

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

**M**R. A. CHRISTOPHER, president of the South African Indian Congress and Mr. S. R. Naidoo, Jt. Secretary, who were members of the Congress deputation who recently made representations to the various Ministers with regard to the hardships of the Indian community, returned last Friday. Our representative had a conversation with the President who expressed satisfaction with the very sympathetic manner in which the deputation was given a hearing by the Ministers and was very hopeful about redress being given to Indians generally and in connection with the licensing and the Liquor Act questions in the Transvaal in particular.

Commenting on the position created by the Liquor Act the *Leader* (Allahabad) writes:—

"How we wish that after the agreement arrived at at Capetown we would not have to hear of measures of legislation of this kind which create further hardships for Indians who are already labouring under many disadvantages. It is not that the Indian employees have failed to give satisfaction to their white employers or the public. Mr. B. L. Smith, secretary of the Witwatersrand, Victuallers Association of Johannesburg, wrote to the Minister of Justice: 'My committee respectfully submits that the Union cannot supply suitable white men to fill the places of these Indians, and that such whites are not available. The Indians are capable, dutiful and sober men. They serve the public well, and my committee has no doubt that their exclusion will result in decreased efficiency to the disadvantage of the public.' The Indians' only crime is that they do not possess a white skin. It is to be earnestly hoped that the Union Parliament and other competent authorities will find their way to modify the Act so that Indians may not have any cause for grievance.

Sir Kurma Reddi, the Agent of the Government of India, will, on Sunday, attend in Johannesburg a meeting convened by the Department of Labour at which the question of the admission of Indians to the European liquor and catering trade of the Union will be discussed.

Thus the *Leader* (Allahabad):—Sir K. V. Reddi in the course of a speech on the League of Nations said: 'There in Geneva, India is treated as an equal partner with every other member of the League. Our representatives are at liberty to speak what they think fit and to vote as they please. They may run counter to British opinion and whenever our interests clash with Britain, we can act and vote even against that country.' We are not unmindful of the value of India's association with the League of Nations, but Sir K. V. Reddi must have noticed that there in Geneva while the delegation of every country was led by and entirely composed of its nationals, the delegation of which Sir K. V. Reddi was a member was led by a non-Indian.

The *Cape Times* interviewed a number of shop-owners regarding the Wage Board's determination

in connection with shop assistants, which came into force last Saturday, and the enquiries show that among many of the principal shopowners in Capetown it is felt that the position can only be remedied by the retrenchment of part of their staffs. A number of employes were informed that their services will be terminated at the end of March. There are a few employers who believe that ultimately a full complement of assistants will be engaged and the increased wages paid for by the general public through the increased prices.

Lord Lytton did well at the Conference of Educational Association, held at the University College, London, says the *Leader*, Allahabad, to dwell upon two features of Indian educational problems. He declared that comparatively little influence upon Indian social life was exerted by English educated Indians largely because of the poverty of Indian women's education. Unless the women of India were educated, there could be no hope of any rapid improvement in Indian social conditions that impeded the progress of the nation. He emphasised the fact that the influence of women in India was far greater than it is in this country—thereby, by implication, flatly contradicting Miss Mayo's allegations to the contrary.

The attention of those concerned is drawn to a notice appearing elsewhere in this issue calling a Sanatan Dharma Conference at the Depot Road Hindu Temple on Saturday, 9th March, 1929.

### AN - EYE-OPENER

"The "state" to be deplored is not the threatened loss of their licences, not even the wholesale statutory degradation the legislature has subjected them to, but their outlook upon, their demeanour towards the situation. Matters have reached the stage where they are because of this very stolidity, and almost one is tempted to say criminal indifference to the calls of duty. The lessons of the past were ignored, warnings disregarded. Cabals and personalities prevailed where cohesion, co-operation, the spirit of public duty and of at least some call to sacrifice should have obtained. 'Each for himself, and the devil for the hindermost' was, in practice, the motto adopted. And at this very twelfth hour when the knife is actually at the throat of the community is there to be observed any real change of heart? Other than the cry 'How can we save our licences?' is aught else heard? And if by some good, or one is tempted to think ill, fortune they are granted for another year will the people promptly sink back in their money-drunk stupor?"—L. W. RITCH.

**W**E quote the above from Mr. Ritch's article on "A Pitiable State" appearing in our last week's issue. The words are strong but nevertheless too true, and truth, is at times bitter to swallow. If we were allowed just to make our pile peacefully would we at all care for what our status would be in this country? If we were to ask our conscience this question, the reply in most cases would

be undoubtedly in the negative. And has not our action from the time of the departure of Mahatma Gandhi from this country proved that fact? We have grievances against the Government of this country, no doubt, we have also to face strong prejudice against us from the white people of South Africa with a few exceptions. We have much cause for complaint in this regard and it does indeed stand in our way of progress. But, at the same time, we should not overlook our own weaknesses. Are we not really clamouring for existence only and nothing more? Would those who speak against Mr. Sastri not have been satisfied, and would they not have hailed him had he but got us a free pardon for those of us who had entered this country illicitly and a free right to trade and the stoppage of repatriation so that we could have traded on our poorer brethren? The argument used by some about British citizenship, British justice and British fairplay is not used in the true spirit. It is used just in so far as it can enable us to gain our own ends. We cannot truthfully say that we have done our duty as hailing from a country known for its ancient civilisation to this country nor to our own people. Mr. Sastri had to come to South Africa to enlighten the people with the ancient civilisation and culture of India whose representatives we claim to be. And yet some of us even go a step further and scorn Mr. Sastri for not having satisfied our greed, thus only disfiguring the already sorry picture we have been able to present to this country of ourselves. Mr. Sastri, when he was here, had to exhort us to unite and speak with one voice. Sir Kurma is having to do the same. We should be above these trifling things. We have often discussed the question as to whether the time has not come for Indians in South Africa to fight for their self-respect, and the retort has been: 'have Indians the sense of self-respect or are they concerned about material gain only?' Well, if we have not the sense of self-respect, then truly we deserve the pin-pricks that we are subjected to to awaken us from our slumber. While justifiably complaining about our grievances let us not forget our own selves and our own faults and weaknesses. Let us save ourselves in time lest we should sink into the depths of degradation.

## Natal Indian Congress

### Annual General Meeting Postponed

We have been requested by the Hon. Secretaries of the Natal Indian Congress to announce that the Annual General Meeting of the Congress has been postponed *sine die*.

## To The Student World

Here is a piece of interesting news that Renter's Agency in India has not favoured us with but we read in the exchanges.

Nearly seven hundred students of the Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, have been on strike for over three weeks. The facts are briefly told by Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*:

The students absented themselves from College with the rest of the boys all over India on the Simon boycott day. The absence was no doubt unauthorised. The students were technically in the wrong. They should have at least asked for formal permission before they absented themselves. But boys are the same all the world over. One might as well hope to restrain the winds as hope to curb the roused enthusiasm of students. There was at best a youthful indiscretion. This was condoned by the Principal after a great deal of negotiation; the boys being permitted optionally to appear for their terminal examination on a fee of Rs. 3 each, it being understood that the majority would appear and that those who did not would not be in any way punished. The Principal, however, it is alleged, broke his pledge and put up notice making it compulsory for the boys to appear for the terminal examination upon payment of Rs. 3 each. This naturally incensed the boys. They felt, 'if the salt loseth its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' They therefore struck work. The rest is simple. The strike continues and friends and critics alike certify to the great self-restraint and correct conduct of the boys.

Expressing his own views about the students' action Mahatma Gandhi writes:

"In my opinion, students of a college are in duty bound to resist such breach of honour by their Principal as is alleged against the Principal of the Gujarat College. It is impossible to tender to a teacher that unreserved respect to which he is entitled by reason of his honourable calling when he is found to be guilty of breach of honour.

"If the students are resolved there can be but one end to the strike, *viz*, withdrawal of the offending notice and an absolute promise of immunity from any punishment to the students. Indeed the most proper thing would be for the Government to appoint another Principal for the College.

"There is in the Government Colleges too much of espionage and persecution of boys holding pronounced political views or taking any part in political gatherings not liked by the Government. It is high time that this unwarranted interference was stopped. In a country groaning as India is under foreign rule, it is impossible to prevent students from taking part in movements for national freedom. All that can be done is to regulate their enthusiasm so as not to interfere with their studies. They may not become partisans taking sides with warring parties. But they have a right to be left free to hold and actively to advocate what political opinion they choose. The function of educational institutions is to impart education to the

boys and girls who choose to join them and there-through to help to mould their character, never to interfere with their political or other non-moral activities outside the school room.

"The question therefore raised by the strike of the Ahmedabad students is of first rate importance and they deserve the sympathy and support of other scholastic institutions and the public in general. Parents are as much concerned with the strike as school-going boys and girls. For the Ahmedabad students have, I understand, acted throughout with the approval of their parents or guardians."

There was a movement on foot to observe January 30 as a Students' Day in support of the strike.

## Mahatma Gandhi Arrested

### Hearing Of Charge Postponed Till End Of March

Reuter reports as follows from Bombay dated March 5 :—

*The Times of India* states that Mr. Gandhi has been arrested at Calcutta.

Reuter's correspondent at Calcutta says that the arrest followed a disturbance at the conclusion of a monster meeting at which four European sergeants and some constables were injured.

According to the *Times of India*, Mr. Gandhi's arrest was expected at Calcutta after a bonfire had been made of foreign cloth in disobedience of a prohibitory order issued by the Commissioner of Police.

It appears that Mr. Gandhi, who was en route for a tour of Burma, addressed a meeting in Mirzapur Park, where stacks of British cloth had been prepared for a bonfire with the object of emphasising the resolution of Congress to boycott British cloth.

Mr. Gandhi advised his followers to disobey the official interdiction and make a bonfire. They thereupon applied flares to the clothing. The police rushed up to extinguish the flames, and a state of pandemonium ensued in which prickbats were freely hurled through the air.

Reinforcements of mounted police were summoned and restored order.

Mr. Gandhi, after first refusing to accept bail, was released on his recognisance, and the hearing of the charge against him was postponed until the end of March pending his return from Burma, whither he sailed to-day.

The Secretary of the Provincial Nationalist Congress Committee was arrested at the same time as Mr. Gandhi.

*Natal Advertiser* London correspondent in a message dated March 6th states:—According to the *Times*' Calcutta correspondent, Gandhi, after getting bail and promising to appear in court on March 26, left for Burma yesterday. He has given an undertaking against further public foreign cloth burnings until after the settlement of his case; but this does not mean the end of the boycott or the collection of foreign cloth for private burnings. Gandhi challenges the police action. Meanwhile the Indian Press devotes columns to further incitements to boycott all foreign goods.

## Mahatma Gandhi And Sastri

### "Greater Affinity Than Any Other Two Persons"

A Reuter's message from Ahmedabad dated Friday March 1, states :—

At a public meeting here the very cordial relations between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Srinivasa Sastri were reaffirmed with a passing reference to Mr. Sastri's attacks on Mr. Gandhi in the past, which Mr. Gandhi described as only occasional quarrels between two lovers.

Mr. Sastri arrived yesterday morning from Delhi on a short visit to Mr. Gandhi who presided at the meeting.

Mr. Gandhi said that although their political opinions were poles asunder, there was greater affinity between Mr. Sastri and himself than any other two persons. He laid claim for generosity on his part because Mr. Sastri had spoken harshly about him in the past.

Referring to Mr. Sastri's work in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi said it would be appreciated as time elapsed. He had received both good and evil reports, yet he could say that although Mr. Sastri had gone to South Africa as the Agent of the Government of India, he had acted as an ambassador for the people of India and brought Swaraj nearer by a few steps.

Mr. Sastri said while he was in South Africa, whenever he did anything he asked himself what Mr. Gandhi would have done. He had gone to South Africa to confirm the line fixed by Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Gandhi which had become blurred. When Mr. Gandhi was in South Africa a number of European men and women had gathered around him for spiritual growth, but after Mr. Gandhi's return the ardour of these friends cooled.

The speaker further said that small though he was he had tried to bring together a body of European sympathisers on whom the Indians could fall back in their difficulties, and in this connection he claimed to have achieved some success. ✓

## Transvaal Notes

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

### Patidar Society Annual Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Patidar Society was held on Sunday 24th Feb. in the Patidar Hall. The Hall was packed to its utmost capacity with hardly any room to move. Such was the enthusiasm and keenness evinced by the members of the Society. The proceedings of the meeting were conducted in an able manner by the presiding chairman Mr. Govindjee Premjee Patel who is a vice-president of the society and who has been acting chairman since Mr. Naran Ramjee Patel resigned because of his departure for India.

The meeting expressed satisfaction to the work of the South African Indian Congress and also appreciated the noble and self-sacrificing services of the Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri P.C. the outgoing Agent-General of the Government of India. The meeting felt that South Africa was the poorer because of his return, a true son of India who cared for the scattered children of India in the remote parts of the world.

The annual and financial reports were unanimously passed and the former one mentioned the various activities of the society during the past year. It spoke of its loyal support to the Transvaal Indian Congress in the past and in the future it promised to give much more support to the work of the Congress in this Province. It called upon its members to share the responsibility of

public duty involved upon every member as a unit of the Indian community in South Africa.

### Elections

Considerable enthusiasm prevailed in the election of a president and Mr. Kaloo Bhai Fakira Patel was unanimously elected to that office.

The following gentlemen were elected Vice-Presidents: Messrs. G. P. Patel, C. B. Desai, D. N. Patel, M. M. Patel, and V. Kalanjee; Jt. hon. Secretaries Messrs. B. K. Patel and L. G. Patel; Asst. hon. Secty., Mr. Bhoobhai P. Patel; Hon. Treasurers, Messrs. R. V. Patel, and Ramabhai P. Patel; Auditors Messrs. P. H. Patel and Dayabhai Patel. A committee of twenty-seven was elected.

A resolution was passed thanking the retiring officials for the services rendered during the term of their office.

The Patidar Society are to be congratulated in their selection of officials and more particularly in securing the services of Mr. B. K. Patel as one of the honorary secretaries. This gentleman has always evinced great public spirit. His office and home have always been at the disposal of the Transvaal Indian Congress. His hospitality is well known and I am sure his appointment will give the stimulating impetus to the Patidar Society which will enable it to be a power for good works in more ways than one for the good of the deserving sections of the Indian community domiciled in the Transvaal.

### Anavil Mandal Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Anavil Brahmins was held at Benoni on Sunday last at 10 a.m. Brahmins from far and near were present to take part in the annual meeting, and also to bid "Au Revoir" to their Patron Mr. Ranchodjee Gopaljee and his wife who were taking their first holiday trip to India after 16 years residence in the Transvaal, and to bid good-bye also to their president Mr. K. Lalbhai who was leaving by the same boat as the patron.

The annual report and financial statement were both passed. The report mentioned of the presentation made to the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri during his term here and also of the active part its members took in the public work of the Indian community.

The result of the election was as follows:—President Mr. P. K. Desai, Hon' Secretary Mr. M. D. Desai (re-elected), Hon. Treasurer Mr. Vallabhai D. Desai (re-elected.)

The outgoing patron and president made a contribution of £2—2 and £3—3 respectively to the Society's funds.

Mr. M. D. Desai who was re-elected as hon. secretary was very popular. His untiring efforts on behalf of the Brahmin Society were greatly appreciated and the members felt that he did everything possible to give the Society as much publicity as he could. Mr. M. D. Desai is a great worker and if it is well with him or not he will be found at all meetings of the South African Indian Congress no matter where it was held.

### Return Of The Deputation

Messrs. A. Christopher (President S. A. I. C.), S. R. Naidoo and E. Mall (Secretaries), M. D. Bharoochi and E. I. Ashabhai returned back to Johannesburg after the interview with the Ministers at Capetown. They speak of the sympathy and courtesy the Ministers showed them and of the very patient hearing with which their grievances were heard. The Ministers made no promises in view of the general election which will take place very soon.

The licensing question has not been settled yet and the information the local papers published was to the effect that each Municipal Committee will be allowed freedom to act, always keeping in mind the legal aspect of the position, without considering race or creed.

### Overseas Visit By Mr. Ramnath Bambata

The great little Indian golfer R. R. Bambata who is

attached to the Durban Turf Club will be going to England at the end of this month to take part in the Empire Golf Championship. The movement to send him was set afoot by European admirers of his who know his full value as a golfer. Their action is a very laudable one and which was actuated by motives of a true sporting kind. I am told that they have raised a sum of £140, but I regret that the Indian community has not sufficient pride to pay the whole amount. There are many monied men in our community and Durban has the bulk of them and yet appeals have been made to other centres to help. One rich Indian in Durban could put up the whole amount and forget that he has done it.

Apart from that I trust the sportsmen of Natal will give this great golfer a rousing send-off and I am sure he will maintain the dignity and prestige of the Indian community.

A meeting has been convened by the Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney for Thursday, March 7th at 5-15 p.m. in Mr. Mustapha Hassim's office to see what Johannesburg Indians would be able to do. He has also seen the Sporting Editor of the *Star* and it is also hoped that a number of Europeans will help.

## Europeans' Farewell To Mr. Sastri

### Mr. Sastri's Speech At The Carlton Hotel

Although belated we publish the following report of the reply by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., late Agent-General for the Government of India in South Africa, to the toast of "India and Mr. Sastri," at a farewell banquet given by the European community in honour of Mr. Sastri at the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, on Tuesday evening, January 8, 1929, which we have no doubt will be read with interest by our readers:—

Mr. Sastri said:

"Mr. chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—This representative and distinguished gathering has received the toast of India, coupled with my name, with much warmth and cordiality. My gratitude is most profound and sincere. We have listened to a very interesting speech. It embodied what I did not expect—a most grateful and luminous summary of the growth of the Indian constitution. It is in itself a field which might tempt me to keep you long here. But there are one or two observations that I would like to make in the proper context upon the growth of our constitution. The speech did much more. It spared me the trouble of explaining to you the Capetown Agreement. As you will know, I am the creature of that Agreement. I have been here for the purpose of seeing that on the part of the Government of India and of the people of India here, the Agreement was observed both in the letter and in the spirit. I hope it will be allowed that I have endeavoured to be true to this trust. The Agreement has many things unique. Some of them were mentioned by Mr. Webber. I have often wondered what would have happened if, instead of the two Governments coming to a round table sitting, the usual course had been adopted of the British Government sending its representatives to preside over and guide the deliberations. It is not too much to say that the sensitiveness in political matters of the people of this country would perhaps have contributed to the failure of the usual negotiations.

"That we met together directly without the intervention of a third party was perhaps a fundamental reason why we came to understand each other. That understanding, I do hope and pray, will be consolidated in the future, and we shall never hear again

of the Indian problem vexing the minds of the South African politicians.

"I have a hope on the eve of my going home that during the coming elections in this country no front-rank politician will seek to obtain votes from their constituency by playing upon their anti-Indian feelings. (Hear, hear.) It will be idle to think that everyone who stands as a candidate will forbear to tread the usual path, and that the politicians will not do themselves full justice when they are seeking the votes of their constituency. But there are signs which lead us to think that upon this occasion from the front ranks of the three parties no word will be spoken which will bring the Indian Agreement within the sphere of party controversy. That, it seems to me, would be a very considerable gain upon which India and South Africa may congratulate themselves. The Capetown Agreement, becoming the basis of the relationship between the two countries, which it will be the desire of all the parties to maintain and improve, we may look forward to the Indian population in South Africa settling down without fear of agitation or disturbance to the work (to which I daresay you will invite them) of developing this country to its greatest advantage, of evolving herein South African citizenship which is a reflection of the citizenship of the British Empire, which will confer both honour and glory upon them.

"To that test I do hope all the sections of this great country will settle themselves. There are, however, some hindrances to this consummation and it will not do for us to lose sight of things in the flush of this new-born hope. We all realise that throughout the Union there is a first requirement laid on the Indian community of giving a guarantee by word and by deed that nothing will be done to disturb the political supremacy here of the white people. That promise was made a long time ago on behalf of the Indian community by a leader whose name we have never allowed to be forgotten or laid aside—Mr. Gandhi. (Applause). Since his time, this pledge not to disturb the political domination of the Europeans has been repeated several times, both by the Government and by the people of India. At several Imperial conferences we have renewed this protestation, and I ask for the twentieth time that our good faith should not be questioned in this matter and that no politicians in this country should seek any advantage by declaring lightly and recklessly that there is real danger of the Indians seeking to dispute political authority in South Africa. I would ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to put that thought altogether out of your minds. If I had time I would prove to you, by the long course of Indian history as far back as we could trace it, that while, in the palmy days of Indian civilisation we went far beyond Indian frontiers, as far as Java and other places, we never established ourselves as a political body looking for supremacy. We never had that sort of ambition. Neither in ancient or modern times could the Indian people be accused of trying to acquire territories or establish supremacy.

"To suppose that in South Africa a handful of our people—most of them small traders and men hawking fruit in the streets—should ever seek to impose themselves as political overlords is a statement which may be expected of politicians hungry for votes that they cannot get by legitimate means, but it is a proposition that will hardly receive credence at the hands of students of political affairs.

"In parts of the Transvaal there is a long-worked tradition that coloured people shall not be allowed equality in Church or State. I can assure you that as regards the pledges of which I have spoken it would never be the ambition of the leading Indians

to ask, in the usual or unusual constitutional ways, for anything like political equality. We do not seek it. We ask that while you establish sufficient guarantees to keep us in the second place or in the third place, may be, but not a place that will call into any peril your political domination, and that, after having taken sufficient safeguards concerning the paramount objection, you should do nothing whatever to deny suitable opportunities for the development of our people or inflict on them any stigma of inferiority incompatible with their natural pride. Do not do anything that will lead us to think that you are betraying the trust imposed on you as inheritors of British honour and prestige. In your effort to maintain your traditions do not go beyond your pride or conscience of power and put upon us any affront that people as proud as yourselves must resent. (Applause).

"This is not the occasion upon which it would behove me to make a catalogue of Indian grievances, but I would make a few general observations and deprive them of any offence or insolence. This is to show you that we still have a great many legitimate causes of complaint. Mr. Webber (the chairman) has referred to our services in the Great War. I had no wish to refer to that subject, but there is just one observation you made, Mr. Chairman, that asks for a little enlargement. It was stated that in consequence of our services during the Great War the constitution of India advanced in the year 1919, almost within a decade of a previous statement that had been made by Lord Morley concerning our constitutional position. It was our services during the War that hastened that great step which we called our first step in India towards the establishment of responsible government. At that time it was repeatedly brought home to people all over the British Empire what great services Indians had done. We, for our part, gloried in the scope given for participation in and the maintenance of this world-Empire, and we swore repeatedly that if ever a similar demand was made upon us we should not be found wanting or behind any other dominion that may be supposed to be more intimately connected with Great Britain by ties of blood, race or sentiment. If you search through contemporary records you can find marvellous declarations of our pride in the British Commonwealth. At that time our hearts were full of the hope that in no long time India would be called on to take her place side by side with the Dominions in the most exalted councils of the Empire. That process may be delayed a little or hastened a little, but that process is surely coming. But what is of somewhat melancholy interest at the moment, and throws an unpleasing light on the remarks made by Mr. Webber, is that as I speak here there is in progress in India a movement of somewhat strong and vigorous protest against the way in which the Simon Commission was appointed... I am full of hope that this condition will soon pass away and that we shall soon come back to complete faith and loyalty to the British aim.

Let us take a few of the causes that have contributed to the present unfortunate juncture. I will put a few of the things that have led to unpleasing remarks on our part. The dominions who played a part in the War no larger or more helpful than we did acquired a mandated territory apiece. What came to India? What did India get; India whose contribution to the War was scarcely less but more conspicuous! So far from getting any added territory the old pre-war restrictions upon her people settled abroad were stiffened. Even the small openings that had hitherto been in her possession for migration outside were more and more restricted.

It is not the ambition of the leading Indians to ask for anything like political equality.

A nation cannot endure half free and half slave.

The people who had been acclaimed as loyal bulwarks of the Empire, as Britishers and comrades and called by other sweet names, they, in a few years have, in these countries, now come to be called 'coolies' and 'undesirables' and even 'aliens.' Desires have been expressed that they should be sent back to the places from which they came. But the people of India, who know their history as well as you do, cannot be blamed if they say, as a result of all this, that they are welcome in foul weather for the help that they can give, but Indians of the Empire are despised and abandoned in fair weather. To that charge it is difficult even for ingenious defenders of British honesty to give an appropriate answer. I would ask everyone of you to believe, and spread the belief, that among the contributory causes to the present state of things is the treatment of the Indians when they are settled abroad in this Empire itself. I would say, therefore, that every right—always excepting that equality which we do not seek—withheld arbitrarily, every restriction upon their education, their occupations, and every licence unlawfully and improperly withheld, has its serious consequence upon the minds and hearts of millions of people in India who watch these things with a sensitiveness that has been sharpened by an extraordinary discrepancy between what they get and what they deserve. It is your duty both individually and collectively, to put an end to that by a firm persistence in the extension of the honour of British institutions and the justice and fairplay that the British flag carries with it; to see that these principles extend to the relations that obtain between Indians and Europeans. Is that too much to ask of people who are proud of their Commonwealth? It seems to me that that is not asking too much of you, and in taking leave of you this is my earnest appeal to you all—that you will co-operate with the Indian community in their lawful endeavour for that limit due to them, to obtain a position that is compatible with their honour and your honour and compatible with the position of dominion which India is assured in the long run to obtain.

"It has always struck me that in South Africa, as in other countries, there is a surprising amount of sympathy with the under-dog and a readiness to champion those who suffer injustice. You meet that phenomenon in England, certainly. There never was a time in the history of England, even in the days of the worst tyranny and despotism, when there were not large numbers of people who, by character and ability and courage, could be trusted to speak the brave word and strike the brave blow in defence of the oppressed against the wrong-doer, however exalted the wrong-doer might be. That is the standing glory of British institutions.

"A wanderer among the Dominions, I can say this: That I have not failed to see either in Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, a far closer people who reproduce this great virtue, which, I may mention in passing, is to be found among the great Imperial races of the world. Conscious of their great power; they are lion-like-willing to overlook the small shortcomings. Little pin-pricks they don't mind; annoyances they are willing to forget, and whenever they see among them any one individual or any community treated with undue severity, they have been prepared in great numbers to incur popular odium, to brave the displeasure of their own kinsmen, in standing by the brave and helping them to obtain redress.

"Before I came to this country, when I contemplated with a sad heart by study on paper, the misery and woes of my countrymen here, I used to think that perhaps the soil of South Africa was uncongenial to the existence of such heroes among men who were willing to strike a blow in defence of the poor and lowly. I have discovered since coming here that I was utterly and hopelessly wrong, and

that in this respect South Africa is just like other nations. I have heard numbers of people come to me and say: 'I feel for your countrymen; I think they are badly used.' Well I have drawn comfort every time I have addressed a public meeting or spoken among my countrymen. I have always had the comfort of ladies and gentlemen who said their hearts were not in this wretched business, and that if they had their way they would put an end to it. What a wonder in an atmosphere that without this redeeming feature you get bad laws, bad administration of those laws—you get fresh proposals of bad laws, and you get threats of expulsion. What is the true explanation of this? To be true, I have not seen in my experience of 19 months in this country many people who say 'your people are wretched; we shall never be happy in this country so long as they are here. Take them back.' No one has told me that. They will not say that because they are out for right and are unwilling to hurt my susceptibilities. People of that character are not always careful of the susceptibilities of the poor Agent of a Coolie Government. (Laughter.) The fact is that I am extremely anxious that those among you who are noble-hearted, generous-minded, and wishful that justice and fairplay should be a portion of all who dwell among us—that you will mobilise your good intentions on behalf of the Indian community when they are oppressed. You are scattered at present here and there. You think that your voices will be the voices in the wilderness and that you may suffer social odium and other penalties if you raise your voices in protest.

"With all my heart I believe that you are mistaken. I do not believe you could do such a political wrong as to refuse to lend a sympathetic ear where the earnest voice of protest is heard. All depends on what you say. If a politician, anxious to get more votes than his rival candidate, might be a wise man and say the wrong thing. But I know of nothing so noble in the conduct of a politician or a statesman, I know of nothing so really heartening and enabling as when a man stands up and fearlessly speaks the truth and loses his chance in the election. Are there no such people in this country who will contest a constituency just for the fun of telling the voters that they are to be just and do the right thing. Four such speeches made in the course of a year would change the face of public opinion.

"I have heard it said that there is nothing in our nature, no part of our being, not even the smallest thought, that has not been put into us by Providence for some purpose. Thoughts, even if you do not express them, will not go in vain; they have their consequences, their influences. Great philanthropists and teachers have told us that whenever we have good and generous thoughts we should lose no time in expressing them. A great thought is a great power; it moves mountains and alters the destiny of whole nations.

"If God gave you a feeling of sympathy for the down-trodden, you are betraying God's trust if you do not straightway give expression to the idea and get it out in the light; if you do not do something to redress wrong or incur some sacrifice, however small, to put matters right. If you let the Indian community be unjustly traduced and ill-treated, if you allow the natives in this country to be despised and confined to the tasks of hewers of wood and drawers of water, then depend on it the politicians will not save you from the responsibility. While you all cannot take a hand in politics, yet you cannot thrust the blame for bad political doings on those who are actively engaged in them if you stand aloof. By standing aloof, by not taking an interest in passing events, you merely make the work of the mischief maker easy. When a wrong is there everyone who sees it but does not rectify it is to blame even as much as its direct author. That is a lesson,

I have been taught and which I would, in feeble yet earnest words, convey to you.

"Some of you may be in sympathy with a policy of repression and unfair treatment. To them I have nothing to say, but only pray that wisdom and better light will one day dawn on them. To those among you who have the right notion, who can discriminate between right and wrong, I would say that your duty is to come together, associate yourselves as defenders of the oppressed community, and join the Indo-European Council that has been formed here. Do one thing or do another as it may seem fit to you, but do not squander noble instincts.

"I make this appeal not merely because I am an Indian defending Indians, but because I am a lover of noble institutions such as our Empire under the British Constitution. To me this British Constitution is valuable because of the urge which it carries, the ideals of justice and fairplay, and the love of free development. I do hope that this feeling of a righteous heart and a goodwill spirit is shared by all of you and that each will consider himself or herself a vehicle for and the custodian of that generosity and high-mindedness associated with citizens in the great Commonwealth. Let nothing prevail to subtract from the beauties obtaining in that character and let nothing contribute towards the undoing of the work for humanity which British institutions all over the world are at present performing." (Applause).—*By courtesy of the Indo-European Council (Johannesburg).*

## The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[ BY M. K. GANDHI ]

Part V. Chapter VI.

WOOLING

On arrival in Poona, we found ourselves, after the performance of the *shradha* ceremonies, discussing the future of the "Society" and the question as to whether I should join it or not. This question of membership proved a very delicate matter for me to handle. Whilst Gokhale was there, I did not have to seek admission as a member. I had simply to obey his wish, a position I loved to be in, launching on the stormy sea of Indian public life, I was in need of a sure pilot. I had had one in Gokhale and had felt secure in his keeping. Now that he was gone, I was thrown on my own resources, and I felt that it was my duty to seek admission. That, I thought, would please Gokhale's spirit. So without hesitation and with firmness I began the wooing.

Most of the members of the Society were in Poona at this juncture. I set about pleading with them and tried to dispel their fears about me. But I saw that they were divided. One section favoured my admission, the other was strongly against it. I knew that neither yielded to the other in its affection for me, but possibly their loyalty to the Society was greater, at any rate, not less than their love for me.

All our discussions were therefore free from bitterness and strictly confined to matters of principle. The section that was opposed to me held that they and I were as the poles asunder in various vital matters, and they felt that my membership was likely to imperil the very objects for which the Society was founded. This naturally was more than they could bear.

We dispersed after prolonged discussions, the final decision being postponed to a later date.

I was considerably agitated as I returned home. Was it right for me to be admitted by a majority vote? Would it be consonant with my loyalty to Gokhale? I saw it clearly that when there was such a sharp division amongst the members of the Society over admitting me, by far the best course for me was to withdraw my application for admission and save those opposed to me from a delicate situation. Therein I thought lay my loyalty to the Society and to Gokhale. The decision came to me in a flash and immediately I wrote to Mr. Shastri asking him not to have the adjourned meeting at all. Those who had opposed my application fully appreciated the decision. It saved them from an awkward position and bound us in closer bonds of friendship. The withdrawal of my application made me truly a member of the Society.

Experience now tells me that it was well that I did not formally become a member and that the opposition of those who had been against me was justified. Experience has shown too that our views on matters of principle were widely divergent. But the recognition of the differences has meant no estrangement or bitterness between us. We have remained as brothers and the Society's Poona home has always been for me a place of pilgrimage.

It is true that I did not officially become a member of the Society, but I have ever been a member in spirit. Spiritual relationship is far more precious than the physical. Physical relationship divorced from the spiritual is like body without soul.

The longer I live, the more I am certain that the great difference between men—between the feeble and the powerful—the great and the insignificant—is energy, invincible determination—a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory.—Buxton.

## Sanatan Dharma Conference

A Religious Conference will be opened by Pandit Ramgovind Trivedi, Vedanta Shastri (who has recently arrived from India) at the Durban Hindu Temple, Depot Road, on Saturday the 9th March 1929 at 2 p.m. The session of the Conference will commence on Sunday the 10th March 1929 at 2 p.m.

All followers of Sanatan Dharma are kindly requested to attend,

R. RAJCOOMAR,  
Chairman.

K. M. MAHARAJ,  
Hon. Secretary.

S. RAMTAHAL KANHIE,  
Treasurer.

Reception Committee.

गन्ना का खेत में ६ मास अगर ज्यादा मुदत के लिये काम करने वाले १२ हिंदी कामदार की जरूर है. बालबच्चे साथ अगर एकीले.

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Head Office : P. 338 Russa Road South, Po. Tollygunge, CALCUTTA, India.

Telegraphic Address : "ALLINDLAC, Calcutta."

All remittances and share applications will have to be sent to the Managing Director at the Head Office of the Company. No application for less than FIVE SHARES will be entertained.

## જરૂર વાંચો!

વલ્લા ભાઈઓ ફરીયાદ કરે છે કે આફ્રિકા એવો ખરાબ સુલક છે કે ત્યાં શોખીનો અને અધ્યાત્મ તખીયતવાળાઓ માટે નથી સરા થીએટર કે નથી થતા સારા ગવર્ધ્યાઓના જલસાં તો પછી આખા દહાકાન કંટાળેલા હીલને રાહત આપવા સંગીત ગજલો કવાલી વિગેરેની મનહ કેવી રીતે મળી શકે. તેઓને એટલું જ કહીશું કે હજારો રૂપીયાના ખર્ચે જે સારામાં સારા ગવર્ધ્યાઓની ગજલો સાંભળવી મયસ્સર ના થઈ શકે તે ફક્ત થોડાકજ પછસામાં તમારા ઘરમાં ગાઈ શકે છે તે તેઓની જ પનાવેલી



ખુશ ખબર!

આમેકોન રેકોર્ડ

ખુશ ખબર!!

અમારી પાસે ડીસેમ્બર સુધીના રેકોર્ડ આવી ગયા છે અને સ્કીમર અમજુખીમાં જાનેવાસીના રેકોર્ડ સાથે મોટો લોટ આવતી વીકમાં આવી પહોંચશે.

અમે એટલું તો ખાતરીથી કહીશું કે આ નવી રેકોર્ડો એવી છે કે એક વખત સાંભળ્યા પછી તે ભુલાશે નહીં.

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There ought to be a general recognition of the fundamental fitness of self government for all peoples. It is wrong for any state to be imposed upon by the hands of other nations.

machines. All countries should walk on their own feet. In short, no argument ever adduced against autonomy or self rule for any state has any scientific value.