

# Indian Opinion

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## SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS NINTH SESSION PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

**T**HE following is the full text of the Presidential address delivered by Advocate A. Christopher. The rest of the proceedings will appear in our next week's issue:—

Delegates from the Provinces,—In your name as representing the South African Indian community, I have the honour this day to welcome to your deliberations, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi, Agents to the Government of India.

Mr. Sastri at Kimberley last year attended your sittings throughout and helped you with his advice and guidance, and now on the eve of his departure, with the knowledge and experience gained during his eighteen months of office, he has come to spend the few last remaining hours before his departure among you to help and advise you. We are indeed grateful to him.

Sir Reddi, we have no doubt, will also give us his help and advice.

But it is for you to come to wise decisions on subjects that you will deliberate on.

There is, since the coming of Mr. Sastri, a better feeling manifest in the country on the question of the relations of Europeans with Indians. Mr. Sastri has wrought a miracle, for, generally speaking, the European to-day is willing to discuss his differences with the Indian, in order that they may better understand the point of view of each other, so that they may find a common ground of agreement.

All Indian movements must inevitably tend to western standards of civilisation as understood in this country, so that in course of time the Indian while holding to much that is his own, will nevertheless be as much anglicised as the Jew, to be justly accepted as one complying with western standards.

Education in English and Afrikaans of every man, woman, and child in our community may help us the sooner to acquire the South African outlook. As it is, the Indian born in the Union is struggling in that direction.

But the economic pressure upon him is largely the result of restrictive legislation and to some extent to his lack of organisation in the industrial field.

Indians for years expressed their willingness to accept a minimum wage, given equal opportunity. It is now, however, a part of the legislation in this country. Indians, owing to the lack of facilities to comply with the requirements of the Apprenticeship Act, find it impossible to sell their labour for a civilised living wage. Indian workers are now organising so that they may be in a better position to speak for themselves and win for themselves a place in the South African labour market, and until it comes to pass that they are given equal opportunities in this country, they will have the harder to struggle.

The Trade Union Congress of this country has met your workers and has agreed that there can be

but one union in an industry, trade or occupation if a union is to be effective for the purposes for which it stands, and that Congress has further agreed to work in conjunction with your workers so that in due time so desirable an object will be achieved in the interests of all workers and of the country in which they live.

Lack of educational facilities for the worker who is already employed is the question that calls for practical handling.

Report of the Natal Education Enquiry Committee will when given effect to make much difference to the education of a large number of children, the workers of to-morrow, who are to-day without facilities and even in existing schools there will be better facilities, and teachers will also have their conditions of employment somewhat improved. A part of the subsidy from the Union Government for Indian Education in the province of Natal which had been diverted to other purposes, will in future be used for Indian education. The report, however, is not the last word on Indian education. It goes far, but it does not place the Indian child nor the Indian teacher on the same footing as the European child or the European teacher. It is for the Province concerned to follow up the question till the difference disappears.

Mr. Kichlu and his co-worker Miss Gordon who came out and did great service in the case of Indian education in Natal, also investigated the Indian education question in the Transvaal, but their report, unlike the report for Natal, was not published.

In the Cape, the Indian education question is nothing like that of Natal or Transvaal for Indian children generally attend non-European schools and in a few cases have their own schools.

No provision has been made for agricultural, industrial or technical training for Indians. So far Witwatersrand Technical School alone is willing to consider the technical education of Indians if details are supplied which will justify the extension of technical facilities to Indians.

Especially in a country like Natal, where a large portion of the Indian population relies upon the soil for its subsistence, agricultural education, together with security of land tenure, are imperative if the toiler is to get a civilised living out of his ground.

The would-be Indian worker in an industry, without the facilities for his training, would fail to find employment, and if he be in an industry without any previous training or educational qualification, he faces the risk of being thrown out of employment.

The Sastri College for the training of teachers will serve a very useful purpose and meet a long-felt want and the education of Indians for the matriculation is also a good objective. But the training of the mind and not of the hand as well, while such training has its usefulness, does not in the absence of other facilities for agricultural, indus-

trial and technical education make for the prosperity nor the wealth nor the strength of a community. It must therefore be your concern that while you do everything possible to make the Sastri College a success, you must also work for the establishment of centres where your children may get agricultural, industrial and technical training.

In this country, restrictive immigration laws form one of the subjects of complaints for years. There has been some relief administratively. The Immigration Department, for instance, has agreed that a South African born Indian need only take out a passport if he desires to visit England, India or any other country and that no longer is he bound to take out an Identity Certificate. You will be told of other relaxations in the Regulations but there remain other restrictions which cause friction.

Out of immigration arose the question of condonation of illicit entrants. To the present Government is due the credit that they put forward a scheme to legalise such illicit entrants. This question formed a subject, you will remember, of a long discussion at the Kimberley Conference last year. In terms of the Resolution then passed, your sub-Committee appointed to deal with the question in co-operation with your Executive obtained the best conditions possible in the circumstances. The Government's Condonation Scheme was by no means the best or the most perfect, but it legalised illicit entrants.

The question of the admission of wives and children of condonees who had never entered the Union is in abeyance. Whether they would be admitted or not, depends upon the Condonation figures which are not yet available. The Minister will consider the question favourably if the numbers are not large, and it is a matter for your incoming Executive to negotiate. Your Executive deferred representations to the Minister on the question on the advice of the retiring Agent.

You must now, as you have always, set your faces against illicit immigration. It does the community no good. It re-doubles the activities of the Immigration Department which bear somewhat very hardly upon the movements of Indians who are lawfully resident in this country, even though they be South African born.

Since 1914 to date 29,026 Indians have been repatriated from this country. The highest figure was last year when 3,477 left. The Commissioner for Asiatics in reply to a request for a copy of the report of his visit to India has told us that that report is confidential and for Departmental use only. We have addressed enquiries to the Government of India and to the Agent for information of what becomes of repatriates on entering India. We are so far without any information. We should not rest until we are satisfied that the repatriates get a fair deal from the Government of India and that the Indians who leave the country do so of their own free will.

As indentured immigration has ceased and western civilisation is the goal set for Indians, the necessity for the existence of the Indian Immigration Laws can no longer be urged and it is for us to work for the repeal of all differential laws.

The question of the separation of the races in Government and Municipal buildings is a source of irritation to Indians. Congestion brings trouble. And it can only be removed if a greater number of buildings are put in use to meet the demands of public interest.

The conditions of the railways are far from satisfactory. Though the same charges are made for Railway facilities, the Indian certainly gets the worst of the facilities. If the Department will set up a Board or Committee to enquire into the travelling facilities provided for Indians and others, they will see for themselves both by the inspection of the

compartments and the conveniences set aside for them and also by taking evidence, that Indians do not get what they pay for on the Railways.

The Licence question still looms large. Until such time as the right of appeal to the Courts of the land are restored, there will be no satisfaction or peace for the Indians.

At the present moment Transvaal Indians are experiencing licensing trouble following in the wake of Norwood and Braamfontein cases. The Johannesburg Town Council is holding up the issue of certificates of renewals of licences to Indians to the extent of about half the number to which Indians have established a claim. The other half have obtained the licences prior to the judgments. The settlement of the licensing question in this country is one of the factors that will make for a contented Indian community. It is a matter of gratification that the Central Housing Board has published its report on housing and sanitation in and around the Borough of Durban. The report is noteworthy for its impartiality. If its terms are carried out much good will follow. The Housing Committee which was first proposed was also to include representatives of the Durban Corporation and the Provincial Council and two Indian assessors, but for reasons best known to the Union Authorities, the proposed Committee was superseded by the Central Housing Board.

The restrictions against ownership of land by Indians in the Transvaal is a cause of much trouble and unhappiness to them. So long as human beings are prevented by unjust artificial laws from using land for their existence, they are bound to seek ways and means of obtaining what is as much a necessity to them as air and water. There would be little or no trouble if Transvaal Indians are given the opportunity to settle down in the country as part of the permanent population.

We should on an educational and property qualification ask the Government for the restoration of the franchise to us. The possession of the franchise, there is no doubt, will remove many of the grievances under which Indians are labouring.

Section 104 of the Liquor Bill moved the Indian community to its very depths and threatened the livelihood of thousands of Indians. The Congress did everything, holding meetings in every part of the country, protesting against the Section, cabling to the Indian Government and prominent leaders in India and making representations to the Agent to support us in our protest. The Agent did all he could to help, and his presence and influence no doubt weighed with the Government in its decision to withdraw the Section.

The Liquor Bill which has now become law contains restrictive clauses and particularly Section 102 which at the present moment is giving trouble to our countrymen employed in the trade in Johannesburg. A number of them have been thrown out of employment. Representations have been made to the Minister but so far without any result. The Agent has taken up the matter with the Minister and the Indian community does not consider the matter closed.

Your Treasurer will put before you a suggestion that a sufficient amount should be collected from the Indian community throughout the Union to constitute a fund which if capitalised would bring a return which together with your annual subscriptions and levies would be more than enough to place your Congress on a footing of absolute permanence.

There are other matters which will also be placed before you for your consideration, and I have tried to indicate some of the outstanding questions affecting us.

One word more—Mr. Sastri came, saw and conquered. No one dreamt the change of heart could

be wrought by any man in so short a space of time, but it has been done. There is the fear with us that the change of heart may be temporary, but it need not be, if we have faith in ourselves and in our cause. No good cause for ever dies. Mr. Sastri goes, but like Mr. Gandhi, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, and Mr. Andrews, Mr. Sastri too will be our friend and advocate in our Motherland so that she may hover over us until such time as we are truly and really taken into the South African household.

## Notes and News

**A**T a meeting of the Durban Town Council held last Monday, Councillor H. H. Kemp brought forward a resolution, that the Council accept in principle the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Central Housing Board, on the housing of Indians in and adjacent to Durban, in so far as the conditions on the Eastern Vlei will permit of the erection of two and three-roomed cottages for Indian occupation thus meeting the immediate needs of the situation. Councillors, however, protested against the matter being dealt with just then, seeing that it was down for discussion by the Council-in-Committee later in the afternoon, and as Councillor Kemp continued to address the meeting, a number of them walked out, with the result that the quorum was broken. When the matter was later discussed by the Council-in-Committee, the report was referred to a special sub-committee says the *Natal Mercury*.

Writing to the *Natal Mercury* on the subject, Councillor Kemp states that it was his intention to draw attention to the fact that after clearing out 23 houses out of 120 condemned as unfit for human habitation since 1925, the Council had done little. These houses were in Brickhill Road and were occupied by 700 Indians who subsequently were allowed to spread themselves over the peri-Durban area. "These houses," Mr. Kemp adds, "were erected on Corporation land, and yet we did nothing more. Some houses have been rebuilt, some reconstructed, but the 'black list' is still on the stocks and cannot be really tackled because the late Medical Officer of Health—and rightly so—told us that, unless we rehoused at the same time as we condemned, the evil would spread again elsewhere."

The Congress offices in Durban have been exceptionally busy during the week arranging the farewell and welcome receptions for the outgoing and the incoming Agent of the Government of India and receiving delegates from the different Provinces who have come to attend the South African Indian Congress which was opened by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri on Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Royal Picture Palace and is to close to-morrow (Saturday). We welcome the delegates of all the Provinces who have assembled in Durban and hope their labours and their stay will be fruitful and pleasant.

A farewell reception to Mr. Sastri and Mr. P. Kodanda Rao who will be leaving these shores next Monday, and a welcome reception to Sir K. V. Reddi, the new Agent of the Government of India, was given under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress at the Town Hall, Durban, on Wednesday at 8 p.m. The Congress officials had exerted all their energies to make this reception a successful one and their labours were well rewarded. There are a very few occasions in the history of the Durban Town Hall when it was full to its utmost capacity as it was on Wednesday night. The gathering was a

mixed one of Indians and Europeans. They had all assembled there eager to see and to hear the new Agent and to hear perhaps for the last time in this country the silver-tongued orator Mr. Sastri. There were messages from Mahatma Gandhi and the Union Ministers and prominent Europeans associating themselves with the Congress in wishing God-speed to Mr. Sastri and according a hearty welcome to Sir Kurma Reddi. We hope to give a full report of the speeches and messages in our next week's issue.

Sir Kurma Reddi was presented on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress with an address of welcome carved on a silver salver and similar salvers were also presented to Mr. Sastri and to Mr. Kodanda Rao with sentiments expressing the profound gratitude of the community for the noble services they had rendered. Mr. Sastri was the recipient also of many other tokens of love and gratitude from other bodies.

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri will be entertained to a farewell banquet on Saturday night at the Town Hall by the Natal Indian Congress.

## WELCOME!

**W**E heartily welcome Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi who comes to us as the new Agent of the Government of India. From the little knowledge we have gained of Sir Kurma after his arrival here, we feel confident that he will prove equal to his task in this country, which he is fully aware is a difficult one. It is unfortunate that two grave issues face him immediately before he could get time even to settle down. They are the Liquor Act and the licensing question in the Transvaal. Sir Kurma has said that he would follow in the footsteps of his predecessor and carry on the great work he has so ably begun; and he asks for the full co-operation of the Indian and the European community as well. Sir Kurma can be assured of the fullest co-operation, in his difficult and delicate task, of his fellow-countrymen in this country. It is admitted on all sides that there are two sides to the Indian question and both the sides must be taken into consideration fully. While accepting that, it would not do to allow Indian sentiment and self-respect to be entirely crushed. The Government of India, unfortunately, have not been very much concerned about respecting Indian sentiment in India and they may quite likely feel it not of very great importance to do so in this country. But Sir Kurma we take to be a representative of the people as well as of the Government of India, and as such, we hope he will not forget the people's side. This is a time when no Indian leader with the slightest feeling of patriotism would like to leave his motherland; and it is no small sacrifice on the part of Sir Kurma to have accepted this exile in the interests of his comparatively few fellow-countrymen who have settled out here. We are profoundly thankful to him for this sacrifice on his part and we hope that his stay in this country will be a very pleasant one and that his unenviable task on behalf of our brethren will be crowned with success.

## FAREWELL!

IN two or three days' time Mr. Sastri will have left us. The thought will sadden the heart of every Indian in South Africa to whom he has been more than an Agent of the Government of India. He came as an ambassador of the people of India and well has he fulfilled his task. He has enlightened South Africa with the best of India. While he has done that with his great intellectual power and with the gifts that Nature has so lavishly endowed him with, he has himself been truly symbolical of the best of India. India need never to be ashamed of producing such an illustrious son. We respectfully differ from Mr. Sastri on some matters as there are in India too who differ from him in many of his views. His moderation and forbearance are at times, we think, far too stretched, but we know he is absolutely sincere. His heart is too soft to bear to see suffering on either side. He would wish to gain for us things without our having to suffer. We believe, however, that nothing can be achieved without suffering. Sufferance is the badge of the down-trodden Indian. He may not inflict suffering on others but he will himself have to be prepared to suffer unto death for right and justice. Nevertheless Mr. Sastri is a great man. The European press and the people of South Africa have almost unanimously hailed Mr. Sastri as being the greatest man in South Africa to-day. This is what the *Natal Advertiser* says: "It would be easy to lapse into eulogy over Mr. Sastri, though it would be difficult to praise him above his worth. Yet this remains true, that during his stay in the Union he is, without question, the greatest man in South Africa, the ablest orator, the shrewdest diplomat, and, withal, the most accomplished interpreter of one civilisation to another that we have ever had in our midst." Mr. Sastri also ranks among the greatest men of the British Empire. India has reason to be proud of him and hence every Indian is proud of him. Mr. Sastri's work in this country has been great. His mission was to prepare the ground for the Agent of the Government of India in this country. In working the Capetown Agreement he has had several hindrances and that has certainly arrested its progress to some extent. One hindrance was the condonation of illicit entrants which took a great deal of every and anxious thought on the part of Mr. Sastri to settle satisfactorily. The other hindrance was the Liquor Bill which was in complete violation of the spirit of the Capetown Agreement. This too took up a great deal of time and labour and anxiety to settle. Much satisfaction was felt among the Indians in this country as well as in India when Mr. Ross agreed to withdraw the objectionable clause 104 from the Bill. Everyone thought the matter had settled then and the energy of the Agent was directed to other activities. In so far as the uplift clause of the Agreement is concerned Mr. Sastri has accomplished much in the line of education, social service work, child welfare work and the housing question in and around Durban. In regard to education, social service and child welfare work there has been more self-help on the part of Indians inspired by Mr. Sastri than any exertion on the part of the authorities. The latter are rather amending the wrongs done in the past than taking any forward step. The housing question too, we venture to take it, is on the high way to a settlement. The report of the Housing Board is satisfactory and it only remains for the Town Council of Durban to

act up to it. These are all the things which Mr. Sastri will leave with a sense of satisfaction to his successor to see that they are finally settled. But it is regrettable that Mr. Sastri does not leave quite with an easy mind. Just on the eve of his departure two vital issues have arisen which, if not dealt with in a fair and just manner, will result in the destitution of several thousands of Indians born and settled in this country. We refer to clause 102 of the Liquor Act which has thrown out of employment nearly a hundred Indians in the Transvaal and to the position arising out of the Braamfontein judgment which will deprive over a thousand Indians in Transvaal of their present trading facilities. Mr. Sastri will thus be leaving these shores with a feeling that all is not quite well in South Africa. He has, however, done more than his duty and for that the community is greatly indebted to him.

Before concluding we may not forget the great sacrifice on the part of Mr. Sastri in allowing Mr. Sastri to remain with us for such a long period. Her sacrifice is as great in sending Mr. Sastri to us as is Mr. Sastri's in coming to us. Nay, it is even greater, for which the community owes a deep debt of gratitude to her. We sincerely hope, and in that we are sure we are expressing the sentiments of the Indian community throughout South Africa, that Mr. Sastri may reach his home safely and find his near and dear ones hail and happy and may God bless him with health and long life to still continue to shine before the world as the brightest star of India.

We would be failing in our duty were we to conclude this article without mentioning yet another friend who has endeared himself to us in South Africa and will be parting with us leaving us the sadder. We refer to Mr. P. Kodanda Rao who has been the private secretary of Mr. Sastri. He hails from the Servants of India Society of which he is a member. All those who have had the privilege of being in touch with him have been deeply touched by his simplicity and amiability. Mr. Rao has been a silent worker and so he has not had the honour to be rewarded for his services with applause. Nevertheless his services to the community have been great. He has been a guide to all the Congress workers who will miss his presence for a long time to come. The Natal Indian Congress did well in presenting Mr. Rao with an address in recognition of the very useful assistance he has rendered. We wish him too bon voyage and may God bless him with long life and health to continue his noble services for his fellow-countrymen.

## Arrival Of The New Agent Heartily Welcomed At The Wharf

Sir K. V. Reddi, the successor of the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, as Agent of the Government of India, landed at Durban last Wednesday morning and was welcomed at the wharf by the Mayor of Durban and other prominent Europeans, Mr. Sastri, Mr. Tyson and Mr. Kodanda Rao, the officials of the South African Indian and the Natal Indian Congress and a large number of prominent Indians including delegates from the three Provinces who came to attend the ninth session of the South African Indian Congress.

After being greeted with flowers on behalf of the Indian community Sir Kurma was taken to Mr. Sastri's residence at Currie Road where he spent a busy day receiving visitors who went to pay their respects to him and giving interviews to press representatives.

### Will Follow Mr. Sastri's Footsteps

Interviewed by our representative, Sir K. V. Reddi said he had had a very pleasant journey and enjoyed the trip immensely. He was entertained most cordially at almost all the ports at which the boat touched.

His Excellency the Resident of Zanzibar entertained him to dinner and took him round the town making his short stay very pleasant. He was also welcomed at Mombasa by the local Indian Association where in the evening he addressed a gathering on the League of Nations. At Daresalam Sir Reddi was received by a large gathering and was very pleased to pay a visit to the Indian School which was situated on a magnificent spot in the Port.

At Beira he was entertained to lunch by the firm of Messrs. Gordhandas Khetsy and to dinner by Messrs. Poochoomal Bros. At Lourenco Marques both the Goanese Institute and the Indian Association gave a very cordial reception to Sir Kurma and the Acting Consul General was very good to him and made his stay very comfortable and happy for which Sir Kurma felt exceedingly thankful.

Asked as regards his future work the new Agent said it was too soon even for an interview but that he might be expected to follow the very excellent work started by the retiring Agent the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri.

### Lunch At Mr. R. K. Naidoo

Sir K. V. Reddi and Mr. Sastri were entertained to lunch by Mr. R. K. Naidoo at his residence at Umgeni where there were present over fifty leading members of the Indian community and several Europeans interested in the Indian cause.

Mr. Sastri referred in appreciative terms to the generous hospitality of Mr. R. K. Naidoo and took the opportunity of bidding farewell to friends who had been closely in touch with him during his stay in this country.

Sir K. V. Reddi expressed his appreciation for the very pleasant function given in his honour immediately on his arrival and for the opportunity thus afforded him of making acquaintance with so many friends. He was pleased to see that there existed no communal or cast divisions in this country among the Indians and hoped that the time may come when Europeans and Indians will also live in this country in harmony as a nation belonging to one common soil and that there will be no divisions based on colour either.

### More Tributes To Mr. Sastri

#### 'Pretoria News'

The Pretoria News in its issue dated Jan. 11, has the following leading article:—

As the accredited representative of the Government of India the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri came to South Africa eighteen months ago a stranger, but with a high reputation won in his country's service at home and abroad. It is fitting to contrast his coming and his going. His reception was cool where indeed it was not hostile and suspicious. But these eighteen short months have been one continuous personal conquest. With his presence here, with all his gifts of character, diplomacy, speech, and culture, the barriers of prejudice which threatened to hamper his service melted rapidly away. He began, wisely, by understanding and accepting the South African point of view, which was the surest way of promoting understanding and acceptance of the

the most I can do for my friend is simply to be

Indian point of view. In this respect his service to India and South Africa has been equal. The public and official life of the country has been enriched by his presence, and South Africa will not soon forget him and the part he has played in composing one of the acutest of our domestic problems and placing it in a position which will keep it, we trust, out of the arena of party politics for many a long year to come.

One has only to glance back a few years in the history of the Indian question in the Union to recognise the transformation which has been wrought, in Indian opinion as well as in South African opinion. If this problem is far too complex and many-sided to allow of any completely logical solution being attained, there is good reason to hope that a *modus vivendi* has at least been reached which is practical and shows signs of permanency. The credit for this transformation, of course, does not belong entirely, or even mainly to Mr. Sastri. The Governments of India and South Africa have played their part; and the part which has been played by our own Nationalist ministers, in particular Dr. Malan, is one which is deserving of the highest acknowledgment. In face of the strong and unreasoning hostility of many of his own followers, Dr. Malan has not swerved one inch from the path of statesmanship rather than political advantage which he chose when he signed the agreement. But it is doubtful whether, but for the presence of Mr. Sastri and the great prestige which he has won among the men of his own race here and in India, the practical operation of this agreement would have been the success it has been up to the present moment.

Mr. Sastri, as he explained in his farewell speech at Pretoria last night, is now forsaking what unexpectedly he has found to be the primrose path of unaccustomed popularity in South Africa, and is deliberately launching himself on the sea of political troubles that is at this moment sweeping over his native land. The countless friends whom he has made during his short but memorable stay in our midst will wish him *bon voyage* and a long and happy continuance of his service for India and for the Commonwealth.

### Trading Rights In Transvaal

#### Legal Position Of Johannesburg Council

#### Col. Jackson Explains

A considered statement was made to the *Rand Daily Mail* last Friday by Colonel H. E. Jackson, chairman of the Public Health Committee of Johannesburg City Council—which committee is closely concerned with the granting of trading certificates to Indians, Asiatics and coloured persons—on the position which has arisen in Johannesburg over this matter. "Twelve months ago," he said, "I called the Licensing Committee's attention to the issuing of licences and certificates to coloured persons where restrictions, by law, upon occupation by such persons existed.

"Counsel's opinion was obtained, and it was to the effect that the City Council may, on proper evidence before them, refuse licences to coloured persons in cases where restrictions have been imposed by law on the occupation of property in respect of which the licence is applied for.

"The Licensing Committee held that the matter should be decided by the full General Purposes Committee, in order that a general policy might be

(into which the poor, and the first that take the law)

laid down for the guidance of members when considering applications for coloured persons to trade in the townships.

### Objections Notified

"As a result of this advice, the committee itself, in the absence of objections from the public, notified numerous applicants verbally, and thereafter in writing, that it objected to these applications under Section 6 (2) of the General Dealers' Control Ordinance of 1926.

"Subsequently, however, the committee decided that the interpretation of these restrictions fell within the functions of the Government in connection with the issuing of any licence authorised by a certificate granted by the Council. After hearing the case of Ah Song in respect of premises on Stand 5005, Braamfontein, the committee granted the licence. Following on this the objections lodged by the committee in other cases dropped.

"The attorney for the applicant in the above case (Mr. L. Japhet) challenged my right to sit on this case, on account of my public statements regarding the trading of Asiatics in prohibited properties; consequently I withdrew from the court."

Colonel Jackson then goes on to outline the laws affecting the question:

"In townships on proclaimed ground," he says, "the Gold Law operates and affects the rights of coloured persons. Law No. 15 of 1898, Section 133, provides that no coloured person could be a licence holder. This law was repealed by Law No. 35 of 1908—that is the present Gold Law. According to Section 120, no rights may be acquired under the Act by a coloured person except in locations.

### Position In Townships

"Under Section 62 of Act No. 34 of 1908 the Government may fix conditions for freehold title on Government townships which are necessary on proclaimed ground. One of these conditions is as follows:—

"The land having formerly been held as a right acquired under Law No. 15 of 1898, the owner shall not transfer or sub-let, or permit to be transferred or sub-let, any portion of the land to any coloured person; nor permit any coloured person other than his bona fide servant to reside thereon or in any other manner occupy the same."

"With regard to the township of Braamfontein, that has been made part of the township of Johannesburg by Act No. 34 of 1908, sec. 22. In the first schedule Braamfontein is included among the list of stand townships, so that section 3 of the Act applies the provisions of the Gold Laws to them. It is clear, therefore, that stands in Braamfontein contain restricted conditions against coloured residents or occupation."

Colonel Jackson remarks that the question is whether the City Council can take notice of the fact that residence or occupation is prohibited in a particular spot when an application is made for a certificate to trade under section 91 of the Local Government Ordinance. "The Council," he states, "may refuse to grant a licence to trade while it has power to licence. The Council is bound to confine itself to the ground specified in all cases where the licence may legally be granted.

### Council's Position

"The Local Authority," he continues, "cannot act upon its mere opinion in refusing a licence, but must base such refusal upon evidence, justifying the conclusion that the applicant, for one of the reasons mentioned, is unfit to have a certificate. But when it is disclosed to, or is under the knowledge of, the Council that it would be illegal to grant a licence, the Council is bound in my opinion to refuse it,

because it would not then be a trade which it has the power to licence.

Colonel Jackson then quotes the following passage from the speech of the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Agent-General for India, made at the banquet in the City Hall on January 6: "It was true in the long run everyone got what they deserved, and that before you ask that your rights should be respected and maintained, be sure that their rights stand in no danger from your mode of existence and your modes of life, and your continued presence among them is no menace to their standards, nor a danger to their civilisation."

Also referring to the question of trading licences, Mr. Sastri remarked on the unjust treatment meted out to Indians by "inferior local authorities."

"I wonder," comments Colonel Jackson, "if Mr. Sastri ever visited the Indian trading areas in the west end of President and Pritchard Streets, or in some of the suburbs where Indians are concentrated in trading—if he thought that European rights stand in any danger from the Indians' mode of existence and modes of life, and whether their continued presence among Europeans is a menace to our standard of civilisation and public health hygiene. It cannot be disputed that in all Asiatic trading areas in this town properties have depreciated considerably on account of the Asiatic mode of living.

## Kimberley's Farewell To Mr. Sastri

### European Function

Mr. Sastri was entertained at a civic luncheon at the Belgrave Hotel, Kimberley on Saturday Jan. 12. There was a large and representative gathering. Those at the main table were Mr. Sastri, the Mayor (Councillor H. Solomon), Sir David Harris, M.L.A., Mr. St. J. Cole-Bowen, R.M., Mr. F. Hirschhorn, Dr. A. G. W. Compton, Mr. W. B. Humphreys, M.P.C., the Rev. A. N. Taylor (Mayor's Chaplain) and Mr. P. Dawson (president of the Indian Political Association).

After the loyal toasts had been honoured, the Mayor proposed the toast of "Our Guest." He said that since Mr. Sastri's visit towards the end of 1926, when he was a member of the Indian Government deputation, they in Kimberley, in general with the rest of the population of South Africa, had had ample scope to learn to admire his great ability, and love for the work which he had undertaken as the diplomatic representative of that great country—India.

### Yeomen Service To Empire

They regretted that it was necessary for Mr. Sastri to return home on the eve of what they all hoped would be the completion of the great task which he set himself to perform in South Africa. He had laid the foundation for a better understanding, of mutual goodwill and fellowship, and if the policy inaugurated by Mr. Sastri were developed on the lines he had so clearly indicated, it could not but result in the betterment of the conditions of the lot of his countrymen to the mutual advantage of all in South Africa. They in this country desired development, and that development could only come by the mutual understanding and goodwill of all the parties to our young nationhood, irrespective of colour, creed or religion. In endeavouring to bring about such a state Mr. Sastri had done yeomen service not only to South Africa, but also to the British Empire as a whole.

Kimberley had always endeavoured to emulate the excellent examples set by their great patriot

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## **SIR KURMA V. REDDI, KT., B.A., B.L.**

The new Agent of the Government of India in the Union of South Africa, who succeeds the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C.

Mr. Cecil John Rhodes—in giving a fair and square deal to all sections of the community, without distinction to colour or creed, and the fruits of this policy were clearly shown by the contented fellow-ship which existed among all sections here.

"In this City," said the Mayor, "we are proud of our Indian community, for they are, and always law-abiding and good citizens." (Applause).

After sketching Mr. Sastri's career and eulogising his work, Mr. Solomon said their guest had been aptly described as "one of the strong pillars of the British Empire."

### "At Home" In Kimberley

Mr. Sastri who was received with prolonged applause, said he had felt quite at home among them, and if he might whisper to them, and beg them not to say it in other towns, he thought he was much more at home in Kimberley than anywhere else. One felt that here there was no discordant note of any kind.

They said that he had been the means of improving the relations between the Indians and the Europeans. There was no need for him to attempt that in Kimberley. On the day he first arrived in Kimberley, his countrymen had told him that there was no cause for him to labour here. He would indeed have many regrets in leaving Kimberley. But in other places, perhaps, take for instance, Port Elizabeth and East London, and even to some extent in Capetown, it could not be said that the traditions of Cecil Rhodes had been carried out, or that his maxim of "Equal laws for all men south of the Zambesi" was still an ideal.

### "Mischievous Motions"

Mr. Sastri proceeded to warn his hearers of the dangers of what he termed "mischievous motions in the body politic."

"Some fellow rather more fancied than others," he said, "perhaps because he has the gift of the gab, or a handle to his name, or some high position, gets up and starts one of those low, mischievous motions scarcely agreeable to the rest. Some people say the less we take notice of him the better. We let the thing pass. The man thinks he has a favourable atmosphere and he comes along repeating it until the worst straying minds in the country, especially young men in school and commerce, are anxious to take up anything new, and before many months go by we find that the man has a following. Then we wake up and ask who started this thing? Perhaps for the first two or three occasions we get up and denounce it. Next we find we have made a mistake and then we find that we have let time sweep past us. I have known a great many people find it is too late—the seed has been sown. I think you will find that in the political field. As an outsider I have no right to instruct you in your politics, but if you do not keep wide awake you will soon find that Cape politics are vacillating because of this racial virulence.

### Racialism Deplored

"For the sake of Cecil Rhodes," appealed Mr. Sastri, "for the sake of the good work he did and the good name of Kimberley, do not let this spread—kill it wherever you can. Do not let this thing grow. The Transvaal and the Free State have it in abundance—you have not. Instead of being carped by it, throw your sustaining influence on it, and get the less forward states to realise that in the Cape a higher political standard has been reached, and instead of going down to them, they are to struggle upward. (Applause.) That, it seems to me, is your duty towards this thing that lies below the surface, and may come up in virulence, for you may find that you have left it too long.

"I have found in Capetown there is growing up a feeling that perhaps Rhodes went too far, and that if

it were possible it were better to rid this country of what has been termed "the Indian problem." Now you know there is no 'getting rid of'; you know if it cannot be got rid of, it must be treated in the most comfortable way possible; it must be digested. If I have the right to speak about Indians, and I think you will agree that I have, you will not find my countrymen difficult to digest." (Applause).

Mr. Sastri mentioned that that night he was not to speak of his own country and its past. "This country has not any past worth mentioning," he said amid laughter. There were some things in his country which they had had for a very very long time, such as the caste system. There were such things as well as good things.

### The Woes Of India

It was very good of them, Mr. Sastri went on, to come and say good-bye. He and his colleagues were just as sorry to say good-bye. There was no doubt that the present was a time full of interest and trouble in India. He was not going to have a peaceful and happy time there. He wished that in the presence of so many sympathetic friends he could pour into their ears the tale of the woes of his country.

"But remember this," said Mr. Sastri earnestly, "that to you and us alike, there is no need to despair of the problem. Surely in India we have very much more difficult problems to think about. Do not let us be distracted by the Indians in South Africa."

Though the Indians in South Africa had no vote and were not likely to get it for a good many years to come, let them in India have the confidence that all would be well.

"If I may take that message back," Mr. Sastri concluded, "that there is no longer an Indian problem—then we shall not forget, but rather remember each other—and as you are finding yourselves more and more to be an intrinsic part of the British Empire, so on our side we shall soon settle down to be a happy, prosperous, and contented member of the British Commonwealth." (Loud applause).

Sir David Harris proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor, who beside the entertainment, he said, had given them the additional pleasure of listening to Mr. Sastri.

Mr. Sastri had been received at first with a percentage of frowns, and he was leaving having won the admiration of the Europeans and the gratitude of his country.

"His has been a great mission nobly achieved," declared Sir David.

A photograph was taken after the luncheon.

### The Alexandersfontein Function

The Indian Political Association subsequently gave a farewell function to Mr. Sastri at Alexandersfontein when a representative gathering of townspeople were entertained to afternoon tea and refreshments on the covered-in lawn in front of the hotel. Among those present were the Mayor (Dr. H. Solomon) and City Councillors, Sir David Harris, M.L.A., Mr. F. Hirschhorn, Mr. W. Pickering, Mr. Geo. M. Barrell, M.R.C. (Mayor of Barkly West), and representatives of the Indian, coloured and native communities.

Mr. Sastri's noble mission of peace and goodwill in South Africa was the note struck in all the speeches, delivered in turn by Messrs. Geo. M. Barrell, P. M. Dawson (chairman of the Indian Political Association), L. P. Joshua (chairman of the A.P.O.), and Sol. T. Platje (on behalf of the Bantu people). All shades of local opinion regretted the departure of the Agent-General to the Government of India, and trusted that when he returned to the land of his birth he would cherish happy memories



of his stay in the Union, and that he would long be spared to carry on his great work in the interests of his people, among whom he was beloved.

Mr. Sastri, acknowledging the good wishes of farewell, thanked all for their extreme cordiality, and referred to the friendly relations which existed between Kimberley Indians and the European section of the population. He said that his mission to South Africa could not be fulfilled in such a short space of time. It was a great and difficult task which successive Agents in this country would have to perform towards the people of India. His heart would be at perfect ease if he could be sure that he had done something which would make the task of his successor a little lighter.

"It is not to me that credit has been wholly due," said Mr. Sastri, "but to the way in which my work has been received by those in authority, whether it be the Government or the leading men of all parties. My work has brought me not only interest, but a good deal of pleasure. It is not with a sense of relief that I leave this country. On the contrary I go away a rather sad man. I have made so many warm friends in all communities, and I have been received with so much cordiality that ever since my departure was settled there has been a manifestation of regret. I am profoundly indebted to you all, and I go with the feeling that I am leaving behind a good many friends."

Other speeches followed, and after the formal votes of thanks had been passed, the happy proceedings terminated with cheers for Mr. Sastri and the Mayor, both of whom during the afternoon were galded.

The Indian Six Orchestra enlivened the function by a spirited programme of musical selections, thoroughly enjoyed by all the guests, as well as by those who were paying the usual Sunday visits to the grounds.

The catering was in the hands of Mr. J. Dengate, under whose direction the tables were laden with many things.

## A Farewell Apostrophe To Mr. Sastri

(BY VERA STENT)

Mr. Vere Stent, at one time editor of the *Pretoria News*, is well known to the Indian community. We have had very few fearless advocates of fairplay and justice for the Indian community like Mr. Stent in this country. His open letter to the late Mr. Gokhale will be well remembered by readers of this journal. Here is an interesting farewell letter to Mr. Sastri which we reproduce from the *Pretoria News*:—

Sastri! Friend of India, sworn of His Majesty's Privy Council, altruist, philosopher, pietist, mystic, and exponent of esoteric Buddhism, orator, and master of the English language, wizard of words, of the East easterly and of the West westerly, dweller upon the Olympic slopes of thought and, withal, very practical, modern, and immediate diplomat and politician—the time has come to say good-bye.

It is difficult to write an apostrophic farewell without hyperbole and avoiding the fulsome which no one could dislike more than yourself.

Reading your speeches, knowing you personally, I find myself wishing that we, in South Africa,

State our own rights and then make others try to

could boast of a House of Assembly, the members of which approached you if only to some small degree, in patriotism, altruism, and intellect. In all this Union, we have only one man approaching you in intellect and love of the country, another, who comes near in the honesty—even in politics—and a steadfast determination not to do wrong, even though good come of it, and one who imposes upon himself your ascetic regime.

We have no Sastri.

I have no desire to flatter you. You doubtless have your faults, like men of common clay, but we have had no opportunity, while you have been with us, to study them. Perhaps that, in itself, is a fault. Perhaps your great fault is pride in your faultlessness. However, not to-day should we go faultfinding.

We've come, Sir, to say good-bye, to wish you well, and pray that God go with you until Nirvana overtake you. While in the Union you have done a wonderful work. You have broken down, in an extraordinary way, so far as your own people go, the prejudice against all men of colour that does so much to hamper and narrow our national concept. When you arrived you would probably have been described, by at least half the people of the Union, as a "Coolie," which generic term they were accustomed to apply to all Indians. While in German East a South African Major talked to me of a "rechte stukse ou Coolie colonel." I once heard a man in a crowd inquire, concerning Sir Mohammed Habibullah, "Wie is daardie ou coolie. Wat maak hy daar?" At least one-half these benighted ones now realise, if perhaps a little dimly, that all Indians are not "coolies," and that India is an Empire, not only politically and geographically, but an Empire of culture and commerce, art and industry. A land of palaces and princes, of culture and refinement, of the highest civilisation, and, sometimes, the lowest, of three hundred million people, a self-contained entity, with exactly the same national and patriotic aspirations as any other British Dominion. Anxious to manage its own affairs, and believing itself well able to do so. Furthermore, there has come to many South Africans, vaguely but still irresistibly, the feeling that, after all, to quarrel with so vast a Power might not be the simple matter it at one time seemed. All this you have attained without a single word that was in the remotest degree likely to give offence even to the most touchy and irrational colourphobe. It has been a great accomplishment, upon which you are to be congratulated, not in the ordinary conventional manner, with limp handshake and mumbled, meaningless insincerities, but earnestly and honestly and with enthusiasm.

I—and many others—wish that you could have remained some time longer with us. You have been an example to our public men that could not have been without its effect and, the Lord knows, they need some such good example. You have been a shining light in literary circles, and you preached to us profitably in our cathedrals. Your exposition of the attitude of the Buddhists towards Christ shames the Christian that he should ever have ventured to point out, to the followers of the Lord Buddha, the error of their ways. You leave South Africa, also a little awed and ashamed, when it realises, for instance, that such an one as you would not, in the past, have been permitted to ride upon our trams or walk upon our footpaths.

Sastri! Friend of India and, let us hope, now, of this Dominion, go in peace. The light grows dim but you have lighted, and left behind you, in this South Africa of ours, "such a candle by God's grace as, I trust, shall never be put out."

Nation shall not live as a sword, "Nation" people shall live as a sword, "Nation"