

INDIAN OPINION

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ONE PENNY

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

We are simply astounded at the behaviour of the Legislative Council of British Guiana. Any casual observer who pays a visit to Council Chamber, cannot but feel that the majority of members of the Council are void of all sense of reasoning, and behave for the worst part as were illiterates. We go further and state that some illiterate persons would behave with a greater degree of reasoning and would always weigh their consciences before making any deliberations. We feel very strongly that this does not happen in the minds of the greater number of members of the L. C.

A large majority of members of the Legislative Council presently have reached a stage where all human rights and human justices have ceased to have a hearing on their souls and judgements.

It seems that the only consideration that matters to these so called educated men is the contrivance of means to justify property before life.

We were present at a meeting of the Legislative Council on Friday the 24th of August and much to our disgust and horror saw the display of what is termed the "Cast Iron majority" group who control the Legislature; and we arrived at the opinion that this legislative Council is one of the biggest farce in this part of the world.

We are of the opinion that it is a down right shame to have such mockery for democracy among men and in a colony of the British Empire.

We would prefer that the Governor dissolve this ten year old moribund Legislative Council and establish a direct rule by the British Crown until

"Nationalization Of A Sugar Estate Suggested"

RESOLUTION TO BE PASSED BY THE RESIDENT WORKERS AND HANDED TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR SOON

Workers Are Perturbed Over Irregularities

Pln. Albion,
Barbice,
24th August, 1945.

The Editor,
Indian Opinion.
Sir,

Please allow me space in your valuable columns to publish the following article in a brief statement.

The inhabitants of this particular "Sugar plantation" are very much perturbed over irregularities.

Since the year 1941—1942, the management made it clear to the workers, "We cannot ship sugar therefore sufficient work would not be available."

Mr. Editor only one and two days work were given to the labourers a back for some time now.

such time as the people can place men who have human considerations and welfare as their primary objects. We feel that with the present Council the people of this land are being fooled and cannot lay their responsibility of deliberate inhuman actions on any responsible quarter, that is, neither the government as directed from No. 10 Downing Street or the Legislative Council of British Guiana, or the Governor.

We are of the opinion that the days of camouflage are over and if the Secretary of State for the Colonies or the Governor, or the Governor in Council feel to do certain things then it must come direct from that quarter and not hidden behind any smoke screen so that proper measures could be taken to contract it.

Finally we lay emphasis on the minds of the people of this land that in some of their hands will soon be placed the remedy to remove this farce; we hope they will apply the Surgeon's knife with due care.

The factory work was also reduced, because the canes used to be ground and the juice thrown away into the sea.

Only selected hands used to get work—that is, those who are related to the headmen of the Estate. Workers started to split among themselves, for not being given equal amount of work—in short the moral of the people has been destroyed by semi starvation then comes suspension, victimization, eviction etc. For some time now all the facilities of the poor workers, such as, medicine, housing, sanitation etc., were taken away from them.

The management neglected the cultivation; Forking, weeding, moulding, drain and trench digging received very little attention.

The amount of workers that used to find employment were reduced and more headmen and parasites increased, to exploit the poor half starved workers.

Several representations had been made to improve conditions but was of no avail. Formerly up to 785 tons of sugar were produced in a week, now sometimes 400 to 500 tons cannot be produced in a week.

When the management is asked by workers why they cannot produce sugar as formerly?

The excuse offered generally takes the following lines, we cannot get punts, or sometimes it is punt-loaders, or cane-cutters or there is no wood to be had or water in the canals and middlewalks is very low, we cannot manage to pump owing to shortage of wood, or we cannot get sufficient punt slings.

(Continued on page 2)

THE VICEROY OF INDIA IN LONDON

The Viceroy of India, Lord Field Marshal Wavell, arrived in London on Sunday night last for consultations with the Government. He flew from Karachi via Cairo to an Airport in Britain and then travelled to London by train.

The Viceroy is expected to meet the Prime Minister almost immediately. For the first few days Wavell will have discussions with the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence, and later will meet other ministers. His visit will probably extend over three weeks. Wavell declined to be interviewed

TO SURINAM ON HOLIDAY

Doctor C. B. Jagan, Dental Surgeon of this city and Mr. L. A. Sookoo, popular businessman of Kitty, East Coast, Demerara, have left on Monday last for Surinam on a short holiday.

Both these gentlemen are members of the Executive Committee of the British Guiana East Indian Association and are very much interested in the Welfare of their brother Indians.

The "Indian Opinion" wishes them a pleasant holiday.

* * *

Mr. Willie Latchanna, popular businessman of Fyrish Village, Corentyne, Berbice was in town last week-end on business. He returned on Monday last after completing his business.

NOTICE

Messrs Mohamed Azeem Khan, Vice President, Mohamed Hassan Khan Hony. Secretary, and S. M. Shakoor members of the Committee of the Islamic Association, of B. G. desire to inform the public that they are not the Members of the Executive of the Newly formed Muslim League and they are in no way connected with it.

"NATURALIZATION OF A SUGAR ESTATE SUGGESTED"

(Continued from page 1)

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Mr. Editor with regards to the labourers, congested as they are with a huge population in a limited area and there is no other source of employment, is leading us to a serious crisis. The S.P.A. admits that they have not sufficient work for this huge population, why then does the management excuse itself on this, and that and so on—is it not all false and wrong to humanity?

Several punts of out canes are being dried up aback through negligence; canes that are out on Tuesday sometimes is ground until the following Monday and Tuesday, matured canes are being dried up aback; if government is prepared to increase the export of sugar it should be a more vigilant attitude. An agriculturist should be sent to inspect the cultivation and verify my statements.

The fact is just this Mr. Editor this estate is having two "Rum Stills" and are producing a huge quantity of rum and alcohol consequently they are not interested in making sugar.

We quite agree for the betterment of our colony, we are glad to produce anything that would benefit the colony; but why sugar is neglected? is it because the profits are sufficient from rum to clear the expenses and good dividends are declared and reserve fund is added to substantially?

"Caption under Sugar Economics" of the "Labour Advocate" "Nationalization of the Sugar Industry."

Figures that were quoted are suspected to belong to this particular sugar estate.

Mr. Editor among other reasons why we are calling for Nationalization of this estate is just this. The population within the boundary line of this Estate cannot produce about 16 gallons of milk. Green vegetables and fruit trees are destroyed, hospitalization facilities can only be attained for head-men and the staff. There is no facilities for cattle or stock rearing as before, all hampered by the Management so that we may continue to live on starvation wages and in a hard to mouth way.

Yours
"Dharmatma."

READ THE
Indian Opinion

Old Secretary Returns To Association

Mr. H. Barron accepts post of
Hony. Secretary

Consequently on the resignation of Mr. N. C. Jankie as secretary of the B. G. E. I. A., Mr. Harri Barron has been appointed and accepted the appointment of Honorary Secretary to the Association. Mr. Barron was connected with the Association from the year 1924. He was Hony. Secretary to the Association from 1928 to 1935. He was subsequently elected as an Honorary member in life of the Association for meritorious and faithful services rendered to the Association and the Indian Community.

Mr. Barron returns to the Association with a desire to serve his people through these difficult times.

THE BALAK JAI MAN- DALEE HOLDS MEETING AT NO. 1 POLDER

The Balak Jai Mandalee, the Youth and League, branch held a committee meeting at Good Hope, No. 1 Polder, on August 19. Mr. Small presided and advised that more attention be paid to health especially among children.

On the suggestion of Pandit Hira Lall it was decided to purchase material for handicraft work. It was also proposed to invite the District Commissioner to attend one of the meetings when he will be given an opportunity to see the children at work and to exhibit some of the things done. Another suggestion was to have a Pound Sale in September, the date to be announced later.

The significance of V J Day was brought home to residents of Canal No. 1 Polder on August 19 1945, when Mr. Harry Singh, newly appointed Secretary of the Balak Jai Mandalee, addressed members of the Mandalee.

He referred to the destruction cause in other parts of the world during the war not only by the war machine but also by epidemics and pestilences.

The organization decided on a post-war programme which includes the intensifying of agriculture, the development of social welfare work and the expansion of the organization.

Mass Strike Sweeps Nigeria

Natives Take Tribal Oath To Fight For Higher Wages

"We swear by mother Africa and the spirits of our departed ancestors never to surrender our fight until the Government grant our demands," thundered thousands of angry African strikers at a mass rally held at Lagos, capital of Nigeria. For the past three weeks over 150,000 native employees of the Nigerian government have been out on a general strike for a minimum wage increase of 2/6d to meet the rise in the cost of living. The entire railway and transport system of Nigeria is paralysed.

Workers Issue Manifesto

"The suffering of the workers in Nigeria in war-time is becoming very grave," says a manifesto issued by the African Civil Servants Technical Workers Union. "Before the war, workers lived in families of three or four with children in rooms some of which measured 10ft. by 10ft. as a result of poor wages. Today the situation is much more aggravated by abnormal rise in rentals. Prices of food-stuffs and imported goods have soared very high and there is obvious scarcity of stock—a situation occasioned by the war. But the Government does nothing to relieve the situation... The health of the community is getting impaired. Victims from T. B. are increasing from day to day. Have we fought this war in order to be exterminated by starvation? We appeal to British sense of justice for timely redress," declares the worker's manifesto.

But the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, former proconsul of Jamaica, ignored the workers, who in desperation decided to take direct action.

General Strike Declared

At midnight on June 28, the leaders of the Nigeria Trade Union Congress issued a strike call and within three days 17 unions with a membership of over 150,000 Government employees, downed tools. The entire railway public transport and communication systems were brought to a stand still.

Workers employed by private British

companies joined in sympathetic strike which soon assumed the character of the greatest general strike ever witnessed in Africa. Mr. A. O. Imoude the new workers' leader was arrested during the war and banished from Lagos under the Defence Regulations. He was only released recently after a term of four years imprisonment. On June 2, Imoude returned to Lagos riding a white horse and was received as the "African Marshal Zoukov," amidst public rejoicing. Now he is the leader of the workers against Governor Richards, known in colonial circles here as the Colonial Office "strong man" who sent the Jamaica labour boss, Alexander Bustamante to jail. Richards was also responsible for jailing the young militant trade unionist, Ken Hill, who took part in the World Trade Union Conference as well as the dynamic journalist and publicist, Wilfred Domingo when he arrived in Jamaica from New York some years ago.

Whenever the Colonial Office want to crush the growing militancy of native trade unions and political movements, Sir Arthur Richards is given the job. After he had established law and order in Jamaica following the labour trouble in that island, Richards was transferred to Nigeria where the natives are definitely on the march.

When the strike started, Richards was in London holding consultations with high-ranking officials at the Colonial Office concerning a new constitution he offered the Nigerians which the people rejected as a reactionary document. As soon as news reached him, Richards returned to Africa by plane to take command of the situation.

(to be continued)

Letter to the Editor

Bush Lot Village,
West Coast
Berbice
13, 8 45.

The Editor,
Indian Opinion,
Sir,

Kindly allow me space in your column to publish this worthy news. During the month of June 1945 the Muslim of the above name Village have thought it expedient to inaugurate an association for their ecclesiastical propaganda, known as the Hedaitul-E-Islam association, from the inception of this association the muslims are much alive to its progress, members are participating the responsibility commensurately for the felicity of this association they also embarking to erect a (Madarsa) school for the teaching of Urdu and Arabic, and application was forwarded weeks ago to the Public Health Department for permission. Just only waiting on Government to confer same.

OFFICE BEARERS

A. Sherriff, President; A. Wazeed, Vice President; S. Kuan, Secretary; S. Mohamed, "Asst. Sect.,"; Hidaitullah, Treasurer.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Yours faithfully

S. Mohamed
Assist. Secretary.

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INDIA

Soldier to Proconsul

[Continued]

In 1937 Wavell returned to the Near East as commander in chief in Palestine and Transjordan, largely stamped out the bloody Jewish-Arab riots. In 1939, he assumed command of the British forces in Egypt. World War II swelled his Egyptian garrison into the Imperial Army of the Nile, an amorphous instrument which he painstakingly fashioned into a weapon that drove the Italians out of Cyrenaica. It was a famous victory at a time when Britain, standing singlehanded against the Axis might, was staggering under successive defeats. For the first time the name of Wavell was heard round the world.

In 1943 Wavell doffed his uniform, was made a peer and Viceroy of India. The soldier became the proconsul. But he was unlike any other proconsul who had ever been seen in India. Hitherto it had been deemed a necessity to surround the Viceregal office with a pomp and pageantry that would dazzle even India's dazzling princes. Wavell's predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, a thrifty Scot, used to travel around India in a luxurious, cream-colored train because "Indians are impressed by these things."

The new Viceroy arrived in India in a rumpled lounge suit. Instead of taking the royal route through Bombay's imposing "Gateway to India," he went direct to New Delhi he shunned parades, fanfare, ceremonial welcomes. He shattered tradition by casually meeting the outgoing Viceroy on the steps of the Viceregal Lodge. At his parties he and the Vicereine, motherly Lady Wavell, a soldier's daughter, mixed freely with the guests, instead of having them led into the Viceregal presence in relays for a few moments of stilted conversation.

Proconsul and Politicians

Lord Wavell had assumed office at one of the worst moments in British-Indian relations. Sir Stafford Cripps' mission had failed. The Indian leaders had rejected his proposals for self-government after the war, demanded immediate independence. Gandhi urged Indians to sabotage Britain's war effort. Singapore had fallen and the Japanese were streaming through Thailand and Burma. Wavell went patiently about his task of winning the confidence of the Indian leaders. He began with drastic, effective measures to curb the famine sweeping Bengal. It was an encouraging start.

With the Indian leaders who were not in jail the Viceroy engaged in earnest discussions. But most of the time he listened. With the jailed political prisoners he carried on a correspondence marked by understanding and humanity. Indians accustomed to

Gandhi Asks For Courage

—:—:—

WADHA, India, Friday (A.P.)— Gandhi in his first statement on the Simla Conference since it ended, asked Indians not to feel frustrated over the failure and urged them to concentrate on the Congress Party's "village uplift" programme. At Calcutta Congress President Abul Kalam Azad said that if Lord Wavell reconstitutes present Council "in the spirit of Lord Wavell's offer," Congress representatives could and would join the Council if invited, but could not participate in it under the present setup.

word jugglery and nebulous formulas noted with surprise his crisp, matter-of-fact candor. He impressed them as a disciplined, cultured administrator sympathetic to Indian aspirations, less concerned with his office than with Indian good will. To Gandhi (then in jail) he wrote: "I am in entire accord with that aim [Indian self-government] and only seek the best means to implement it without delivering India to confusion and turmoil."

Hating publicity, Wavell was nevertheless the first Viceroy to hold a press conference. Good-humoredly, he adjured photographers to picture his "bad" eye as well as his good. In his first address to the Legislature he criticized the Moslem League's plan for Pakistan (the idea of an independent Moslem state) (see map). Said Wavell bluntly: "No man can alter geography."

For 18 months Wavell went about India, a British pilgrim in search of understanding, absorbing the atmosphere of the age-old land, trying to feel his way toward solution of its problems. India, he decided last spring, was ripe for self-government. He broached his idea for a modified Cripps Plan [TIME, June 25] to Gandhi and other leaders. Assured of their willingness to consider his scheme, the Viceroy flew to London.

(to be continued)

General Provision

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