

INDIAN OPINION

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ONE PENNY

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B. G. CONTINGENT

We welcome home our men who fought in the battlefronts of world war II and wish to express gratitude to the Almighty for sparing the lives of so many of them in a war of such horrible proportions.

We have heard quite a number of verbose speeches made by officials of the Government and by a number of responsible citizens with respect to the splendid performance of these our men abroad; but we have heard no concrete plans with respect to the future of these men.

All we have been hearing so far has been a kind of general statement that all would be done to help these men to get back into civilian life but knowing these naked statements of government to be carrying its usual hide and seek methods behind it and playing a delaying action game; we request that con-

Balance Sheet—Evening In India—Saturday 3rd Nov. 1945

INCOME			
Gate	\$ 307 63	.. Carpenter	5 50
Bar	226 24	.. Labourers (two men)	2 00
Games	55 00	.. For Coca-Cola	45 72
Raffles	50 00	.. For 3 Trinidad Centenary Magazine	6 00
Merry Go-Round	38 00	.. Mr. Amos Rangela	2 24
Ice Cream	45 36		<u>693 71</u>
Coca-Cola	67 02	Total Income	\$1072 06
Dips	22 84	Expenditure	<u>693 71</u>
Household Stall	7 04		378 35
Fancy Work Stall	27 46		
Cake Stall	49 00		
Sweets Stall	15 00		
Pepsi Cola	28 07		
Mrs. Ying Ice Cream	5 00		
Donation—W & R Ltd	15 00		
.. Litchman	2 50		
Restaurant	6 00		
Donation M. Harleen	2 70		
Refund from Town Hall	21 00		
Tickets	21 60		
From Fancy Work	2 00		
Value of Remnants	10 00		
Handkerchief Stall	26 60		
Collected from J. N. Singh	21 00		
	<u>\$1072 06</u>		

On behalf of my Committee and the Executive of the Association I wish here again to express the Association's profound appreciation for the voluntary service rendered the Committee by the many helpers to make the show Evening in India the success it has been.

SUGRIM SINGH

Chairman

(Fair Committee—Evening in India)

MANUFACTURE OF POTASSIUM CHLORATE

New Delhi, Nov. 29: Potassium chlorate, an important constituent of the dipping composition for safety matches, was being imported almost wholly into this country prior to the war. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research financed a scheme of research at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, to explore the possibilities of manufacturing this important chemical in India. As a result of the investigations, a process was developed which is now being employed on a commercial scale by the Mettur Chemical and Industrial Corporation. The process consists in passing chlorine through a slurry of lime to obtain Calcium Chlorate, from which in its turn potassium chlorate is obtained.

— Bureau.

crete plans be made to settle these men in some form of civilian life that measures up to the sacrifices that they have made.

Recent Constitutional Changes And Issues And The Question Of Self-Government For British Guiana.

By D. P. DEBIDIN

[Continued from last week]

I have maintained before and I still maintain that the majority of the inhabitants of the Colony wanted Universal Adult Suffrage. I have been in the forefront among a group of organisations including the B.G.E.I.A. who went into various important districts after the publication of the Franchise Report in order to sound out the people there on the issue and in every case these meetings (fairly mixed and representative) un-animously voted for Universal Adult Suffrage.

CHAIRMEN'S CONFERENCE

I have referred to the position of the Legislature and the value of their discussion. With respect to the Chairman's Conference, at an annual meeting of same held at Mahaica quite recently I was amazed when the Chairman Mr. T.T. Thompson (now a nominated unofficial member of the Court) told the meeting that by the constitution of the Chairmen's Conference it could not discuss anything political and ruled Mr. Jenaraine Singh, President of the British Guiana East Indian Association, out of order on this ground alone when he raised the question of Universal Adult Suffrage. I am amazed because I would like to know whether the Resolution upon which His Excellency seemed also to have relied was not *ultra vires*. Moreover I am informed that the delegates at the Bartica conference did not get a plebiscite from their villagers or a mandate from their councils. What was equally amazing was that after ruling Mr. Jenaraine Singh out of order the Chairman Mr. Thompson announced later in the afternoon that his committee had confirmed the last resolution (passed at Bartica) and supported the Franchise Bill.

I shall not deal with the merits of the case for Universal Adult Suffrage as I understand others have been asked to do so. But suffice it to say, that with the form of the Constitution as it is, giving all safeguard to the British Government, I fail to see why Universal Adult Suffrage could not have been ventured. Any possible

difficulties, and I fail to see any, would have been fully offset by the strong political incentive to the masses generally who have been accused in the Report for indifference. After all, the qualification to become a legislator was not wiped away and so there was no chance of the illiterate grass cutter coming forward to contest a seat. All that was asked was that the grass-cutters and others be given their human right of choosing—merely choosing their representative, a process which does not require academic education but human intelligence, which even the Grass-cutter should have if he is to rank a little higher than a beast.

THE FRANCHISE BILL

The last matter in my outline of the Constitutional changes and issues, to which I would refer is the Franchise Bill. Again the same legislature constituted as above sat to discuss a Bill of over 100 clauses. Again the question of the qualification of voters was discussed and as to be expected the fight so gallantly led by Messrs. Edun and Jacob was lost. They were perhaps inspired by the Labour Victory in England but their hopes were short lived to the staggering surprise of particularly Mr. Edun—a labour leader.

This bill which will now be law reminds me of a boat I made when a youngster out of an old discarded calabash which I half-filled with dust in order to plant my mast and a lot of fancy riggings. I launched it, and as it got half way across the trench a hussar "burst" and down went the calabash. I am afraid the people of Br. Guiana are abused and insulted at every turn wrongly. They are much better than they seem to a good many people—Law-abiding, good-natured, tolerant and so forth.

The Secretary of States for the Colonies has albeit "consoled" us with the hope that in five years when he hopes illiteracy will be liquidated, we may have Universal Adult Suffrage. On this I have three hopes—

(1) That 5 years do not extend to 8 by delay of General Elections.

(2) That Adult Education be made a Government responsibility and be forthwith introduced, and

(3) That the Secretary of State did not adopt his statement from the Resolution passed at a meeting held at the Town Hall a few months ago, to the same effect, and presided over by the Mayor, as that meeting was most unrepresentative, being of a hand-picked crowd, which was called for one purpose but resolved itself into the railroading of the particular resolution. I am still at a loss to know whether it was through the Town Council or through Mr. Thorne and his movement that the meeting was held.

RACE ISSUE RAISED

A race issue has been definitely raised by the Franchise Report (vide Paragraph 40), and this is very regrettable. Does it matter if one race or another preponderate in a constituency. I would appeal to my African friends everywhere not to let anyone dupe them or themselves to be duped by this issue in overlooking the broader issues of the common rights of man and our brothers here. We put our noses to spoil our faces, when we deny ourselves political progress on the ground of race. We are already left behind by Jamaica and Trinidad. We will fail to see Self-Government for a long time if we cannot agree on political issues. The slogan should as it has always been to elect the best man purely on merits and regardless of race. I do strongly feel that the time is ripe for the formation of a Race Relations Committee in this Colony when large issues like that of the Franchise can be taken care of for the ultimate benefit of our country and ourselves and when also, plans for welding the interest of the races together especially of the two largest groups—the Indians and Africans may be devised.

Editors Note

This article was intended for the Christmas Number of Indian Opinion; but was late for publication. We recommend it to our readers.

(To be continued next week)

General Provision

Merchandise

Boodhoo

Water Street, Georgetown.

Indian Languages In The Colonies

By the Rev. C. F. ANDREWS

(Continued from last week)

Natal is another area which I have often visited and here the most touching thing has been to see how the Tamil mothers seek, at all cost, to preserve the mother tongue in their own homes. Gujarati has its own place among the considerable number who had emigrated as traders from the west coast of India before the door was shut against all further emigration.

None from the west coast came out as indentured labourers. About one in four came from the United Provinces as compared with the much larger number who emigrated from the south of India. Yet, for the purpose of public meetings a simple Hindustani has been found serviceable in practice. When I have used this, as far as I was able to do so, the chairman has sometimes called for a double translation, first into Tamil and afterwards into Gujarati, but, not seldom, what I said has been allowed to pass untranslated, on the assumption that it was understood by practically all who were present.

In British Guiana and Trinidad, the basic language has been Hindi; for the vast proportion of settlers have come from the U.P. and are Hindus. There are very few from South India; therefore the question of finding a common language hardly arises. In the schools of Trinidad, the Hindi language has been far better taught than in British Guiana, where the mother tongue of the children has been terribly neglected. It has often seemed to me, from my own practical experience in the different colonies, that the one where new teachers sent from India were most needed was British Guiana. I would specially urge that some Indian women teachers should find their way out, whose mother tongue was Hindi. The best method of getting forward might be for one or two Indian educationists, who could train Indian girls to be teachers in their turn, to offer their services to the British Guiana Government for work in the Women's Training College at Georgetown. At present, the number of Indian women born in British Guiana who offer themselves to be trained as teachers is very small indeed. The teaching of Indian children is taken in hand by the women of other races and though I would not for a moment dis-

parage what is thus being done, often at a great sacrifice, there is obviously some quality peculiarly Indian which they cannot impart and therefore the peculiar Indian temperament is lost by the younger generation.

I shall not soon forget what a pang it gave me, when I visited one of the smaller islands of the West Indies and went inland to visit a group of people who had originally come from India. I found that they could not speak one word of their mother tongue and also had given up Indian dress and Indian ways.

It is my hope soon to go out to Mauritius, which is the one island to which Indians have gone that I have not yet visited. Though I have been asked to go many times, I have not yet been able to do so. I wonder what I shall find when I get there! The language problem, so I hear, is further complicated out there because the basic speech of the island is not English, but a form of Creole French, which many of the Indians have learnt as their mother tongue.

In East Africa, whenever I have been there, it has been quite easy to make myself understood by using simple Hindustani, even though the majority come from

INDIAN AUTHOR, JOURNALIST DESIRES CORRESPONDENTS IN BRITISH GUIANA

We have received a letter from Shri Bhartiya M. A. to the effect that he would like to correspond with Indians overseas. Mr. Bhartiya is author and journalist, is presently collecting material for a book on Indians overseas and in addition publishes a monthly "Duniya" which will gladly devote some space to news and articles relating to Indians overseas. We are publishing his address below for those who would like to correspond with him.

Shri Bhartiya M. A.
Antarvedi
10/8 Beli Road
Allahabad (India)

the west coast and speak Gujarati. Since there is still a considerable amount of journeying to and from the Arabian Sea—as there is also on the other side of India across the Bay of Bengal—there is no tendency at all to forget the mother tongue or to speak English in the homes. Thus, on the whole, both in East Africa and also in Malaya the language problem does not arise in so acute a form as it does in such a distant group of islands as the West Indies or Fiji.

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Raising Of Indian Workers Standards

Dr. AMBEDKAR'S SPEECH

New Delhi, Nov. 27.—Presiding in New Delhi today over the Seventh Labour Conference, which from now on will be called the Indian Labour Conference, the Hon. Dr. Ambedkar, Member for Labour, struck a balance-sheet of the State's obligations to Labour and urged legislation for raising Indian labour standards to the international level.

Taking stock of Government action on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour and the ratification of I. L. O. conventions, Dr. Ambedkar observed that there were actually only ten recommendations which were still outstanding whereas India had yet to ratify forty-nine out of the sixty-three Conventions. "But", the Labour Member pointed out, "this is due not so much to the unwillingness of the Government" but to "the rule which requires that a Convention must be adopted without change or modification." It should be possible", remarked the Labour Member, "for the I. L. O. to draft a Convention so as to provide for stages".

Dealing with the capacity to bear the burden of the cost involved in labour legislation, Dr. Ambedkar observed: "Labour may ask monied classes a very pertinent question saying, if you do not mind paying taxes to meet expenditure on war, why do you object to raising funds when their purpose is to raise labour standards?"

Speaking on the agenda of the Conference, the Labour Member emphasised that the reduction of working hours, minimum wage legislation, and the recognition of Trade Unions were necessary to ease the situation in the transition period from war to peace. Reduction of hours of employment would help the provision of employment for many. Absence of machinery for fixing minimum wages, combined with unemployment, was bound to cause labour standards to slump. Sound and responsible trade unions would help employers and workers to work together in the solution of their common problems.

"I do not propose", observed Dr. Ambedkar, "to go on a breakneck speed, but I am determined to see that the Labour Department does not linger on".

Proceeding, the Labour Member referred to the common plea that we should copy the British example, that it would be unfair to put the cost of labour legislation on

A Plea For Unity

By CHEDDI B. JAGAN B.Sc., D.D.S

Looking forward there seems to be hard times ahead for the working classes of British Guiana. Removal of subsidization of various commodities plus an increase in taxation will result in an increase in the burden already borne by the small wage earners. This fact, however is beclouded, by verbose statements from the Government officials, the yes-men in the Legislative Council, and certain of our so-called leaders and instead a propaganda of racial hatred and disunity is being spread.

In British Guiana the Africans and Indians are being taught to get at each other's throats. On examination the working classes will soon find that this spearhead is being directed against their ranks from on top by their reactionary leaders and that it doesn't start from within their own ranks. What racial hatred can the employee working for 7 cents an hour in a shirt factory or tobacco have for another eking out an existence on a sugar estate? By the way, how can the church and the news papers talk about a family week and the good things of a family organization when they do not point out the 7 cents per hour crime against the workers? Would it be too much to say that this intense racial propaganda saw its beginning with the reactionary legislative members who can

Indian industries which are at present in an infant stage and that it would be useless to enact laws which must remain a dead letter owing to the absence of the necessary administrative machinery. "Far from accepting them as good and valid reasons, labour is sure to regard them" he said. "as so many excuses". He stressed that the fact that the British took 100 years to have a proper code of labour legislation was no argument that we should also in India take 100 years.

Bureau.

[To be continued next week]

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forces that a united working class voting together for liberal candidates in the next elections would turn them out. It is their object to divide the working classes so that they can be returned on a small minority vote to warm the seats of the Council.

Workers should learn a lesson from the recent elections held in Canada. Many conservative members were returned to the Canadian parliament because the progressive forces were divided. The result was that in most districts the working class votes were split between two progressive candidates, thereby permitting the conservatives to win on a small minority. Let us be aware that racial propaganda spread in British Guiana does not achieve the same disastrous results in the next election. The workers should let the old men in the Legislative Council know that the Council is not a place to get together for a social evening.

We are all too familiar with this policy of divide and rule. We see it in India with the Moslems and Hindus, in Palestine with the Arabs and Jews.

(To be continued next week)

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