

Indian Opinion

No. 48—Vol. XXV.

Friday, December 2nd, 1927.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.
PRICE FOURPENCE.

NOTES AND NEWS

PREPARATIONS are being made for the Eighth Session of the South African Indian Congress which is to be held on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th of January 1928 at Kimberley. The Indian Political Association of Kimberley will act as the Reception Committee of which Mr. Amod Mahomed will be the Chairman. The Secretaries of the various Branches are requested to communicate with Mr. T. V. R. Pillay, the Secretary at Box 417, as to the names and number of delegates attending the Conference from their respective centres on or before December 20 in order to facilitate the arrangements for their accommodation.

The M. K. Gandhi Library established by the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee in Durban for the use of the public is gaining popularity. Hardly any visitor to Durban fails to pay a visit to that memorable and useful place and improvements are gradually being made by the enthusiastic secretary Mr. B. M. Patel to suit the requirements of the public. An appeal has now been made by the secretary for more liberal use of that instructive institution and one of the latest improvements is that a table has been set apart for the use of students and many instructive and illustrated papers and books are kept for them. Parents are requested to send their children to make full use of this section.

A grand bazaar and fete will be held on Dingaan's Day, Friday 16th December 1927 in the Inchcape Hall, Eloff Street, Johannesburg, beginning at 10 a.m. Miss Charollette Albu daughter of Sir George and Lady Albu has promised to perform the opening ceremony. The object for which this will be held is to provide a Hospital for Indian women and children. The need for one in Johannesburg is very very great. It will be more a Cottage Hospital like St. Aidan's Indian Hospital in Durban. The Hospital will be run by the English Church in the Transvaal, but it will be open to all sections of the Indian community. Negotiations are being carried on by the Lord Bishop of Johannesburg with the great S.P.G. Society in London for the supplying of European nurses. The Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney is doing everything possible to make the bazaar a success. On Sunday 4th Dec. 1927 at 9 p.m. in the Inchcape Hall there will be a sacred concert in aid of the same purpose. Tickets 1/-. Childrn 6d. Contributions can be sent to Mrs. Trembath, Treasurer, c/o the Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney, 18 Moseley Street, Doornfontein.

H. D. Dames a European post Commander at Somkele Police Station on being found guilty of a criminal offence against a Native girl was recently sentenced by the Supreme Court to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour. Addressing the prisoner, the Judge-President said:

"Dames, you have been found guilty by the jury of an offence which you must recognise is a very serious one on the part of a police officer, especially

in the circumstances in which you were placed in this outlying station of Somkele. I have every desire to deal with you as leniently as I can, and I take into account that you have been apparently in custody for three months. But, having regard to the gravity of the offence, especially when committed by a police officer, I cannot find it consistent with my duty to sentence you to less than nine months' imprisonment with hard labour, which with your three months' incarceration awaiting trial, will make it not less than 12 months in all."

TRANSVAAL MUDDLE AGAIN

HOW the present officials of the Transvaal British Indian Association are carrying on their work is indeed a mystery to us. Since our last article on the subject the situation cannot be said to have improved much. The Secretaries who profess to act strictly constitutionally have thrown into the waste paper basket the requisition signed by over seven hundred members of the Association calling upon them to convene a special general meeting. This requisition was signed in accordance with section 27 of the constitution which reads as follows:—

Upon receipt by the Honourary Secretaries of a requisition, signed by not less than two hundred members of the Association, requesting him to convene a Special General Meeting of the Association for the purpose set out in the said requisition, he shall, within one week thereafter, publish a notice that a Special Meeting of members of the Association will be held, and setting forth the time, date and place and purpose for which such meeting shall be held not later than one month after the publication of such notice as aforesaid, *save in the circumstances set forth in Article 26 hereof.*

Italics are ours. The above section clearly lays down the duty of the secretaries and if, perhaps, the secretaries, in the present instance, have tried to take advantage of the words we have italicised, even then their action is not correct for those words only mean that if the circumstances are as set forth in Article 26 such meeting may be delayed more than a month. But what the Secretaries did was to place the matter before a Committee meeting which was attended

only by a few, those who had signed the requisition choosing, wisely or unwisely, to remain out; and such Committee members as were, evidently, the supporters of the Secretaries decided to reject the requisition.

Now, in the first place the Secretaries had no right to place the matter before the Committee for further instruction. And secondly a Committee appointed by the members of the Association to carry on the work in their interests had no authority to reject the wishes of the members. In this present instance not only the action of the Secretaries is liable to be censured but also that of the members of the Committee who authorised them to act likewise.

Again when an exceptional case happens such as the resignation of the Chairman it is not competent under any constitution for a Committee to accept his resignation and carry on their work. They may do so temporarily but it would be their duty to place the matter at the earliest opportunity before a general meeting of the members which they have also failed to do.

It is further reported that the Committee has suspended Mr. N. R. Patel, one of the vice-chairmen of the Association who agreed to act according to the wishes of the signatories to the requisition and took the task of convening the meeting asked for on his own shoulders. In suspending Mr. N. R. Patel the Committee have, evidently, acted in terms of section 14 of the Constitution which reads as follows:—

"No member of the Committee or Honorary Officer shall be suspended save by order of the chairman of a meeting of the Committee or discharged from membership of the Committee or office save by resolution of a special general meeting called for that purpose and of which at least one month's previous notice shall have been given to all members of the Association either by advertisement or otherwise."

If the Committee has acted in terms of the above section it does not by any means redound to their credit, although, of course, it is quite consistent for an autocratic Committee to desire to discard one who is not in agreement with them. Mr. N. R. Patel, however, by virtue of the above section, still remains a vice-chairman and a member of the Committee with full liberty to act in his capacity as such until a general meeting of members discharges him.

Acts such as these only prove the insincerity of the present officials and their co-workers who do not, or will not, see the

larger issue which is at stake but are more concerned about their own little prestige. They do not, however, seem to know that they are thereby only rendering their position from bad to worse.

Some of their supporters are now trying to make people believe that most of the signatures on the requisition were not genuine but were either faked or given without knowing the facts. The truth about that the signatories themselves can only tell and we hope they will do so at the meeting they have convened. If on the other hand if the majority of our friends in the Transvaal are of the same mentality as the present officials then it is a sorry day for the Transvaal Indians is all that we can say and there remains nothing further to be said or done. But if that is not the case, and we fully believe it is not the case, and if the officials and their supporters insist on not mending their ways then their remain only two things to do. One is for those that do not attend Committee meetings to do so and to turn down by their majority every wrong action and the other is the step they have already taken of calling a special general meeting of members and to elect new officials. If they have the majority with them they are sure to succeed either way.

Commission On Indian Education

The following Notice appears in the *Natal Provincial Gazette* dated 17th. November 1927;—

It is hereby notified for general information that a Committee has been appointed to enquire into and report upon the question of education of Indian children of both sexes, both generally and with particular reference to the undermentioned aspects, so far as the subject lies within the scope of the Natal Provincial Administration:

The existing facilities as a whole in town and country areas;

The conditions of service of Indian teachers in Government and Government-Aided Schools, including salary, promotion, discipline and pension;

The present system of Provincial grants-in-aid and any changes which may be considered to be necessary;

The financial basis of Indian education, having regard to the resources of the Province, the various demands upon them, and the adequacy or otherwise of the existing Union Government subsidies in so far as they affect Indian education.

The Committee will consist of the Chairman of the Executive Committee, together with Messrs.

John Augustine Lidgett and Frank Horace Acutt, members of the Natal Provincial Council.

The sitting of the Commission is expected to take place early in the new year. A sub-committee of the Natal Indian Congress is sitting daily in Durban collecting figures and facts for submission to the Commission.

Plans For Proposed High School and Training College

Plans and specifications for the Indian High School and Training College to be built on the site that was formerly known as Currie's Fountain are well in hand. One main building will be composed of eight class rooms, The main assembly hall, a library, a laboratory, etc. There will also be a hostel providing accommodation for about fifty boys. Resident Principals quarters will also be built separately. It is expected that these buildings will vest in a Trust composed of the trustees who probably will be, a nominee of the subscribers, the Agent of the Government of India and the Administrator of the Superintendent of Education. An Advisory Committee may also be appointed from the subscribers.

The large sum collected reflects to the credit of the Indian community which with the exception of a few rich merchants and farmers is comparatively a poor and working class community. This effort of the community is taken by all those that know anything of the Indian problem such as the Rev. C. F. Andrews as an earnest gesture and the will to work the Capetown Agreement.

Thoughts on the Present Discontent in Indian Community

(BY M. D. BARMANIA)

A writer in an English contemporary of yours recently wrote: "Looking round me I can't help but be struck by the appalling amount of humbug that exists in modern life—wherever one turns one encounters blathers and dithers about nothing at all."

When I survey the present condition of our politics in this country, and the very unfortunate controversy carried on at the present moment by some persons about the South African Indian Congress and the Capetown Agreement, I find that every word of the above quotation applies entirely to that class of ungenerous persons who while they themselves are incapable of achieving anything resent the achievements of others.

This painful controversy has been carried on with so much gusto and bitterness, that some of our journalists finding it a source of profits have lent their aid to it. It is being exploited so much that it is now impossible to read some of our week-end newspapers without discovering that some one has been pouring out himself of a good deal of abuse about the Congress or the Agreement, or both, and the persons connected with them.

Our Editors and Leaders who claim themselves to be the sincere well-wishers of the community and the "Intelligentsia" of the nation cannot restrain themselves but call to their aid all the vocabulary of Billingsgate and the lingo of bitter invectives, blowing froth while rolling in their arm chairs in the Editorial Office. The whole thing is pitiable; and God help those self-complacents.

Almost everyday, wherever you go, you come across somebody indulging in a few cheap sneers about the Congress or the Agreement. Furious letters appear in the press, from people who think that anybody who can see any good in the Congress or the Agreement is unpatriotic—a traitor and a parricide.

The Capetown Agreement is derided on all sides by people who are devoid of all political knowledge and insight, and whose services to the community may be summed up in one big Nil; yet at the present moment they claim all knowledge of politics and patriotism as their particular monopoly. The beauty of the whole thing is that they have not produced an alternative or rivaling scheme. The reason is not far to seek: simply because they cannot.

There is a big talk of a Federation just now. Federation forsooth. Of what and whom? Will anybody ask him who talks much of Federation; and pray what is Federation? I am almost sure, half of them never understood the word, and of the other half very few will be found capable of defining the term.

What a grand scheme these Federationists have put forward: the wrecking of the Congress and the Agreement. Have they ever realised that this their Himalyan folly means the speedy transportation of the entire Indian community across the Indian Ocean more speedier than any pro-repatriation had ever foreseen in his wildest dreams?

I am all for healthy constructive criticism, but the way to criticise is to wake up a sharp and latent criticism, and not to heap abuses on one's political opponents in season and out of season; and this is a pastime which if indulged in too long blunts all conscience and deadens the sensitive feelings. I would rather welcome criticism and encourage it, but the whole business as carried on now by the opponents of the Congress is so lacking in humour that it almost reduces one to tears.

We want to-day more frankness and honesty and less hypocrisy. This age, we live in, is called the age of folly, but to my mind it is a very wise age. But it is our misfortune that there are too many amateurs—people with superficial and dangerous knowledge, who rush to the press often more to gratify their own vanity—to see their names at the end of articles made up of humbugs and nonsense,—than from any sense of responsibility and a desire to advance the interests of humanity at large.

Such uninspired work and complacency is dangerous to the community and spells its ruin. We have had enough of all these; and must declare a truce now for at least five years. Let us consign to the limbo of oblivion all futile arguments and unprofitable quarrels engendered by mutual jealousies and get down to brass tacks.

Hotel Employees' Conference

As a result of the recent tour of Messrs E. C. Pillay President and Samuel J. Joseph Secretary of the Durban Hotel Employee's Union, a Conference of the Natal Hotel Employees was held at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall on Sunday the 27th November, 1927 at 10 a.m.

The following delegates were present:—Messrs. C. M. Pillay, C. S. George, Thomas Gabriel, K. N. Peter, M. Chinnaswami, R. C. Pillay and Samuel J. Joseph, Durban; D. Anthony, S. Francis, Arthur Poonusamy and Bigram Poodhas, Pietermaritzburg; M. Khan and S. E. David, Ladysmith; C. R. Naidoo, Newcastle; D. G. Persadh, Port Shepstone; Sing and N. P. Naidoo, Isipingo. Letters of apologies were received from Umkomaas, Umzinto, Dundee, Vryheid and other branches who were not able to send their delegates.

Amongst the speakers were Messrs. V. S. C. Pather, A. I. Kaje and P. R. Pather officials of the South African Indian Congress and also Mr. Ernest Gisham, B.A., (the author of the First Account of the Labour Organisation in South Africa.)

The chairman Mr. F. C. Pillay, President of the Durban Hotel Employee's Union in welcoming the delegates to the Conference said, this Conference is a unique episode in the annals of the Indians of South Africa. With the innumerable political grievances that our community has been pestered with, it must be admitted that the

work of organising our labouring class has been neglected.

We have met here this morning for the purpose of forming a Natal Union of the Hotel Employees. It is needless for me to emphasize on you all the benefits and strength which could be derived from forming such a Union.

I am happy and proud to say that the Durban Hotel Employees' Union which has been instrumental in convening this Conference has been a success. This success has been an inspiration to us, who have the honour to be its officials to take time by the forelock and ask you to assemble here this morning to form a Natal Union. Certain evils are a blessing in disguise and as far as we are concerned I think the Liquor Bill is of such a nature. It has awakened us from our lethargy.

As regards this proposed Liquor Bill, it is admitted on all hands that Section 104 thereof, which aims at the removal and closing of the avenues of employment in the Liquor and its allied trade to Indians and Natives on the ground of race only, is unfair and iniquitous, in fact we submit that it is a breach of the Capetown Agreement arrived at between the Governments of India and the Union of South Africa. Actions of protest have been taken both by the Government of India and the South African Indian Congress.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were passed :—

1. "That this Conference of the Hotel Employees of Natal called under the auspices of the Durban Hotel Employees' Union hereby resolves to form a Natal Hotel Employees' Union for the purpose of bettering the position of the Hotel Employees throughout Natal on trade union lines."
2. "That the following branches : Durban, P.M. Burg, Ladysmith, Dundee, Newcastle, Vryheid, Isipingo, Umkomaas and Port Shepstone are hereby accepted as Branch Unions of the Natal Hotel Employees' Union."
3. "That this Conference of Hotel Employees of Natal hereby adopts the draft constitution as read, subject to revision by the Executive, as the Constitution of the Natal Hotel Employees' Union formed by this Conference."
4. "That Mr. F. C. Pillay be, and is hereby appointed as the first President of the Natal Hotel Employees' Union."
5. "That the President, Secretary and a representative of Pietermaritzburg Branch be appointed as a sub-committee to draft the Standing Orders which shall be submitted after circulating to the Branches, to the next Conference for confirmation."
6. "That this Conference of the Hotel Employees of Natal offers its grateful thanks to the officials and members of the Durban Hotel Employees' Union for convening this Conference and making all arrangements in connection therewith."
7. "That this Conference of the Hotel Employees of Natal hereby records its sincere thanks to the Chairman Mr. F. C. Pillay and the Secretary Mr. Samuel J. Joseph for their assistance and help rendered in making this Conference a success."
8. "That this Conference of Hotel Employees of Natal hereby records its appreciation to the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C. for his untiring labours on behalf of the Indian community of South Africa."
9. "That this Conference of Natal Hotel Employees expresses its thanks to the Parsee Rustomjee Hall Committee for placing the Hall at its disposal for holding the Conference."
10. "That this Conference of Natal Hotel Employees held under the auspices of the Durban Hotel Employees' Union extends its thanks to the South African Indian Congress for their assistance and co-operation."
11. "That this Conference of the Natal Hotel Employees' Union held under the auspices of the Durban Hotel Employees' Union hereby extends its thanks to Mr. Ernest Gitsam, B.A., for his assistance."

Election of Officials

The following officials were elected : Mr. F. C. Pillay (Durban) President, Mr. Arthur Poonsamy (P. M. Burg,

Vice-President), Mr. Samuel J. Joseph (Durban), Hon. Gen. Secretary, Mr. K. N. Peter (Durban,) Hon. Gen. Treasurer.—Contributed.

Royal Commission On Indian Reforms

Personnel As Nominated By The Government Approved

A Reuter's message from London states :—The House of Commons unanimously approved of the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission as nominated by the Government. The Indian Revenue will bear the cost of the commission, but His Majesty's Government will contribute £20,000. Mr. Stanley Baldwin declared that the commission was the most effective scheme for a constitutional settlement for the future of India, and the Government desired the opinions of every man. The Premier added that goodwill should be given the fullest weight by the commission.

Parliamentary Labour Party's Suggestion

Another message states :—Before the debate in the House of Lords on the Indian Commission a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party, over which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald presided, a resolution regretting that the Government had not secured the co-operation of representatives of the Indian people before making the original proposals, and expressing the opinion that the primary duty of the commission should be from time to time to consult on equal terms with a commission appointed by the Indian Legislature. The two commissions should take evidence jointly as well as separately, and the reports of commissions should be presented to a joint committee of the two Houses of Parliament.

Appointment Approved By The Lords

A message from London dated Nov. 24 states :—The House of Lords has adopted, without opposition, a resolution in favour of the appointment of the Indian Inquiry Commission as nominated by the Government.

Mr. Sastri Welcomed At Port Elizabeth

Meeting With The Local Bodies

The Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., Agent of the Government of India in the Union of South Africa, accompanied by his staff Mr. J. D. Tyson and Mr. K. Rao, arrived in Port Elizabeth on the morning of November 22 from Fort Hare, and received a very cordial welcome from a large number of local Indians. Amongst those present were Messrs. H. E. Haffjee (Chairman of the Cape British Indian Council), Cader Beg (Secretary), K. N. Bhagat (Treasurer), R. S. Pillay, V. V. Devan, Reddy Bros., V. S. Pillay, V. A. Naidoo, S. R. Naidoo, V. M. Moodley and many other Indian residents of the city. On alighting from his saloon, the distinguished visitor was presented with a beautiful bouquet by Miss Naidoo.

After greetings had been exchanged, Mr. Sastri was conveyed by a motor car to the residence of Mr. V. A. Naidoo, in Walmer Road, and had breakfast with the members of the Council. During the morning he interviewed the Deputy Mayor Mr. James Scott, in the absence from the city of the Mayor Mr. A. H. Brookes, and matters of municipal interest were discussed. The chief point that was raised was regarding public opinion concerning Indians in Port Elizabeth, and Mr.

Sastri was informed that there was no feeling against Indians here.

Mr. Sastri then met the Education Committee of the School Board, and discussed generally with the Committee the educational facilities open to the Indian community in Port Elizabeth and the Province generally, with particular reference to the position of providing facilities for technical education.

The distinguished visitor afterwards proceeded to the Paterson Street Secondary School, and closely inspected it, and was subsequently the guest of the Municipality at the Humewood Hotel, the proceedings being private.

Afternoon's Reception

In the afternoon, Mr. Sastri was accorded a reception at the house of Mr. Devan in Chapel Street. The proceedings were purely informal, and Mr. Sastri chatted freely with the other guests among whom were Messrs. W. Lawson Brown, Womersley, S. Illingworth, E. J. Sawyer, Bishop Walker, D. Reid, Fuller, Hemming, Edward, Anderson, R. S. Pillay, R. S. Pillay, junr., C. Appavoo, V. A. Naidoo, Kader Beg (secretary), Heftejee, S. Allie, H. H. Jogge, Yakoob Salleh, Hyder Khan, M. E. Bhattay, Omar Khan, Allie Hassin, A. E. Sam and Peter O'Brien.

During tea Mr. Sawyer, in welcoming Mr. Sastri, said that at an informal function of this nature there was not the necessity, neither was it the occasion when lengthy speeches should be made. He had, however, been requested by their host of the afternoon Mr. V. V. Devan, a director of Messrs. Teikamdas Bros., the leading Indian merchants of this city, to extend to their illustrious guest, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., a very cordial and hearty welcome to this house. There they met some of the leading citizens of Port Elizabeth; gentlemen who were actively interested in the Indian question as it affected the Union, and who had the welfare of his compatriots at heart. Had Mr. Teikamdas, Mr. Devan's co-director, been in South Africa, it would also, he was sure, have afforded him great pleasure to meet their distinguished visitor that afternoon.

In asking Mr. Sastri to accept this welcome, he did so with particular personal pleasure, as twenty-two years of his life were spent in India. He loved India and its peoples, and still continued and always would take a great interest in them. It might interest Mr. Sastri to learn that within the walls of this house have been entertained at different times, a number of Indian notabilities, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Sir Deva Prasad, and the Hon. Rasul Ali Khan, not forgetting that great European leader of the Indian community, the Rev. Mr. Andrews. And now this house was honoured by Mr. Sastri's presence, and speaking on behalf of their host, he hoped that he would carry away pleasant recollections of his short visit here, and trusted that at some future occasion the honour may be repeated.

Speaking as a European, he could assure him that they believed that his presence in this country would greatly help to smooth over many of the racial difficulties which so often arise in a country as cosmopolitan as this one, and trusted that his good services would bring to those people who, although resident in South Africa, always claim the Great Indian Empire as their spiritual home, a time of peace and prosperity.

Mr. R. S. Pillay, on behalf of the Siva Subramania Auliyum, also welcomed Mr. Sastri and expressed the hope that he would grace their Hindu Temple in Valley Road with his presence.

Mr. Sastri did not reply, and simply stated that the word "grace" was not the most suitable word to use. He would approach the Temple in a spirit of piety, and promised, if he could spare the time, to pay the Temple a visit to-day.

There was a very large gathering in the Feather Market in the evening, when Mr. Sastri gave an address on Indian questions which we hope to publish in our next issue.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part III. Chapter XX.

TRIALS OF THIRD CLASS TRAVELLING

The journey was from Calcutta to Rajkot, and I wanted to halt at Benares, Agra, Jaypur and Palanpur *enroute*. I had not the time to see any more places than these. I stayed a day at each one of these places, and in *dharmashalas* or with *Pandas* like the ordinary pilgrims, excepting at Palanpur. So far as I can remember I did not spend more than Rs. 31 (including the train fare) on this journey.

In travelling third class I mostly preferred the ordinary to the mail trains as I knew that the latter used to be crowded, and there was of course the objection of the fare being higher for third class by mail.

The third class compartments were as dirty and the closet arrangements were as bad as to-day, though there might be a little improvement now. But the difference between the facilities provided for the first and the third classes is out of all proportion to that between the fares for the two classes. Third class passengers are treated like sheep and their comforts are sheep's comforts. In Europe I travelled third—and only once first, just to see what it was like—but there I noticed no such difference between the first and the third classes. In South Africa third class passengers are mostly negroes, yet the third class comforts are better than here. In parts of South Africa third class compartments are provided with sleeping accommodation, and cushioned seats. The accommodation is also regulated, so as to prevent overcrowding whereas here I have found the regulation limit mostly exceeded.

The indifference of the railway authorities to the comforts of the third class passengers, combined with the dirty and inconsiderate habits of the passengers themselves, makes third class travelling a trial for a passenger with cleanly habits. These uncleanly habits commonly include spitting and throwing of rubbish in the compartment, smoking at all hours and in all places, betel and tobacco chewing and converting the whole carriage into a spittoon, shouting and yelling, and using foul language, regardless of the convenience or comfort of fellow passengers. I have noticed little difference between my experience of the third class travelling in 1902 and that of my unbroken third class tours from 1915 to 1919. I can think of only one remedy for this awful state of things, and it is this that educated men should make a point of travelling third class and reforming the habits of the people, as also of never letting the railway authorities rest in peace by complaints wherever necessary, never resorting to bribes or any unlawful means for the sake of their own comforts, and never putting up with infringements of rules on the part of any one concerned.

This, I am sure, will bring about considerable improvement. My serious illness in 1918-9 has unfortunately compelled me practically to give up third class travelling, and it has always been a matter for pain and shame to me especially because

the disability should have come at a time when the agitation for the removal of the hardships of third class passengers was making fair headway. The hardships of poor railway and steamship passengers, accentuated by their bad habits, the undue facilities allowed by Government to foreign trade, and such other things make an important subject by itself worthy to be taken up by one or two enterprising and persevering workers devoting their full time to it.

But I shall leave the third class passengers at that and come to my experiences in Benares. I reached there in the morning. I had decided to put up with a *Panda*. Numerous Brahmins surrounded me, as soon as I got out of the train, and I selected the house of one of them who struck me to be comparatively cleaner and better than the rest. It proved to be a good choice. There was a cow in the courtyard of the house which had a storey where I was given my lodging. I did not want to have any food without abtution in the Ganges in the proper orthodox manner. The *Panda* made preparations for it. I had told him beforehand that on no account would I give him more than a rupee and four annas as *dakshina*, and that he should therefore have that in view in making the preparations.

The *Panda* readily assented, 'Be the pilgrim rich or poor,' said he, 'the service is the same in every case. But the amount of *dakshina* we receive depends upon the will and the ability of the pilgrim.' I did not find that the *Panda* at all abridged the usual formalities in my case. The Puja was over at twelve o'clock and I went to the Kashi Vishvanath temple for *darshan*. I was deeply pained by what I saw there. When practising as a barrister in Bombay in 1891, I had occasion to attend a lecture on 'Pilgrimage to Kashi' in the Prarthana Samaj hall. I was therefore prepared for some measure of disappointment. But my actual disappointment was greater than I had bargained for.

The approach was through a narrow and slippery lane. Quiet there was none. The swarming flies and the noise made by the shopkeepers and the pilgrims were simply insufferable.

Where one expected an atmosphere of meditation and prayer, this was conspicuous by its absence. If one wanted to meditate, one must fall back on oneself. I did observe devout sisters, who were absorbed in meditation, entirely unconscious of the environment. But for this the authorities of this temple could scarcely claim any credit. The authorities should be responsible for creating and maintaining about the temple a pure, sweet, and serene atmosphere, physical as well as moral. Instead of this I saw a bazaar where cunning shopkeepers were selling sweets and toys of the latest fashion.

When I reached the temple, I was greeted at the entrance by a stinking mass of rotten flowers. The inside was paved with fine marble, which was however broken by some devotee innocent of aesthetic taste who had set rupees in it. And the rupees served as an excellent receptacle for dirt.

I went near the *Jnana-vapi* (the well of knowledge). I had searched here for God but failed to find Him. I was not therefore in a particularly good temper. The surroundings of the *Jnana-vapi* too I found to be filthy. I had no mind to offer my *dakshina*. I therefore offered a pie. The *Panda*, in charge, got angry and threw away the pie. He stared at me and said, 'This insult will take you straight to hell.'

This did not perturb me. 'Maharaj,' said I, 'whatever fate has in store for me, it does not behoove one of your class to indulge in such language. You may take this pie if you like or you will lose that too.'

'Go away,' he replied. 'I don't care for your pie.' And then followed a further volley of abuse.

I took up the pie and went my way, flattering myself that the Brahman had lost a pie and I had saved

it. But the Maharaj was hardly the man to let the pie go. He called me back and said, 'All right leave the pie here. I would rather not be as you are. If I refuse your pie, it will be bad for you.'

I silently gave him the pie and went away with a sigh.

I have since been to Kashi Vishvanath twice, but that was after I had already been afflicted with the title Mahatma, and experience, such as I detailed above, had become impossible. People eager to have my *darshan* would not permit me to have a *darshan* of the temple. The woes of Mahatmas are known to Mahatmas alone. Otherwise the filth and the noise were the same as before.

If any one doubts the mercy of God, let him have a look at these sacred places. How much hypocrisy and irreligion does the Prince of Yogis suffer to be perpetrated in His Holy name? He abtubined long ago that, "Whatever a man sows, that shall he reap."

The law of Karma is inexorable and impossible of evasion. There is thus hardly any need for God to interfere. He laid down the law and retired, as it were.

After this visit to the temple, I waited upon Mrs. Besant. I knew that she had just recovered from illness. I sent in my name. She came at once. As I wished only to see her, I said, 'I am aware that you are in a delicate health, I only wanted to have a look at you. I am thankful that you have been good enough to see me in spite of your indifferent health. I will not detain you any longer.'

So saying I took leave of her.

Why I am a Hindu

We reproduce the following article by Mahatma Gandhi under the above heading from his *Young India* dated October 20:

An American friend who subscribes herself as a lifelong friend of India writes:

"As Hinduism is one of the prominent religions of the East, and as you have made a study of Christianity and Hinduism, and on the basis of that study have announced that you are a Hindu, I beg leave to ask you if you will do me the favour to give your reasons for that choice. Hindus and Christians alike realize that man's chief need is to know God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Believing that Christ was a revelation of God, Christians of America have sent to India thousands of their sons and daughters to tell the people of India about Christ. Will you in return kindly give us your interpretation of Hinduism with and make a comparison of Hinduism with the teachings of Christ? I will be deeply grateful for this favour."

I have ventured at several missionary meetings to tell English and American missionaries that if they could have refrained from 'telling' India about Christ and merely lived the life enjoined upon them by the Sermon on the Mount, India instead of suspecting them would have appreciated their living in the midst of her children and directly profited by their presence. Holding this view, I can tell American friends nothing about Hinduism by way of return. I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

Nor do I consider myself fit to interpret Hinduism except through my own life. And if I may not interpret Hinduism through my written work, I may not compare it with Christianity. The only thing it is possible for me therefore to do is to say as briefly as I can, why I am a Hindu.

Believing as I do in the influence of heredity, being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject it, if I found it inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth. On examination I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me in as much it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in the other faiths. Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism.) Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore sacredness, of all life. The great belief in transmigration is a direct consequence of that belief. Finally the discovery of the law of *Varnashrama* is a magnificent result of the ceaseless search for truth. I must not burden this article with definitions of the essentials sketched here, except to say that the present ideas of cow worship and *Varnashrama* are a caricature of what in my opinion the originals are. The curious may see the definitions of cow worship and *Varnashrama* in the previous numbers of *Young India*. I hope to have to say on *Varnashrama* in the near future. In this all too brief a sketch I have mentioned what occur to me to be the outstanding features of Hinduism that keep me in its fold.

South African Indian Congress EIGHTH SESSION

In terms of Clause 13 of the Constitution notice is hereby given to the constituent bodies that the next Annual Conference will be held at Kimberley on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th January 1928.

The following is the agenda:—

1. Presidential Speech.
2. Minutes.
3. Hon. Gen. Secretary's Report.
4. Hon. J. Treasurer's Financial Statement.
5. Capetown Agreement.
 - (a) Bills passed there anent.
 - (b) Education Inquiry Commission.
 - (c) Housing & Sanitary Commission.
6. Proposed Liquor Bill.
7. Notices of Motion.
8. Revision of Constitution and Standing Orders.
9. Election of Officials.
10. General.

A. I. KAJEE,
HON. GEN. SECRETARY.

Headquarters:
175 Grey Street, Durban.
25th Nov. 1927.

Transvaal British Indian Association

Mass Meeting

Whereas, on the 5th November, 1927 a requisition duly signed by over 700 members of the Association was duly served upon the Joint Hon. Secretaries, calling upon them, in terms of rule 27 of the constitution and regulation, to convene a Special General Meeting of members for the purposes set forth in the said requisition

and whereas in violation of the said rule the said Joint Hon. Secretaries have failed, refused or neglected to comply with the said requisition, and failed, refused or neglected to convene a Special General Meeting

And whereas the members of this Association are by reason of the foregoing being subjected to injury in regard to the affairs of the Association and their communal interests

Notice is hereby given that a mass meeting of the Indians of the Transvaal Province (over the age of 16 years, all such being *ipso facto* members of the Association) will be held on Sunday, the 18th December, 1927, at 2 p.m. at the Good Hope Bioscope Hall, corner of Commissioner and Nugget Streets, Johannesburg, for the following purposes:

1. To consider the conduct of the present officers and committee, and to pass such resolutions in regard thereto, as the meeting may determine.
2. To elect by vote officers and members of the committee either in addition to those presently holding office or in substitution of them or any of them.
3. To consider and vote upon the proposal that the Transvaal British Indian Association re-affiliate with the South African Indian Congress.
4. To consider and discuss and vote upon any other matter arising out of or incidental to the foregoing.

Tel. Add.,
"ORGANISER"
P.O. Box 2538,
Johannesburg.

N. R. PATEL,
Vice-Chairman of the Transvaal British Indian Association. (At the request and instance of members and signatories to the requisition.)

Lecture on the League of Nations

will be delivered by H. B. Butler Esq., C.B., of the League of Nations Union, London, at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, 140 Queen Street, Durban, on Saturday 10th December 1927, at 3 p.m. sharp.

Don't miss this opportunity of knowing all about the League and its work.

B. M. PATEL,
HON. SECRETARY.

M. K. Gandhi Library & Parsee Rustomjee Hall Committee.

इमो बोडो आपुना छे

दर ये इमना इलेद तथा तेनी साये नवी आयेवी इमनीने
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ઈન્ડિઅન ઓપિનિઅન.

પુસ્તક રૂપ મુ.

ફીનીક્સ, ચુકવાર, તારીખ ૨ ડીસેમ્બર ૧૯૨૭

અંક ૪૮

“ઈન્ડિઅન ઓપિનિઅન”

ચુકવાર, તા. ૨ ડીસેમ્બર સન. ૧૯૨૭

ટ્રસ્ટિવાલ ધીટીસ ઈન્ડિઅન એસોસિએશનના હાલના અમલદાર શ્રી રીતે પોતાનું ટ્રસ્ટિવાલનો ગુચવાડો કામ ચલાવી રહ્યા છે એ અમને ચાલુ તો તાબુખીજ થાય છે. આ આખન ઉપરના અમારા છેલ્લા

લેખ બાદ ટ્રસ્ટિવાલની સ્થિતિ માં ધણો સુધારો જ્યેલો કહી નહિ શકાય. સેક્ટરીઓ કે જેઓ બંધારણસર કામ કરતા હોવાનો કાવો ફરે છે તેઓએ ૭૦૦ મેમ્બરોની સહીઓ વાળું મેમ્બરોની સ્પેશીયલ જનરલ મીટીંગ બોલાવવાની માંગણી કરનારે રેકવીઝીશન કમિટીના ટોપલીમાં નાંખી દીધેલું છે. જે રેકવીઝીશન એસોસિએશનના બંધારણની કલમ ૨૪ની રૂએ તૈયાર કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું જે કલમ નીચે પ્રમાણે છે:—

“આજમાં ઓછી ૨૦૦ મેમ્બરોની સહી સાથનું તેની અંદર દર્શાવવાલા હેતુસર સ્પેશીયલ જનરલ મીટીંગ બોલાવવાની સેક્ટરીને વિનંતિ કરનારે રેકવીઝીશન સેક્ટરીને મળતાં તેણે આર બાદ એક અઠવાડીયાની અંદર એસોસિએશનના મેમ્બરોની એક સ્પેશીયલ જનરલ મીટીંગ બોલાવવાની નોટીસ બહાર પાડવી અને તેમાં તેવી મીટીંગ બોલાવવાનો હેતુ, વખત, તારીખ અને સ્થળ જણાવવા અને જેવી મીટીંગ બહાર થયા બાદ, કલમ ૨૬માં જણાવેલા સંજોગો સિવાય, વધુમાં વધુ એક માસની અંદર ભરવી.”

ઉપલી કલમમાં સેક્ટરીઓની ફરજ સ્પષ્ટ રીતે દર્શાવવામાં આવી છે અને જે તેઓએ “કલમ ૨૬ માં જણાવેલા સંજોગો સિવાય” એ શબ્દોનો હાલ લેવાનો પ્રયત્ન કરેલો હોય તો તે પણ તેઓનાથી લઈ શકાય તેમ નથી કેમકે એ શબ્દોનો અર્થ માત્ર એટલોજ થાય છે કે મીટીંગ બોલાવવાની મુદત એક માસ કરતાં વધારે પણ લખાવી શકાય.

પરંતુ સેક્ટરીઓએ તો જે બાબતને કમીટી મીટીંગ સમક્ષ રજુ કરી કે જે કમીટી મીટીંગમાં માત્ર થોડાજ મેમ્બરો હાજર હતા અને ઉપર જણાવેલા રેકવીઝીશન ઉપર સહી કરનારાઓમાંનાં મેમ્બરો હકાપણથી કે જેર હકાપણથી બહાર રહ્યા હતા; અને જે કમીટીના મેમ્બરો કે જે દેખીતી રીતે સેક્ટરીઓને ટેકા દેનારા હતા તેમણે રેકવીઝીશનને ફેંકી દેવા નો કસવ કર્યો.

હવે પ્રથમ તો સેક્ટરીઓએ જે બાબત વધારે સુચના માટે કમીટી સમક્ષ લઈ જવાની જરૂર નહોતી અને ખીજું એસોસિએશનના મેમ્બરોએ પોતાના હિત અર્થે કામ કરવાને નીચેથી કમીટીને પોતાની ઉપર વિશ્વાસ મુકનારા મેમ્બરોની ઇચ્છાની અવગણના કરવાનો હક નહોતો. આ પ્રસ્તુત દાખલામાં માત્ર સેક્ટરીઓનું જ પગલું નિંદાને પાત્ર છે એટલું જ નહિ પણ જો કમીટીના મેમ્બરોએ જે કામ કરવાનું

સેક્ટરીઓને સુચના આપી તે મેમ્બરોનું પગલું પણ નિંદાને પાત્ર છે.

વળી બ્યારે સંસ્થાના પ્રમુખને રાજીનામું દેવાનો અસાધારણ બનાવ અને બ્યારે કોઈ પણ બંધારણની રૂએ કમીટીને તેનું રાજીનામું સ્વિકારી લેવાની અને તેની જગ્યા એ ખીજી નીમી દેવાની સત્તા હોઈ શકે નહિ. તેઓનાથી એક કે એવું કામચલાઉ પગલું લઈ શકાય ખરું પરંતુ પહેલીજ વકે જે બાબતને તેઓએ એસોસિએશનના મેમ્બરો સમક્ષ રજુ કરવી જોઈએ. પરંતુ તેમ કરતાં પણ સેક્ટરીઓ ચુકેલા છે.

જે સિવાય વળી હવે જેવી બબર આવી છે કે મી. એન. આર. પટેલ જે એસોસિએશનના એક વાઈસ ચેરમેન છે તેમણે એસોસિએશનના મેમ્બરોની ઇચ્છાને માન આપવાનું ઉચિત સમજી તેઓએ માંગેલી મીટીંગ બોલાવવાની જવાબદારી પોતાની ઉપર લીધેલી હોવાથી કમીટીએ મી. એન. આર. પટેલને સરપેન્ડ કર્યા છે. આ પગલું લેવામાં કમીટીએ બંધારણ ની કલમ ૧૪નો આધાર લીધેલો જણાય છે કે જે નીચે મુજબ છે:—

“કોઈ પણ કમીટીના મેમ્બર કે અમલદારને સરપેન્ડ કરી શકાયે નહિ, સિવાય કે કમીટી મીટીંગના પ્રમુખ તરફથી તેવો ફકમ થયો હશે, અગર તેને કમીટીનાં મેમ્બરોથીપમાંથી કે અમલદારોમાંથી બરતરફ નહિ કરી શકાય, સિવાય કે તેને માટે બોલાવવામાં આવેલી સ્પેશીયલ જનરલ મીટીંગે એવો કસવ કરેલો હશે, અને જેવી મીટીંગની બહારોટથી કે કોઈ પણ ખીજી રીતે એસોસિએશનના મેમ્બરોને એક મહિના અગાઉથી બબર આપવી પડશે.”

જે કમીટીએ ઉપલી કલમને આધારે મી. એન. આર. પટેલને સરપેન્ડ કરવાનું પગલું લીધેલું હોય તો તે કમીટીને શોભતું નજ ગણાય, જે કે, અલબત્ત એક આપખુદ કમીટીને જે મેમ્બર પોતાની સાથે મળતો નહિ હોય તેને કાલવાની વાજબીજ ઇચ્છા થાયજ. પરંતુ મી. એન. આર. પટેલ તો ઉપલી કલમને આધારે જ્યાં સુધી જનરલ મીટીંગે તેઓને બરતરફ નહિ કરેલા હોય હાં સુધી સંપૂર્ણ સત્તા સાથે વાઈસ ચેરમેન અને કમીટીના મેમ્બર તરીકે રહેવાનાજ.

આવાં કાર્યો હાલના અમલદારો અને તેના ઝોડીયાઓની અપ્રમાણીકતાજ પુરવાર કરી આપે છે કે જેઓ વધારે મોટો સવાલ જેમમાં આવી પડેલો છે તે જોઈ શકતાજ નથી અથવા જેવા મંત્રિતાં નથી અને મોટામાં મોટી ચિંતા પોતાના મોભાની ચઈ પડેલી છે. પરંતુ એ રીતે તેજે પોતાની સ્થિતિ સુધારવાને બદલે સમગ્રી બગાડતા જાય છે એ તેઓ જોઈ શકતા જણાતા નથી.

તેઓના કેટલાક ઝોડીયાઓ હવે લોકોને એવું સમજાવવા માંગે છે કે રેકવીઝીશન પર સહીઓ મોટે ભાગે યોગ્ય છે અથવા તો સમજણ વગર આપાલેલી છે. આ બાબતનું ખરા મજબૂત માં જણી કરવામાં આવેલાં કાકા કાકા જેને ડિવિઝીને મોકલવામાં