

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

IN the course of an electioneering speech at Rustenburg on Friday August 20, General Smuts referred to the Indian Agreement. At Rustenburg, two days ago, said the speaker, Mr. Piet Grobler had defended himself on the Indian agreement. They knew the views of the Nationalist leader before the election. It was simply a case of clear the coolies out of the country. His (General Smuts') policy was a different one. It was the policy of President Kruger—that of placing the Indians in bazaars. He admitted that the question was a most difficult one. The pretty stories of the "kicking-out policy" was believed by many in the country, but the Pact did not carry it out. And now Mr. Grobler, in his Rustenburg apologia, said there really was no agreement. He (General Smuts) would not discuss the agreement. It might be the best in the world, but it was certainly an agreement quite different from the policy for which the Pact Government had received a mandate. "It would be the most difficult thing in the world to get away from that agreement. It was useless for Mr. Grobler to pretend that the agreement could be easily set aside. South Africa, having made a solemn agreement with mighty India, could not lightly repudiate that agreement."

As reported in our last week's issue, for killing an Indian child by carelessly driving her car a European woman was fined £20. Now for interfering with European women in an insulting manner an Indian has been sentenced at the criminal sessions to six years hard labour and eight strokes, Mr. Justice Matthews remarking that he had to take a very serious view of this behaviour towards European women. Thus the prestige of a white woman is greater than the life of an Indian in the eyes of the Courts of justice in this country.

The following was included among the resolutions passed by the Durban General Council of the S.A.P. at its recent meeting to be forwarded to the forthcoming Provincial Congress:—

That Clause 12 of Act 37 of 1927, relating to Immigration and Asiatics, be so amended as to divest the Minister of the power he had taken to himself under that Act of accepting from Asiatics the surrender of their domicile certificates in the Transvaal and enabling him to send them to other Provinces.

Our readers will be sorry to learn that the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has been slightly indisposed after his visit to Umzinto last week-end. He

has consequently had to cancel all his engagements for the time being. We hope he will have completely recovered by the time this issue gets into the hands of our readers.

SOCIAL SERVICE

IN accordance with the upliftment clause of the Capetown Agreement a proposal was made some time ago by the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri that in regard to the matter of health and sanitation a number of educated young men should volunteer to form themselves into a committee and that they should make a house to house visit among their poorer and unlettered brethren and teach them and render them practical assistance in the observance of ordinary sanitary rules and thus remove one of the accusations against the community of being a menace to public health. It is satisfactory to note that the appeal of Mr. Sastri has been responded to by the community and an Indian Social Service Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Mr. V. Lawrence with Messrs T. M. Pather and B. D. Lalla to act as secretaries and with a membership of sixtythree adults for the purpose of educating their brethren on public health, sanitation and personal hygiene. This is a step in the right direction and a proof of the community's earnest desire to fulfil in so far as it is possible their own part of the agreement. Dr. C. J. Clegg, M. O. H. for the Borough of Durban who has won the esteem of the Indian community since the recent small-pox epidemic which he tackled with admirable tact and ability has come to the assistance of the community by advising the above-mentioned Committee on the lines they should adopt in the prosecution of their task and we have no doubt the community will be very grateful to the M. O. H. for his assurance that his department would be always prepared to assist them. The task before the Committee is a

thankless one as all social service work is. It will entail a great deal of displeasure and the Committee may even be faced with strong opposition by some of our ignorant brethren who might think that it is an uncalled for interference in their private life. This work will therefore require a deal of patience and perseverance. While welcoming the inauguration of the Indian Social Service Committee we sincerely hope that that body has come to stay and that it will not only be helpful in the observance of sanitary rules but that it will be able to do social service in its broader aspect by removing the many social evils that still exist among a section of our brethren and that tend to alienate us from the Europeans.

We heartily congratulate the officials and members of the Committee and wish them every success in the noble and unselfish work which they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves.

Indian Social Service Committee

On the 16th instant in the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, through the instrumentality of the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P. C., an Indian Social Service Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. V. Lawrence, with a membership of sixtythree adults, for the purpose of making a house to house visit and educating the Indian people on public health, sanitation and personal hygiene. Messrs. T. M. Pather and B. D. Lalla were elected joint-Hon Secretaries.

On the 23rd instant, Dr. C. J. Clegg, Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of Durban, at the request of the above Committee, lectured to its members in the Parsee Rustomjee Hall on sanitation, and public health and how the Committee should go about its work. The Chairman Mr. V. Lawrence in introducing the lecturer, extended a cordial welcome to him and referred to his high qualifications and reputation and asked the members to give him patient and attentive hearing. Dr. Clegg gave a short and instructive address on sanitation and health and impressed on his audience the necessity of their striving to educate their people on those subjects and training their young men for that particular work, aiming at the gradual growth of their activities and not try to run before they can walk and assured them that his department would be always prepared to assist them. The Chairman expressed the gratitude of the members for his interesting lecture and advice and promised to co-operate with the Durban Corporation in carrying out their voluntary work. On the motion of Advocate J. W. Godfrey a hearty vote of thanks was recorded the lecturer. The Committee then proceeded with their other business. After the minutes of the last meeting were read and the report of the previous Sunday's work had been made, it was resolved to meet next Sunday at 2.15, p.m. to go on house to house visit and to hold the next meeting on Tuesday next at 5.30, p.m. in the M. K. Gandhi Library.

Indian Trading Licenses

Licensing Officer's Decision Reversed By Town Council

At the meeting of the Durban Town Council last Tuesday an appeal by Moosa Ismail, who had been refused a general dealer's license for premises at the corner of Southampton Street and Albert Road, was upheld, and the Licensing Officer's decision reversed.

Appellant had been carrying business at 83 Bell Street for 15 years, but had been compelled to give up this shop because the lease was re-sold with an anti-Asiatic clause. He leased a piece of ground in Southampton Street from the Council, and erected thereon a building costing £4,000. The building consists of three shops and three flats; two of the flats are rented to Europeans, and the appellant proposes to live in the other.

Colonel Molyneux refused the license because he considered that the premises were unsuitable, though the plans had been passed by the Corporation, that the premises were too close to Point Road and a solely European quarter, and he thought it an undesirable arrangement for Europeans and Indians to live under one roof in confined surroundings.

Mr. Doull, who appeared for the appellant, argued that the decision was unreasonable. Colonel Molyneux, said that Indians owned a number of properties in West Street, but even they would not suggest they had the right to occupy them. The Licensing Officer added that it was the policy of the Licensing Department and the Council to segregate Indian traders from European traders.

After a brief consultation in committee, the Council resolved to uphold the appeal. Wishing to test the feeling of the Council in open meeting, Mr. Eaton moved that the appeal should be dismissed, but Mr. Kemp moved as an amendment that the appeal be upheld, subject to the plans of the building going back to the responsible committee in order that the European portion might be distinctly separated from the part occupied by the Asiatics. The amendment was passed by 9 votes to 7.

From Our Readers

The Editor, INDIAN OPINION.

Mr. Sastri's Speeches

Sir,—I wish to congratulate you on publishing the speeches of Mr. Sastri verbatim. People outside Natal are indeed thankful because the papers of Natal are not easily had. I want to make a suggestion, and that is they (the speeches of Mr. Sastri) be published in book form at a latter period in the different languages. That the English copies be presented to every child attending school right throughout South Africa among the Indian community. I am sure there are many merchants in Durban who will defray the cost of publication. The reading of the speeches alone will be an education to many people who do not understand the Indian question.

Yours Sincerely,

BERNARD L. E. SIGAMONEY.

A Black Man's Protest

The speech of Lamine Singhor, Negro Delegate from Central Africa at the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held at Brussels last February has appeared in *L'Indépendance Belge* of Brussels. Extracts from it are given below.

Permit me to dwell a moment, by way of introduction, upon the word 'colonisation.' What does it mean? It means usurping the right of a nation to direct its own destinies. Any nation that is deprived of that right is, in the strict meaning of the word, a colony. I will quote to you some passages from a report made by a former colonial administrator of France and published in several newspapers of that country. It relates to typical colonial abuses.

I accuse M. Hutin, who was at that time a colonel and is now a general and a commander of the Legion of Honor for having ordered the looting of the trading station at Molenga and of having shared the loot.' A list of stolen articles follows—cases of jam for his personal use, pictures, a shotgun, a Browning, high-priced cloth, and so on. The author of the report continues: 'I accuse the Assistant Chief of the post at Bania of having brought before him a chief of the Gana tribe, who refused to tell him where certain Manser rifles, captured by his men from the German deserters, were hidden. He first caused the chief's hand to be crushed in an iron copying press. He then had him flogged with lashes containing bits of steel, and after honey had been rubbed upon his wounds exposed him in the sun to be stung by bees.

Who is there that does not shudder with horror at the thought that Frenchmen in the twentieth century still commit atrocities that would shame the worst barbarism of the Middle Ages?

It is true that you can no longer sell a Negro to a white man or a Chinaman, or even to another Negro. But it is a familiar sight to see one imperialist Power sell a whole Negro nation to another imperialist Power. What did France actually do with the Congo in 1912? She simply turned a great territory there over to Germany. Did she ask the people of the country if they wanted to belong to the Germans? Some French politicians write in their press that their West Indian Negroes are beginning to demand too many privileges, and that it would be better to sell them to America and get something out of them. It is a lie that slavery has been abolished. It has only been modernized.

You saw during the war how every Negro who could be caught was put into the army, to be taken away and killed. So many were forced to serve that the French governors in Africa began to protest, fearing that the natives would rebel. But since cannon fodder must be had at any cost, France found a tractable Negro, heaped honors upon him called him 'Commissioner-General representing the French Republic in Africa,' gave him an escort of French officers and of Negroes decked out in gorgeous uniforms, and sent him back to his native land. There he was received with the most exalted honors. French administrators and colonial governors greeted him, bands of music welcomed him, soldiers presented arms to him. So this Negro managed to get eighty thousand more men to add to the half-million already fighting in France.

Ah, you Chinaman among my auditors here, I embrace you as comrades. You are setting a grand example of revolt for all the oppressed colonial peoples. I only hope that they will catch the inspiration from you.

French imperialists, I say have sent Negro troops to Indo-China to shoot down the natives of that country in case they rebel against French oppression. They tell these troops that they are of a different race from the people whom they are ordered to kill, in case the latter venture to revolt against the so-

called 'Mother Country.' Comrades the Negro race has slept too long. But beware: they who have slept long and soundly, when they once awakened, will not fall asleep again.

Now let us see how this 'Mother Country' rewards the services of the black soldiers who have been wounded in her defence, the men who have been crippled by the bullets of pretended enemies and can no longer labour to support themselves. They are treated very differently from the French wounded who fought shoulder to shoulder with them on the battlefield, and in defence as we are told, of the same 'Mother Country.' I will cite to you only two examples. Here is a wounded French soldier, graded with ninety-per-cent disability—that is, in the second class. He has one child. The French Government grants him a pension of 6888 francs a year. Here, on the other hand, is a Negro soldier of the same class, married, the father of one child, wounded in the same way, wounded in the same army, also graded with ninety-per-cent disability. He receives 620 francs. Then take a war cripple with one-hundred-per-cent disability. That is to say, he cannot move himself: he must be carried wherever he goes. If he is a white Frenchman he receives 15,390 francs a year; if he is a Negro he gets only 1800 francs.

When we are needed to be slaughtered or to perform heavy labour, we are Frenchmen. But when it comes to giving us our right, we are no longer Frenchmen—we are Negroes.—*Modern Review.*

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part III.

Chapter VI.

SPIRIT OF SERVICE

I was getting on well with my profession, but that was far from satisfying me. The question of further simplifying my life and of doing some concrete act of service to my fellowmen had been constantly agitating me, when a leper came to my door. I had it not in my heart to dismiss him with a meal. So I offered him shelter, also dressed his wounds, and began to look after him. But I could not go on like that indefinitely. I could not afford, and I lacked the will, to keep him with me indefinitely. So I sent him to the Government Hospital for undentured labourers.

But I was still ill at ease. I longed for some humanitarian work of a permanent nature. Dr. Booth was the head of the St. Aidan's Mission. He was a kind-hearted man and trusted his patients free. Thanks to Parsi Bustomji's charities, it was possible to open a small charitable hospital under Dr. Booth's charge. I felt strongly inclined to serve as a nurse in this hospital. The work of dispensing medicines took from one to two hours daily, and I made up my mind to find that time from my office-work, to be able to fill the place of a compounder in the dispensary attached to the hospital. Most of my professional work was chamber work, conveyancing and arbitration. I, of course, used to have a few cases in the Magistrate's Court, but most of them would be of a non-controversial character and Mr. Khan who had followed me to South Africa and was then living with me undertook to take them if I was absent. So I found time to serve in the small hospital. This meant two hours every morning including the time taken in going to and from the hospital. This work brought me some peace. It consisted in ascertaining the patients' complaints, laying the facts before the Doctor and dispensing

the prescriptions. It brought me in close touch with suffering Indians, most of them indentured Tamil, Telugu or North India men.

The experience stood me in good stead when during the Boer war I offered my services for nursing the sick and wounded soldiers.

The question of the upbringing of children had been ever before me. I had two sons born in South Africa, and my service in the hospital was useful to me in solving the question of their upbringing. My independent spirit was a constant source of trial to me. My wife and I had decided to have the best medical aid at the time of her delivery, but if the doctor and the nurse were to leave us in the lurch at the right moment, what was I to do? Then the nurse had to be an Indian. And the difficulty of getting a trained Indian nurse in South Africa can be easily imagined from the similar difficulty in India. So I studied the things necessary for safe labour. I read Dr. Tribhuvandas' book, "*Ma na Shikhaman*" (Advice to mother), and I nursed both my children according to the instructions given in the book, tempered where necessary by such experiences as I had gained elsewhere. The services of a nurse were availed of—not more than two months each time—principally for helping my wife, and not for taking care of the babies, which I did myself.

The birth of the last child put me to the severest test. The travail came on all of a sudden. The doctor was not immediately available, and some time was lost in fetching the midwife. Even if she had been on the spot, she could not have helped delivery. I had to see through the safe delivery of the baby. My careful study of the subject in Dr. Tribhuvandas'

work was of inestimable help. I was not nervous. I am convinced that for the proper upbringing of children the parents ought to have a general knowledge of the care and nursing of babies.

At every step I have seen the advantages of my careful study of the subject. My children would not have enjoyed the general health that they do to-day, had I not studied the subject and turned my knowledge to account. We labour under a sort of superstition that the child has nothing to learn during the first five years of its age. On the contrary the fact is that the child never learns in after life what it does in its first five years. The education of the child begins with conception. The physical and mental states of the parents at the moment of conception are reproduced in the baby. Then during the period of pregnancy it continues to be affected by the mother's moods, desires and temperament as also by her ways of life. After birth the child imitates the parents, and for a considerable number of years entirely depends on them for its growth.

The couple who realises these things will never have sexual union for the fulfilment of their lust, but will unite only when they desire issue. I think it is the height of ignorance to believe that the sexual act is an independent function necessary like sleeping or eating. The world depends for its existence on the act of generation, and as the world is the play-ground of God and a reflection of His glory the act of generation should be controlled for the ordered growth of the world. He who realises this, will control his lust at any cost, will equip himself with the knowledge necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of his progeny, and give the benefit of that knowledge to posterity.

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