estimate of costs.

Our attention has been drawn to the omission in the list of the newly elected officials of the Natal Indian Congress for the ensuing year published in our last weeks issue of the name of the hon. auditor Mr. Sapurjee Jivanjee who was also re-elected.

It is with deep regret that we have to record the sad and sudden death which took place in Durban last Wednesday of Mr. Hajee Ismail Aboobaker the son of the late Mr. Aboobaker Hajee Amod Jhaveri the first Indian merchant to come to South Africa. The funeral of the late Mr. Hajee Ismail which took place at 5 o'clock in the afternoon was attended by a huge crowd of Indians among whom were many prominent merchants. The late Mr. Hajee Ismail leaves behind him a sorrowing widow and three children of whom the eldest is only about fifteen years of age. We extend our deepest sympathy to the bereaved family and other relatives including the deceased's uncle Mr. Omar Hajee Amod Jhaveri.

THE FATE OF THE INDIAN IN THE UNION

OUR contemporary the *Rand Daily Mail* is startled at the movement of the Indian community against the Asiatic Bill and evidently deplores the fact that no effort is being made by the white people of South Africa to counteract the movement. Speaking on the Bill itself the paper says, "there is little doubt that it represents . . . what may be called the moderate South African view in regard to the Indian question." This, it goes on to say, is a fact which should be made known to the world and supported by the resolutions of as many public bodies as possible. "Otherwise the very great activity of the propagandists will seriously increase the difficulties of the situation by inflaming Indian opinion against us and possibly also by creating an unfavourable impression in other lands."

We must confess that our experience is quite different to that of our contemporary. The majority of the British people in the Union, we feel sure, are thoroughly ashamed of the measure introduced by Dr. Malan. We are not sure that even Dr. Malan and those responsible for drafting the Bill were not

aware that they were violating every principle of British justice. Although they may be reluctant to speak out we know that there is a large majority of Europeans in this country who will be proud to see Indians fighting against the Bill than meekly surrendering, which if they do they will have proved by their own action that they deserved such a measure and they will have none but themselves to blame. Since the watchword of our contemporary is "self-preservation" it is but natural that justice and fairplay cannot be found in its vocabulary and, in the circumstances, it is not at all surprising to see it preaching counteraction to establish an injustice. Be that as it may. We have now to consider what future action we have to take. The ways of the Indian Government seem to be very mysterious indeed. In reply to questions put to the Government in connection with the Indian question in South Africa the Government are reported to have said that they were still negotiating with the Union Government for a Round Table Conference; that they were fully alive to the grave issues involved and were trying to ascertain the wishes of the Indians in South Africa. The Indian Government are in negotiation with the Union Government now for at least a year, if not more, and not a word is known as to the result of the negotiations. While these negotiations are going on the position of Indians is growing from bad to worse. This fact has been declared over and over again and a Round Table Conference has been asked for over and over again by the Indian community in South Africa. The much respected President of the South African Indian Congress Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has also strongly pressed for such a Conference and yet the Indian Government who profess to be alive to the grave situation do not know the wishes of Indians in South Africa! Is this not a reply merely to evade the issue, we wonder?

India has become the unfavourite child of the Imperial Government as she is asking for her rightful place in the family, and the Indian Government represents the Imperial Government in India. If, therefore, we receive a cold shoulder from both these quarters it is not at all to be wondered at. We have then, only to look to the Indian people, and they are already suffering and our cause in this country only adds to their suffering. They can only suffer for us and do no more.

We, however, should not leave a single stone unturned to get redress by constitutional means. We should approach the Indian and Imperial Governments until they are thoroughly conversant with our wishes—and what other wish could we have than to be treated as British citizens with respect due to us? Nothing more do we ask of the Imperial, Indian or the Union Governments. If in that we receive a cold shoulder and even in our very moderate demand for a Round Table Conference then our last resort is to suffer relying, as Mahatma Gandhi says, upon our own strength and capacity for enduring hardships and in the innate justice of our cause.

The Natal Indians have had their protest meeting, the Transvaal Indians have had theirs. The Cape Indians have not yet raised a united voice. It is time that the Cape British Indian Council stepped in the

matter. And then the South African Indian Congress should hold its session without delay and make joint representations in the name of the Indians of the Union as a whole to the Union, Indian and the Imperial Governments for a Round Table Conference.

Health Committees Ordinance

Judgment Against Indians

Notice of Appeal Given

At the Magistrate's Court, Pinetown, on Tuesday the 8th instant, Mr. J. T. Braatvedt, Assistant Magistrate, delivered judgment in the case in which the Pinetown Health Committee sued an Indian H. M. Wahed, agent, for the non-payment of £9 alleged to be due in respect of rates levied by plaintiffs.

Mr. E. F. Wilcocks appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr. H. F. V. Dymes for the defendant.

In giving judgment the Magistrate said. The Pinetown Public Health Committee, as plaintiffs, claim a sum of £9 for rates levied by them upon defendant as the owner of certain dwellings and stores within the area of the jurisdiction of their committee. The defence of the claim is based upon the following grounds —

(1) That the plaintiff committee was not lawfully constituted at the time the rates were passed or adopted, by reason of the fact that certain two vacancies which had occurred after the committee had been constituted had not been filled by one or other of the two methods of obligatory procedure prescribed by Ordinance No. 7 of 1923; and that in any event the two casual vacancies have never been lawfully filled, in that Proclamation No. 22, 1924, purporting to appoint Messrs. Trotter and Hirst, was not promulgated as required by Section 5 of the Ordinance, and is therefore of no valid effect.

(2) Alternatively, and in the event of it being held that the plaintiff committee was lawfully constituted, defendant denies liability, and contends that the rating regulations are ultra vires of the powers conferred on the plaintiff committee by the Ordinance, as amended by Ordinance No. 6, 1924, in that, whereas the plaintiff committee were empowered under Section 17 of the Ordinance to levy a rate on immovable property only, yet they have levied rates on dwellings and buildings used for store, shop, or business purposes, thereby levying rates not on the immovable property, but on the purposes to which the buildings are being put. And, further, contends that the regulations are unreasonable and bad in law, in that the power to rate immovable property given by Section 17 does not give the plaintiffs the right to select by regulation the type of immovable property it desires to rate, but is a power to rate generally all immovable properties in its area of jurisdiction. Defendant further contends that the rating regulations are partial and unequal in their operation as between classes in the area, and are manifestly unjust by rating only dwelling houses and business premises, and by rating these in an unequal and arbitrary manner.

The facts of the case are not in dispute. With regard to the first ground of defence, it is submitted that an attack on the constitution of the plaintiff committee is not competent in these proceedings. In any case, the requirements of the law in regard to the filling of casual vacancies have been substantially carried out. The Ordinance has for all practical purposes been complied with. The neglect to fill these vacancies within the time prescribed must be regarded as a mere technical omission which

caused no variation from the terms of the law. (Nathan Vol. 3, Sec. 1,217—Devenish v. Jackson, and Sec. 1,219 in Shaw v. Clanwilliam Divisional Council.

Limit of Powers

Coming to defendant's alternate ground of defence, the plaintiff's committee is invested with rate collecting and other powers. Their powers are derived from Section 17 of the Ordinance, which does not limit their powers as contended by defendant, it is authority of a general nature to impose rates. A levy is the appropriate mode of raising money for that purpose. The rating regulations published by the plaintiff committee would appear to be framed in accordance with the legislative power granted to the plaintiff committee, and must therefore be held to be intra vires. These regulations impose a flat rate. While it is not difficult to conceive that such taxation measures might operate somewhat partially and unequally, yet there is simple authority for the rule that Courts do not readily interfere to set aside as unreasonable and void by-laws which a local authority has deliberately adopted.

And as to fixing the amount of the rate, the evidence before the Court is that the plaintiff committee instituted proper inquiries before drawing up their estimates of expenditure, and thereafter fixed the rate which was taken to approximate to their requirements. In view of evidence such as this, it is impossible to challenge the levy on the ground that it is arbitrary and out of all proportion to the necessities of the case.

I come to the conclusion, therefore, that the plaintiffs succeed. Judgment must accordingly be for plaintiffs as prayed with costs.

Notice of appeal was given by Mr. H. F. V. Dymes, attorney for the defendant.—*Natal Mercury*.

Indian Affairs

Reforms Inquiry Committee Report

Heated Debate In Assembly

"British In India Thieves and Robbers"

Pundit Nehru's Amendment for Total Responsibility Passes Assembly

But Rejected by Council of State

The following Reuter's messages have been published in the local daily papers:—

Simla, Sept. 7th.—India's fitness to govern herself was urged by Motilal Nehru, when the Legislative Assembly discussed Sir Alexander Muddiman's resolution proposing acceptance of the majority report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee, in which connection Sir Alexander advised the House to follow the Viceroy's advice, urging co-operation to solve "one of the greatest problems of the human race."

Motilal Nehru moved an amendment, whereby the constitution and administration would be fundamentally changed, declaring that Indians looked for a place in the sun for themselves. He strongly urged that a convention representing all interests should frame a scheme for approval of the Legislature, to be submitted to the British Parliament and embodied in a statute. He declared that the Swarajists were unable to accept Lord Birkenhead's views. He said that the Indians were kept down forcibly, and unless the Government showed a change of heart, the Swarajists would not co-operate.

Simla, Sept. 8.—That the British in India are

merely thieves and robbers, was one of the bitter taunts uttered against the Government whose administration practically all the Indian speakers condemned, when the Legislative Assembly resumed the debate on Sir Alexander Muddiman's resolution, proposing acceptance of the Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee.

Eventually an amendment by Pundit Motilal Nehru advocating that total responsibility should be invested in the legislature with the traditional reservations in respect of the army and foreign affairs, was passed by 72 votes to 45. Sir Alexander Muddiman described the amendment as a virtual repeal of the Government of India Act, and admitted that, as it denoted for first time that the Swarajists and Independents were in agreement, it deserved the utmost attention.

Simla, Sept. 13.—The Council of State by 23 votes to 7 carried the Government resolution endorsing the conclusions of the Majority Report of the Muddiman Committee.

Proposed Indianisation of High Commissioner's Office

Simla, Sept. 8.—The Council of State has animatedly debated a resolution put forward by the unofficial member, Sethna, in favour of the Indianisation of the staff of the High Commissioner in London. The mover complained that at present only 6 per cent. of the staff were Indians, despite the fact that the Department was maintained by the Indian Exchequer.

Mr. Chadwick (Secretary for Commerce) pointed out that it was not a business proposition to send Indians at a huge expense to England, when better qualified Englishmen were available there.

The High Commissioner, Sir Chatterjee, had informed the Government that he was appointing Indians wherever possible.

An amendment moved by Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoy, to the effect that Indianisation, compatible with efficiency and economy, should occur in the higher staff establishment, was carried by 26 votes to eight.

The Indian in the Union

The *Rand Daily Mail* has the following leading article in its issue of the 12th instant:—

The report, published elsewhere in this issue, of the debate in the Indian Council of State on the position of Indians in South Africa touches on a matter of really grave importance to the Union. The tone of the speeches makes plain the intensity of public feeling in India with regard to this matter. It is a feeling which may easily be fanned into a passion of resentment. In South Africa a strong Indian movement is vigorously afoot to provoke counter-action in India, and also, if possible, in Great Britain. The question is one which, even under the very best conditions, involves serious and far-reaching reactions, and it is in every sense desirable that it should receive the most thoughtful and earnest consideration by the white peoples of South Africa.

The problem is pre-eminently one which we must settle for ourselves. In the final resort we must decide the issue upon the basis of self-preservation. But in the meantime every possible endeavour should be made to negotiate a settlement along lines which will not unduly offend Indian susceptibilities or aggravate the difficulties of Great Britain so far as her Indian Empire is concerned. The speeches in the Indian Council indicate that an attitude favourable to

negotiation exists, and it would be a blunder of the first magnitude on our part to close the door against it.

But we do not think this will be done. In introducing, at the end of last session, the areas Reservation and Immigration Bill, Dr. Malan, in a very reasonable and tactful speech, said he was not sorry for its introduction at that late stage, because it would afford the country as a whole an opportunity of learning the policy of the Government, and also of offering constructive criticism, which he personally would gladly welcome. We do not know what helpful suggestions, if any, may have reached the Minister since he issued his invitation, but recent developments, both in South Africa and India, make it very plain that it is high time an earnest effort was made definitely to mobilise public opinion on this subject. Indian propaganda is being actively conducted over a very wide area, and, so far as we can see, no effort at all is being made by the white peoples of South Africa to counteract it. Failure to take any action along these lines may quite easily plunge us into a nasty mess of far-reaching political complications before we know where we are. And we cannot afford to blunder into a crisis of this nature with our eyes shut.

The Bill is available to the public and it should have the closest scrutiny in all its details. As Dr. Malan says, it will not satisfy the extreme section of either school of thought in South Africa, for very wisely, he has tried to steer the safe and the sane middle course. But, broadly speaking, there is little doubt that it represents with substantial accuracy what may be called the moderate South African view with regard to the Indian question as it affects us in the Union. This is a fact which should be known to the world and supported by the resolutions of as many public bodies as possible. Otherwise the very great activity of the propagandists will seriously increase the difficulties of the situation by inflaming Indian opinion against us, and possibly also by creating an unfavourable impression in other lands.

A Reply

Mr. L. W. Ritch has sent the following reply to the *Rand Daily Mail*:—

The Editor, "Rand Daily Mail" Johannesburg.
Sir,—May I be allowed to express concurrence in your opinion "that this question is one which it is desirable should receive the most thoughtful and earnest consideration of the white peoples of South Africa." Also with the implication that so far it has not. To the average South African the question appears to be just a matter of putting the "coolies" into locations, getting rid of their competition in business and generally putting them "into their place" among the coloured and native sections, unless better still, they can be "persuaded" to clear out of the country altogether. Now it must be confessed that this is a very free and easy, and rather parochial, way of regarding a Racial question that is by no means purely a local one, but on the other hand, one which touches to the quick the *amour propre* of three hundred millions of British subjects just across the Indian Ocean, not to mention several hundreds of millions of Non-British Orientals represented here by only a small sprinkling of their peoples. It takes but a very tiny flame to start a most destructive conflagration, and when the elements of combustion are already well advanced but little additional heat for the fire to burst into flames. Racial and National pride are dangerous explosives to fool with, as Russia learned to her cost in her collision with Japan and only a fool could contem-

plate with indifference the prospect of an armed clash between East and West. The last War (1914-1918) would be a more game of toy soldiers compared with such a cataclysm! It is fairly obvious, therefore, that considerations of expediency alone demand that this question be handled with the utmost tact and restraint and that so far from it being solely a domestic matter touching South African interests, our share in it is that of a comparatively small partner in a concern with world-wide ramifications.

Must, however, expediency and self interest be our sole or even paramount considerations? Is the national soul so dead that the moment our material interests appear to be threatened the word "Principle" vanishes from our vocabulary? For in this matter there is a principle involved. More, our honour is involved, the keeping or breaking of an honourable compact solemnly made by two honourable men. When Mr. Gandhi at long length was constrained to accept the principle of restricted immigration from India and of the Registration of Indians entitled to be here, it was on the express understanding as between General Smuts and himself that the existing rights of Indians entitled to enter and to reside in the country should be preserved and not further be impaired. It would now seem that honour is a small thing—less even than a scrap of paper—when reckoned against the prospect of ousting Naboth from his vineyard. For does all this anti-Asiatic pother amount to much more than just that—getting rid of Indian trade, competition and annexing his customers? And, his trading rights are about the last vestige of rights of any kind that legislation has not already stripped him of! Granted that the Indian is a shrewd business competitor; that he is an additional impediment to the realisation of a White South Africa. As to the former, so long as public wants are catered for by private competition the shrewdest competitor will oust the less shrewd, be they Europeans or Asiatics. Legislative compulsion, in such incidentals as Shop Hours, Minimum Wages, Enforcement of Hygienic standards in shops, warehouses and homes should go far enough to correct much that is complained of with any show of justice. As to the latter, the proposed legislation is obviously designed to make the position of Indians untenable and to "pin-prick" them out of the country. Such a policy pursued for the purpose of advancing a White South Africa is no more defensible morally than would be a policy of extermination of the Bantu and Cape Coloured population to accomplish the same object. We do not hesitate to dismiss the one as unthinkable. Why do we appear to be blind to the moral turpitude of the other? Opportunity, the power of Might, the claims of Expediency, were the arguments advanced by Germany in defence of her precipitation of the Great War. We replied that that was Devils' scripture, and so we joined issue and fought and laid the dead bodies of our dear ones on the altar of Principles that the enemy sneered at as romantic and unpractical. If principle were then so much more precious to us than expediency, why should it be otherwise now? Or can it be that the brute in us reasserts itself when we feel we are safe and the Angel in us only when we feel the knife at our throats?

Let us not lightly ignore the lesson of history but rather consider seriously whether we may not by our conduct be calling on the Fates that rule our destinies to set us yet one more, and perchance severer lesson than the last.

I am, etc.

L. W. RITCH,

Bishop Fisher

After spending a very busy week during which they visited many places in and outside Durban in connection with the Indian question and interviewed prominent members of both European and Indian communities Bishop and Mrs Fisher sailed last Monday by the s. s. *Khandalla* for Dela Goa Bay. The distinguished visitors were seen off by a large crowd of Indians gathered at the Point. Mr. J. W. Godfrey on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress presented Mrs. Fisher with a beautiful bouquet.

From Dela Goa Bay Bishop and Mrs. Fisher will be going to Pretoria and Johannesburg and then to Capetown, Kimberley and Rhodesia to Beira and after studying the Asiatic question in East Africa they will sail for India.

Lecture On 'Modern Racial Problems'

A very interesting lecture on "Modern Racial Problems" was delivered by Bishop Fisher last Saturday afternoon under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall. Mr. Advocate J. W. Godfrey was in the chair. After dealing at length with the numerical condition of the different races and their progress the Bishop pictured the problem as a very grave one and wound up by saying that he feared only one thing and that was animosity and misunderstandings. He believed that if in South Africa, India and Europe they were to see that every man woman and child of all the races had equal opportunities, they would have far less difficulty than if they attempted to restrict one another in every way. The one solution, said the speaker, was to make the standard of life absolutely universal so that one would not be higher, or one lower.

[We hope to publish the full text of the lecture in a later issue. Ed.]

Sermons

On Sunday Bishop and Mrs. Fisher were invited by Mr. R. K. Naidoo to the wedding of his daughter and also to dinner by the Majnum Ahabab Club—an institution where prominent Indian merchants assemble. Bishop Fisher also gave very interesting and instructive sermons in the morning at the Greyville Wesleyan Methodist Church, in the afternoon at the Indian Wesleyan Church in Grey Street and in the evening at the West Street Wesleyan Church. Speaking emotionally the Bishop said that though they professed Christianity they had nothing to prove that they were true Christians. The image of Christ was no longer within their hearts. Non-Christians had gained a better knowledge of Christ and His Principles than Christians themselves and they were in a position now to rebuke the Christians for violating the principles for which they professed to stand. If they wished to Christianize the world they would themselves have to live like true Christians.

Indians as a rule are not allowed in European Churches but an exception was made on this occasion and it was rendered possible, therefore, for a few who were anxious to hear the Bishop to attend the services.

The Natal Indian Congress have published the Asiatic Bill in a book form with a fair comment on the Bill showing how adversely it affects the British Indian community in the Union of South Africa. These booklets are being sent out to Indian leaders and sympathisers in India, England and other parts of the world. In order to cover the cost of printing the book is priced 1s. each and 2d. postage. It can be had at this office (INDIAN OPINION Phoenix, Natal) or from The hon. Secretaries, Natal Indian Congress, 110 Field Street, Durban. Every Indian should deem it his duty to purchase this book.

OUR LONDON LETTER
[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]
13th August, 1925.

Parliament has now voted the necessary authority for the payment of the coal subsidy for the next nine months, during which time, it is hoped, the negotiations involved in the coal dispute will be settled. The Royal Commission on the subject is not yet appointed nor the terms of reference published. But the subject still occupies considerable space in the press of the country.

M. Briand, the French Minister, left London to-day for Paris, after having consultations with Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and other Ministers of the Crown. The object of the consultations was in regard to the proposed Pact Treaty between Germany and the Allied Powers in connection with Western Europe. Both Ministers appear to be highly satisfied with the result of their conversations. Details, however, are not yet made public.

A Hundred have passed since the birth of R. D. Blackmore, the author of several novels, the most famous being, *Lorna Doone*, *A Devonshire Romance*, *The Wild Men of the Wild Valleys of Exmoor*, published in 1869 it was slow in attracting attention, but it eventually gained in popularity, which has yet to decline. The author was, however, prouder of his success at his chosen calling, that of market gardener, than of the fact that hundreds of thousands wanted to read, what he considered the best of his novels.

The great trial arising out of a breach of the State Law of Tennessee, which forbids the teaching of any matter, which questions the Bible in any way, which took place at Dayton, otherwise known as Monkeyville, presents some remarkable features. There was nothing of the formality associated with the conduct of a Court. Counsel sat without coat or waist coat, the Judge stood up and posed in a commanding attitude at the request of press photographers, and he permitted the final session of the Court to be held in the open air. The Counsel for the defence, Mr. Darron, apologised for having "gassed" the writ the previous day, and the judge in accepting apology solemnly forgave him, on behalf of the people of Tennessee as a Christian duty.

While spectators chewed gum, smoked and patronised the vendors of soft drinks Counsel for the defence called Counsel for the prosecution to the witness box and proceeded to cross examine him on his religious beliefs, with the purpose of making him appear as foolish as possible. The judge, notwithstanding, being appealed to, allowed this extraordinary procedure, but after Mr. Bryan the prosecuting Counsel had given his views on the literal acceptance of the book of Genesis, the farce was carried a stage further by expunging the whole of his evidence from the record. Such a trial in a British country would have only brought those who were concerned with it into contempt. Dayton, however, seems to have accepted them quite seriously and the idea of trying the Bible as a work of scientific reference, by a Court of Law, does not appear to have had any aspect of absurdity for judge, jury, counsel or spectators.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the Turkish President, has informed his Government that he divorced his wife Latifa Hanon on August 5th, but the reason for the divorce does not appear in the reports published here. Madame Kemal is the daughter of one of the principal merchants of Smyrna, she is a leader of the Western Emancipation Movement among Turkish women, educated for a time at Tudor Hall School Chislehurst in England, she was brought up

by an English governess, and later spent some years in France. She is now only 22. When she became engaged to Kemal, she ordered her bridal robes in Paris, thus bidding goodbye to the Yashmak, and the eastern custom of veiling the face. She accompanied her husband everywhere, and frequently discarded skirts, for riding breeches and top boots.

About 18 months ago Madame Kemal was instrumental in saving her husband's life. A visitor called at their villa and asked to see the President. Madame became suspicious and ordered the visitor to wait. A moment later a bomb was thrown, and she was wounded.

During King Feisul's absence from Bagdad, for health reasons, in Europe, his brother, the Emir Said, who is an undergraduate at Oxford, will act as Regent, and for this purpose he is now on his way to Bagdad from Oxford.

The Maharajah Singh, deputed by the Government of India to report on the Indians in Mauritius, recommends the stoppage of unskilled Indian immigration to the Island. According to the census of 1921, out of a total population of 376,935 persons in Mauritius, 248,468 were returned as Indo-Mauritius, that is, persons of Indian descent born in Mauritius, and 17,506 as other Indians.

The passing away of Sir Surendranath Bannerjee at Barrackpore, in Calcutta, removes one of the pioneers of Indian National Movement. Though he was not of the Swarajist Party, he nevertheless was the patriot who will go down in Indian history, as one of the great sons of India. His autobiography, "A Nation in the making" being the reminiscences of fifty years of public life in Bengal, published by the Oxford University Press, deserves to be read by every Indian.

The projected visit of the Secretary for War, to India is cancelled owing to pressure of official business in London. Sir S. L. Evans the Secretary, had planned to leave for India in September and to be present at the Northern Manoeuvres in India; returning to England early next year. It is considered that four months is too long a period for the War Secretary to be absent.

Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday Celebrations

Mahatma Gandhi's fifty sixth birthday was celebrated last Monday evening at the Pargee Rustomjee Hall, Queen Street, Durban, under the joint auspices of Natal Indian Congress and the Kathiawad Arya Mandal. There was a large gathering of Indians and some European ladies including Mrs. Andrew, Mrs. Fernandez, Miss E. Kundsén, and Miss Warner. Mahatma Gandhi's photo decorated with flowers was placed on the platform. The proceedings commenced with the singing of national songs by school children under the guidance of Mr. A. N. Gosalia.

Pundit Bhawani Dayal who was in the chair then described, in the course of an eloquent speech in Hindustani, the exceptional qualities of Mahatma Gandhi and the services he was rendering the Motherland.

Speeches were also made by Messrs O. H. A. Jhaveri, V. Lawrence, A. H. Kazi, M. I. Kajee, Raghavjee Rughnath, V. D. Mehta, B. M. Patel, Mrs. Andrew and Miss Kundsén praising Mahatma Gandhi's work and wishing him long life.

The meeting terminated with the singing of National songs by the children and three hearty cheers for Mahatma Gandhi.

Message of Congratulations

The following cable was sent to Mahatma Gandhi

on his birthday by Mr. Amod Bayat, president Natal Indian Congress:—

"Natal Indians sends greetings on your fifty-sixth birthday. Pray Almighty grant you long life and happiness."

Anniversary of Gandhi Library and Rustomjee Hall

A European Lady's Appreciation

Mrs. Helen Calland Andrew writes to us from Durban:—

It was a real pleasure to me to be present at the above anniversary, and to hear of the work done by the Indian community for the upliftment of their people. The beautiful collection of books, the many periodicals, dailies, which are placed at the disposal of the people, just shows how Indians who, instead of being the ignorant pariahs as so many Europeans think are most intelligent farseeing people, and are kept well posted up as to what is happening everywhere. But, what to me was the most refreshing part of that meeting, were the many utterances made by Bishop Fisher, he boldly says, he is a blanched Indian! He is Indian in everything but birth and colour. Now that was really splendid, for, after having lived among the Indians in their own country, he must know something, in fact a good deal about them, and as he admitted had imbibed the true Indian spirit.

He also joined in the universal praise of that wonderful soul Mr. M. K. Gandhi and it was beautiful to know that in spite of all the obstacles placed in Mr. Gandhi's path, how hopeful, even joyous he was: with so brilliant an intellect it was useless for any person, body or sect to try to belittle so great a teacher. Truth conquers all the way! And in the end Mr. Gandhi will realize his objective. We are constantly hearing from the students of various nationalities and sects that this is the time for fulfilment of the old Abrahamic promise mentioned in our own Bible—of the Restoration of all things—for all nations, and peoples. And God grant it may be so, for this old aching world is longing for peace, when truth, honour, and justice will reign.

It is only truth in operation that makes us free.

An Open Letter to Mr. M. K. Gandhi

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Yesterday evening we assembled together at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall to celebrate your birthday. It was a wonderful gathering. Sympathy, love, honour, and respect permeated the atmosphere, and a natural pride in having so great a leader to help and guide their destinies. I do not understand any of the Indian languages, but anyone with sympathy in their hearts could easily sense the sincerity, and earnestness of the speeches. When any particular sentence struck my consciousness as being pleasing and strong, I just asked my Parsee neighbour to translate it for me, and I was always pleased to find my sense of understanding correct. One gentleman very kindly honoured us European ladies by making his speech in English, which was delivered with great feeling and respect, to be able to stir up a community, to send out on a strong wave of love beautiful thoughts is a blessing and a help. The psychology of which is known to your

own great soul, one speaker said. "we do not want to remember Mr. Gandhi on his birthday only, but everyday and to remember him in our daily prayers." I am a great believer in the efficacy of prayer, no matter whether it be to Manu, Krishna, Buddha, Mahomed or Christ, each of these prophets are intercessors to the one All Father. Unity in diversity and diversity in unity, is what so few people attempt to grasp. Sects, creeds, faiths, make no difference when the heart and mind are set Heavenward.

Your strenuous life, your many sacrifices, your great trials, misunderstandings, your self-denials, sufferings, and martyrdom, are the mysterious essentials of a great victor and may God grant you health, and peace, long to live, and to see your objective won. For, with God at the helm of your ship of difficulty all things are possible.

Again wishing very many happy returns of your birthday.

Yours very sincerely,

HELEN CALLAND ANDREW.

Durban, 15th September, 1925.

Natal Indian Congress (Pietermaritzburg Branch).

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Natal Indian Congress (P. M. Burg Branch), will be held in the H. Y. M. A. Hall, No. 548, Church Street, Maritzburg, on Sunday, the 20th September, 1925, at 2 p. m. sharp, for the transaction of the following business:—

AGENDA.

1. Minutes.
2. Balance Sheet.
3. Report by Acting President.
4. Rules.
5. Election of Officials.
6. Primary Education.
7. Asiatic Bill.
8. General.

R. B. MAHARAJ,

Acting President,

N. I. Congress, Maritzburg.

IMPORTANT.—Any persons desirous of joining the Congress may do so upon payment of 2/6, being annual fee,

All members are asked to pay their annual fee before taking part in the meeting.

Places where fees can be paid:—

Mr. Amod Bayat, 47, Church Street, and at H. Y. M. A. Library between 7 and 9 p. m. daily.

416, Boom Street,

Pietermaritzburg,

9th September, 1925.