

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

THE attention of all those concerned is drawn to a copy of a letter addressed to the South African Indian Congress by Mr. Venn, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, appearing elsewhere in this issue. The letter makes it clear that no person will be allowed to bring his wife from India without being in possession of the D.I. 91 certificate. The Commissioner is prepared to issue, in case of men proceeding to India for the purpose of getting married, the D.I. 91 form without the name of the wife being furnished so that they may obtain the D.I. 91 certificate immediately after marriage. A warning is also issued in the letter to those whose children arrive in the Union without the D.I. 91 certificate that such children, no matter what age they are, should not leave India without obtaining D.I. 91 form for if they do they will not be admitted until enquiries in India have established their identities.

Inquiries have been made at this office as to whether persons who are to return to the Union before the 5th July 1930 are required to bring their wives and minor children as well. The relative portion of the section referring to the question reads as follows:—

"A person shall be deemed for the purposes of this Act to have lost his domicile within the Union if he absents himself from the Union and does not re-enter the Union within three years from the date of departure therefrom or from the commencement of the Immigration and Indian Relief (Further Provision) Act, 1927, whichever may be the later."

As long as a person has not himself lost his domicile by not meeting the requirements of the above section his wife and minor children can come in the Union under his own right at any time under subsection (g) of section 5 of the Principal Act. The above was confirmed by Mr. Teague, the Principal Immigration Officer at Durban in an interview our representative had with him.

General regret will be felt that since his return from Johannesburg last week Sir Kurma has been indisposed and confined to his bed. We are informed from the Agent's office that there is no foundation in the report that Sir Kurma intends leaving for India. He intends after his recovery to go for a change but as to where he will go is not yet decided. In wishing Sir Kurma a speedy recovery we have no doubt we are voicing the sentiments of the whole community.

The dispute of the Pretoria Indian Market Association with the Town Council regarding the disposal of produce bought in the auction shed, reported in our last week's issue, it is understood, has now been settled by a letter from the Association to Sir Kurma who acted as mediator, in which the former expressed willingness to accept his advice, and see that no retail sales are carried on in the central shed. The Association presumed that Europeans also would not be permitted to conduct retail sales in the market.

The following message dated at Bangalore has been received by the Hon. Secretaries of the South African Indian Congress from Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, private Secretary to Mr. Sastri:—

"I have been desired by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri to convey to you his grateful thanks for the very generous message of congratulations and good wishes which you were so kind to send him on his 61st birthday."

"Mahatma Gandhi having persisted in his refusal to accept the presidentship of the next session of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel who received the next largest number of votes from the Provincial Committees having likewise declined the responsibility, and new nominations not being permissible according to Congress rules, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was elected at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Lucknow to the office" writes the *Indian Social Reformer*. It "was a case of more or less Hobson's choice with the Committee. The result has been received with enthusiasm by few and with frank misgivings by some organs of public opinion. Pandit Jawaharlal's own position is not an easy one. To the country at large he stands for independence of the British connection, but he is himself in the position of a captive balloon held down on the one side by the pacific idealism of Mahatma Gandhi and on the other by the political realism of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The reasons given publicly by Mahatmaji are not necessarily all his reasons for insisting on the Junior Pandit's election this time to the Congress presidentship. Politics, national as well as international, is now-a-days largely a matter of gestures, and Pandit Jawaharlal's presidentship is a gesture to the British Government. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may be described as being the most moderate of extremists and Mahatma Gandhi has doubtless calculated the value of his co-operation in keeping the independence school within the bound of practical politics. On the whole, the choice is perhaps the best in the circumstances."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is second only to the late Mr. Gokhale in being the youngest to hold this unique position. Mr. Gokhale was hardly 39 years of age when he took the reins of the Congress in his hands and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will have completed his 39th year next December. Indians in South Africa congratulate Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and wish him every success in the onerous task that has fallen on his shoulders.

Speaking on the Indian question in East Africa at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society, Sir Reginald Mant declared that the political status of Indians in East Africa was regarded in India as a test of British sincerity. India was waiting, he said, to see the British Government put its profession into practice, otherwise the seeds of mistrust would be nurtured at the very moment that it was most important that India should recognise the good intention of Britain.

At a meeting of the All India Congress Committee held at Lucknow on the 28th of September a resolution was passed agreeing to the affiliation of the South African Indian Congress and authorising 12 delegates to the Indian National Congress, and fixing the annual affiliation fee at 300 rupees (about £25). It was further resolved that the South African delegates be considered members of the Subject Committee of the Congress and be authorised to take part in its proceedings.

A resolution declaring the restrictions imposed on the Ali brothers' visit to the Union as a national insult and that the Government of India had failed in its duty in not insisting upon the Union Government to remove those restrictions was moved by Mr. T. Shervani at the above meeting and passed unanimously.

The Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, in a proclamation issued at Delhi foreshadowed a general Indian conference on the subject of the future government of India, and stated that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion status. He hoped that all India would respond to this action of the British Government. Lord Irwin's proclamation caused a stir in London political circles, although leading Conservatives expressed the opinion that the declaration did not embody any vital change in British policy. The statement was generally welcomed in India.

Thirty leaders of the Congress and other progressive parties, including Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Mrs. Besant, have signed a statement conditional on the acceptance of the Viceroy's offer of a round-table conference, declaring that the conference will not discuss when dominion status will be established, but will frame a scheme for a dominion constitution for India. The statement suggests that until the new constitution comes into existence a liberal spirit should be infused in the Government of the country and the relations between the executive and the Legislature should be brought more into harmony with the object of the proposed conference and greater regard should be paid to constitutional methods and practice. The statement concludes that it is essential for the success of the conference that it be convened as expeditiously as possible.

Maharaja of Kashmir and Bikanir have welcomed the proposed round-table conference.

South African Indian Congress

TENTH SESSION OF CONFERENCE

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

Preliminary Notice is hereby given that the tenth session of the Conference will be convened at Capetown from the 1st to 4th January, 1930.

Agenda of proceedings will be announced later.

Notices of motions and resolutions should reach the Secretaries, through the Headquarters of the respective Provinces, not later than the 15th December, 1929.

S. R. NAIDOO } Joint Hon.
E. M. MALL } Gen Secretaries.
S.A.I. Congress.

INDIA'S STATUS

THE declaration of the Viceroy (Lord Irwin) that in the judgment of His Majesty's Government it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of a Dominion Status and foreshadowing a general Indian conference on the subject of the future government of India has caused a stir both in Britain and in India. Narrow-minded Britishers are blaming the Labour Government for having taken this step before the publication of the Simon Commission's report thus rendering a blow to the prestige of the Commission. Others praise the Government for acting fearlessly in a broad-minded spirit. Leaders in India, the moderates as well as the so-called extremists have jointly expressed their satisfaction at the Viceroy's declaration.

Although it is a matter of satisfaction that the voice of India has been somewhat heeded we do not see much cause for jubilation over this affair. These things have happened so often in the past and great hopes have been given only to be shattered to pieces. Coming as it has just when a momentous step was about to be taken by the Indian National Congress to define the goal to be aimed at by the nation this declaration has come either as a curse or a blessing. A blessing if there is a real change of heart behind it and is going to be fruitful, in that it will satisfy the aspirations of the nationalists of India; a real curse if it has come as a diplomatic move only to disturb and render into confusion the nation from the straight path it has outlined for the freedom of India and was almost unitedly proceeding towards it. Let us hope, however, it is for the better. Time alone will prove what it is.

PERVERTED MENTALITY

WE must note here the perverted mentality of the British people as represented by the *Natal Mercury*. Commenting on the Viceroy's declaration our contemporary writes:—

"Someone undoubtedly blundered seriously over the regrettably premature announcement of Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, regarding Dominion Status for India, and for the sake of the Viceroy's prestige no less than for that of the authority of the British Raj that blunder will have to be redressed, though Mr. Macdonald will be hard

pressed to repair the harm which has been done....."

".....The unfortunate and untimely statement will not only tend to vitiate the report of the Commission and rob it largely of any force which it may possess, but it has committed the Government irrevocably to the ultimate grant of Dominion status to a country not yet capable of wielding the power or of garnering the fruits of full autonomy. The announcement will pass in India for a weak surrender to extreme opinion, and strengthen the impression...that anything may be gained from the British Government provided the clamant's voice of extremism be vociferous enough and enduring in its sustained demands."

Our contemporary has doubtless imbibed the spirit of Dyerism. The prestige of the British Government seems to be a matter of more concern to it than suffering humanity. It would perhaps have the people of India rolling at the feet of the British Government for freedom like the faithful dog does unto his master for bread crumbs. Indeed it is this mentality that would have long rendered to dust all the prestige of the British people had it not been for some honourable exceptions who have upheld it by their more liberal views. But there is more to learn from a foe than a friend and so there is much food for thought for those who aspire for the freedom of India in the following passage from our contemporary's editorial, though not prompted by love or a spirit to guide, for our contemporary belongs to that section of the British people who would not have India given self-government until she is sucked dry like an orange :-

"The great web of Indian life is shot through and riddled by intense racial and religious feelings that have fostered a spirit of communalism that shows no abatement. The feeling of one-ness in a people which is the mortar that holds them together in unity and purpose, and which is inspired by national consciousness, is lacking in India. Where there should be unity and cohesion in thought and aspiration as a postulate to Dominion Status with all that it connotes there is diversity; where in other Dominions there are relatively small homogenous populations with high standards of civilisation, as Mr. J. A. Spender has pointed out in a brilliant study of the Indian problem, "there are in India three hundred millions of people scattered through many States and nations, speaking many different languages, professing four or five religions and living at many different levels of education and culture."

There is no doubt much truth in this but the pity of it is that this state of affairs should still exist after over a hundred and sixty years of British rule in India.

The Coming Conference

(By S. R. N.)

The Executive of the South African Indian Congress has decided to hold the tenth session of the Conference at Capetown from the 1st to 4th January 1930. The holding of the Conference annually is a momentous affair in the life of the Indian community in South Africa. The Conference is looked upon as the assemblage of an unofficial Parliament of the Indian community here. It is the only meeting ground of its kind for the expression of public opinion on any matters affecting the interest and welfare of the community. The Congress by its systematic and selfless work has gained a popularity which has given added weight to its prestige. It is recognised by the Union Government as a body which speaks for and acts on behalf of the community. The Indian Government likewise recognises it. Since the Congress has been placed on a stable position, it has done work of no mean kind. Its achievements are a credit to those who have worked heart and soul to elevate the position of the Congress to its present pitch. The wise handling of the situation and the presentation of cases on behalf of our people won approbation for the Congress. We need only mention, among many, the fate of the Class Areas Bill and the deletion of the provision in the Liquor Bill, which threatened the livelihood of a section of our people.

We do not claim that the Congress has reached perfection in all its details. The period of its existence has been much too short to enable it to do so. But we do not despair and have confidence that, given support and encouragement, it will yet rise higher in the estimation of people and command respect. When all parts of its machinery have been put into a working order, and funds have been collected and capitalised, we have no doubt that many items of work of a tangible and durable character can be undertaken for the gradual progress of the community in the various fields of public activities.

The tenth session of the Conference promises to be no less important than those which preceded it. The present unsettled situation in the Transvaal in regard to the question of trade will be bound to become acute. Not only the honour of the South African Indians is bound up with the question, the peculiar situation in that Province may create a crisis the possibilities of which one cannot see at present. The people's vested rights are in the melting pot. Their trade, the businesses they have built up and the capital they have invested are all insecure at the present moment. Our hope is that by a wise handling of the situation, the community's rights and interests may be protected. There are also the larger issues of immigration, licence and labour, affecting the community and other questions equally as important.

We hope that our countrymen will rally round the cause of the Conference and make it a success.

Indian Traders' European Employees

Commerce Congress Resolution Replied

Mr. M. D. Bharoochi, president of the Transvaal Indian Congress and an old resident of Vereeniging, in the course of an interview with a representative of the *Star* (Johannesburg), replied to the criticism made at the Congress of the Associated Chamber of Commerce recently held at Kroonstad, with

regard to Indians employing European women as shop assistants.

"The Commerce Congress is trying to get it both ways" said Mr. Bharoochi. "Commerce blames the Indian for competing against whites on a lower standard, and then turns round and blames the Indian for employing whites and so competing on the same standard.

"Many white men and women were employed by reputable Indians. There were several reasons for this. White people liked to be served by whites, and Indian employers also felt that they should remove the reproach against them that they entered into one-sided dealing with the whites. The Indian trader gave better conditions and wages to whites they employed than did many white employers, and in Vereeniging especially, where he was fully conversant with the position, Indians received many applications for employment from white women and youths and from their parents.

"There was no social question involved. The Indian was ready to fall in with European ideas of social status. In Johannesburg there was a big Indian firm which employed about 60 Europeans, and no question about desirability had yet been raised here. It seemed that commerce was looking for any excuse to attack Indian traders."

Unfounded Allegation

Referring to the allegation made by Mr. A. Behrman that an Indian storekeeper in Vereeniging employed 20 Indian assistants imported at £15 a year, Mr. Bharoochi said that the allegation was absolutely unfounded. Mr. Behrman seemed not only to be ignorant of the facts, but ignorant of the immigration laws of this country.

The only unattached Indians who could enter the country were teachers and preachers. Besides that, the indenture system had existed only for the sugar and tea plantations in Natal and had been done away with. Apart from that no Indian would work for £15 a year.

Shall Not Be Admitted Without D.I. 91 Form

Mr. Venn's Letter To Congress

The following is a copy of a letter addressed to the Joint Hon. Secretaries of the South African Indian Congress by Mr. H. N. Venn, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, dated at Pretoria 26th October, 1929:—

Gentlemen,—In acknowledging receipt of your telegram of the 24th instant, asking that the Principal Immigration Officer, Durban, be instructed not to take the case of.....claimed as wife by.....to the Immigrants Appeal Board, I have the honour to express regret that it was not found possible to give the desired instructions.

With regard to your statement that "when this point was discussed with you on the day of opening of Sastri College you gave us to understand that in case of newly married people procedure as to D.I. 91 will not be insisted upon," I fear that you misunderstood what I said. I stated that, in view of the fact that the procedure in the past of accepting evidence other than the D.I. 91 Certificate, has now been altered, I should for the cases still under consideration be satisfied to accept marriage certificate which identified the parties concerned but that in all future cases the D.I. 91 Certificate

would be required. If persons arrive at the Union Ports in possession of the D.I. 91 Certificate duly completed they have no difficulty in landing and your countrymen should see that the necessary documents are in order.

In the case of men proceeding to India for the purpose of getting married I am prepared to issue the D.I. 91 form without the name of the wife being furnished to me so that they may obtain the D.I. 91 Certificate immediately after marriage.

I would take this opportunity of informing you that many young children are arriving in the Union without the D.I. 91 Certificate and I shall be glad if you will issue a warning to your countrymen that in all cases of children (no matter what age they are) entitled to enter the Union the D.I. 91 form should be obtained prior to such children leaving India, and if they are in the Union without such form there is danger they will not be admitted and in any case unnecessary expense will be incurred as such children will not be admitted until enquiries in India have established their identities.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) H. N. VENN,

Commissioner for Immigration and
Asiatic Affairs.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part V. Chapter XXXV.

IN THE PUNJAB

Sir Michael O'Dwyer held me responsible for all that happened in the Punjab and some irate young young Punjabis held me responsible for the martial law. They asserted that if only I had not suspended civil disobedience, there should have been no Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Some of them even went the length of threatening me with assassination if I went to the Punjab.

But I felt that my position was so correct and above question that no intelligent person could misunderstand it.

I was impatient to go to the Punjab. I had never been there before and that made me all the more anxious to see things for myself there at first hand. Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Kitchlew and Pandit Rambhaji Dutt Chowdhari who invited me to the Punjab were at this time in jail. But I felt sure that the Government could not dare to keep them and the other prisoners in prison for long. A large number of prisoners used to come and see me whenever I was in Bombay. I ministered to them a word of cheer on these occasions and that would comfort them. My self-confidence at the time was infectious.

But my going to the Punjab had to be postponed time and again. The Viceroy would say 'not yet' every time I asked for permission to go there, and so the thing dragged on.

In the meantime, the Hunter Committee was announced to hold an inquiry in connection with the Punjab Government's doings under the martial law. Mr. C. F. Andrews had also reached there. His letters gave a heart-rending description of the state of things there which left me with the impression that the martial law atrocities were in fact even worse than the press reports showed. He

pressed me urgently to go and join him. At the same time, Malaviyaji sent telegrams asking me to proceed to the Punjab at once. I once more telegraphed to the Viceroy asking whether I could now go to the Punjab. He wired back in reply that I could go there after a certain date. I cannot exactly recall it now, but I think it was 17th of October.

The scene that I witnessed on my arrival at Lahore can never be effaced from my memory. The railway station was from end to end one seething mass of humanity. The entire populace had turned out of doors in eager expectation, as if to meet a dear relation after a long separation, and was delirious with joy. I was put up at the late Pandit Rambhaji Dutt's bungalow and the burden of entertaining me fell on the shoulders of Shrimati Sarala Devi. A burden it truly was for even then as now the place where I was accommodated became a veritable caravanserai.

Owing to the principal Punjab leaders being in jail, their place, I found, had been properly taken up by Pandit Malaviyaji, Pandit Motilalji and the late Swami Shradhdhanandji. Malaviyaji and Shradhdhanandji, I had intimately known before, but with Motilalji, I came in close personal contact for the first time only on this occasion. All these leaders as also such local leaders as had escaped the privilege of going to jail at once made me feel perfectly at home amongst them so that I never felt like a stranger in their midst.

How we unanimously decided not to lead evidence before the Hunter Committee is now a matter of history. The reasons for that decision were published at that time and need not be recapitulated here. Suffice it to say that looking back upon these events from this distance of time, I still feel that our decision to boycott the Committee, was absolutely correct and proper as also reasons for so doing.

As a logical consequence of the boycott of the Hunter Committee, it was decided to appoint a non-official inquiry Committee, to hold almost a parallel inquiry on behalf of the Congress. Pandit Motilal Nehru, the late Deshabandhu C. R. Das, Sjt. Abbas Tyebji, Sjt. M. R. Jayakar and myself were appointed to this Committee, virtually by Pandit Malaviyaji. We distributed ourselves over various places for purposes of inquiry. The responsibility for organising the work of the Committee devolved on me, and as the privilege of conducting the inquiry in the largest number of places fell to my lot, I got a rare opportunity of observing at close quarters the people of the Punjab and the Punjab villages.

In the course of my inquiry, I made my acquaintance with the women of the Punjab also. It was as if we had known one another for ages. Wherever I went, they flocked to me in their numbers and laid before me their heaps of yarn. My work in connection with the inquiry thus brought home to me the fact that the Punjab could become a great field for Khadi work.

As I proceeded further and further with my inquiry into the atrocities that had been committed on the people, I came across tales of Government's tyranny and arbitrary despotism of its officers such as I was hardly prepared for, and they filled me with deep pain. What surprised me then, and what still continues to fill me with surprise, was the fact that a province that had furnished the largest number of soldiers to the British Government during the War should have taken all these brutal excesses lying down.

The task of drafting the report of this Committee too was entrusted to me, and I would recommend a perusal of this report to any one who wants to have

an idea of the kind of atrocities that were perpetrated on the Punjab people. All that I wish to say here about it is that there is not a single conscious exaggeration in it anywhere and every statement made in it is substantiated by evidence. Moreover, the evidence published was only a fraction of what was in the Committee's possession. Not a single statement regarding the validity of which there was the slightest room for doubt was permitted to appear in it. This report, prepared as it was solely with a view to bring out the truth and nothing but the truth, will enable the reader to see to what lengths the British Government is capable of going and what inhumanities and barbarities it is capable of perpetrating in order to maintain its power. So far as I am aware, not a single statement made in this report has ever been disproved.

Grand Celebrations

Organised By New Glasgow Deepavali Reception Committee

This little country district outside Verulam was the scene of unusual demonstrations on Sunday 27th October when the above Committee gave a grand reception to the Very Rev. Mother General and teachers of St. Xavier's School, Oakford Estate.

The function was organised by the New Glasgow Committee with Punjavarnam Murugan as president and M. S. Pillay as hon. gen. Secretary.

The Sports Ground was tastefully decorated all round with tiny flags, while an extensive tent beflagged and bannered in a most artistic way afforded a place of vantage for the worthy guests: Very Rev. Mother General and over thirty Sisters, also Rev. Father Muldoon. A display of fireworks announced the arrival of these guests.

FOOTBALL—ST. XAVIER'S VS. TONGAAT

As an introduction, a football match was played between St. Xavier's team and Tongaat team with Mr. M. K. Naidoo as referee. One goal was scored during the match the honour being St. Xavier's.

SCHOOL SPORTS

The programme proper opened with St. Xavier's School sports of nineteen items, with Messrs. M. K. Naidoo and E. J. Choonoo as Judges. Great excitement was created and much enjoyment afforded to the parents among the large attendance of 700 people when some tiny tots reached the winning posts.

The Donkey Race and Boat Race were especially enjoyed likewise the Senior Boys' Flat Race, for which a silver watch was the first prize.

PRIZE CONTRIBUTORS

The following were the prize contributors:—Messrs. Murugan Bros., A. Moonsamy Bros., S. Nehere, V. P. Moodley, B. C. Moonsamy, M. S. Pillay, H. Bhajan and R. Ramchuran.

INTERVAL

Refreshments were then served in a most elegant and lavish way, special waiters being engaged for this great occasion. Visitors and friends were astonished at the display and justice done to the dainties served.

RECEPTION

The guests adjourned to the fore part of the tent where the President Mr. P. Murugan and the Committee members were assembled. The president addressed the Very Rev. Mother General and company and announced to her that the main object of the function was to express their deep gratitude to her for the educational advantages offered to them and to their children at St. Xavier's School. He then called on Mr. M. S. Pillay the Hon. Gen. Secretary to read the beautifully illuminated address which was presented to her by the New Glasgow Indian community.

An address in Tamil song in honour of the Head Teacher Rev. Mother Ignatius O.P., was then rendered by Misses Pillay and Mr. M. S. Pillay, Mr. H. Bhajan contributing music.

Votes of thanks were offered by Messrs. M. S. Pillay, M. S. Naidoo and S. Gajadhar in English, Tamil and Hindi.

Mr. M. K. Naidoo was then requested to read a much appreciated expression of thanks to the New Glasgow Deepavali Committee from the Very Rev. Mother-General and one from the Head Teacher and Staff.

