

Indian Opinion

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— EDITORIAL —

Our Educational Rights

There are several places in this colony where the number of children of school-going age justifies the establishment of schools. We see no reason why Government should not undertake to live up to its responsibility in this respect. Members of the Legislature so often take pride to refer to their pet phrase "illiteracy." Will these Legislators, (with a knowledge of the fact that there is a Compulsory Education Law in this Colony) prove themselves somewhat useful by asking Government to provide these centres with a school each?—

We are asking them to do so now. We must draw the attention of every one concerned that silence on this issue will be interpreted to mean that Government wants us to know that people of the Indian and Coloured races are not entitled to the educational rights enjoyed by other races.

Every working man and woman in this country contributes to the running of the administration. It is therefore the duty of the state to provide every child with the education provided for by compulsory legislation.

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We Still Want Markets

It is all well and good to sit down and talk about living standards. It is all well and good to have our well-paid Government Officials and Publicists talking and writing about improving living conditions. We must mention for the benefit of public information that nothing will be done to improve conditions in this colony in any appreciable way until and unless markets can

be found for every article we can and do produce. What will happen to a people who are growing good human food to feed pigs and cattle? What will happen when the "pigs and cattle" can eat no more? Is Government "fighting" to secure a market?

*

Government Admits Inefficiency

Every section of the community is now beginning to realise that our Government in this Colony is indulging in class politics. More often than not, it is the small deploration that gives more food for thought. The official communique which stated that Government is unable to control rent imposed on small business places serves the purpose of an "expose." It shows clearly that the administration is not concerning itself with the section that is affected. By allowing just a handful of unscrupulous landlords to have things their own way, Government has clearly shown that its decisions are only (either openly or subtly concealed) intended for the biggest Capitalist class. Governments' declared inability to effect rent control of small business places admits that it has:

1. totally ignored the representation of the public concerned.
2. Completely, ignored every section of the local press.
3. Unthinkingly, ignored its own "doctrine" of the "greatest good for the greatest number, and
4. convincingly, exposed the Colony's law officers to open attacks for inefficiency.

Will Government recall its reasons for being unable to control the rent of small business places?

*

Village Chairmen's Conference

Each little village in this Colony can be something like a little state in itself. We shall like to see the day when the village fathers will sit down and plan out their own improvements. Today's Conference of Village Chairmen will, as in the past years merely

deliberate over suggestions, most of which will not be remembered, before next CONFERENCE DAY. This kind of regular meeting does absolutely no administrative or economic good. Our Chairmen and Councillors have got to be a little more self-reliant. We hope they will make this known today

Rotten Educational System in British Guiana

British Guiana's educational system continues to be one of the most primitive, poorly organized and controlled in the entire world.

No wonder illiteracy is so rampant in this country and the general public's mind is so narrowly channelled.

Time and again unbiased educationalist have recommended Government Schools and time and again it has not been implemented. Who is responsible?—Definitely, its the Government—the whole situation is tantamount to so much Tommy rat and is completely farsical.

The allies have promised four definite freedoms—

- 1 Freedom of Speech
- 2 Freedom of Worship
- 3 Freedom from fear
- 4 Freedom from Want

Most certainly the present system of proselytising and Church Schools cannot lead to it. It is time the Government of British Guiana becomes aware of the fact that its every action is being watched.

The Muslim Literary Association

"The Duties of Young Muslims," was the subject of an address by Moulvi Mobammad Ahmad Nasir, Guest speaker; at the Half yearly General Meeting of the Muslim Literary Association of B.G.—at the Association's Hall Ruimveldt, on Sunday 13th August at 3 p.m. Half Year Reports on the activities of the Association were presented by various Sub Committees. The President, Mr. Akbar Khan, outlined the programme for the present Half Year ending December 1944.

Capt. L. D. Gammans Opposed to Race, Religion and Colour Distinction in Civil Service

SUGGESTION FOR MASS ATTACK ON ILLITERACY

"PROGRESS HAS BEEN PATCHY"

Captain L. D. Gammans, M. P. who visited this colony earlier this year has written an article in the "London Times" suggesting six principles for Unity and reform within the British Empire. This Member of Parliament admits in Suggestion No 3 that race, religion, and colour bar exist in the Empire. Here are Captain Gammans' six suggestions:

(1) The establishment of a Colonial Development Board in London upon which each Colony would have direct representation. The Colonial Welfare and Development Act as a welcome move in this direction, but its limitations are that it is far too short-term in its application; it does not necessarily apply to the whole of the Colonial Empire; it does not integrate the economies of one colony with those of another; and it savours to a certain extent of the almoner's purse. In four directions in particular I do not believe that we can afford haphazard development—secondary industries, broadcasting, intercolonial air communication, and the investment of British capital.

(2) A Colonial Defence Council. It is doubtful if Great Britain alone is now able to assume responsibility for the defence of the Colonial Empire. The Colonial peoples are both willing and competent to play their part, if encouraged to do so.

(3) A more dynamic approach towards education. In the short-term sense this means a mass attack on illiteracy. But education must do more than merely making people literate. Any educational policy is a failure unless it raises the standard of agriculture, upon which the colonial peoples largely depend, encourages power of leadership, and engenders pride in local traditions and cultures.

(4) A minimum standard of social services. More has been done in this direction than is generally realised, but progress has been patchy. There is surely a basic minimum of health and hospital services, as well as such things as workmen's compensation, without which we should not be satisfied.

(5) The creation of an Imperial Civil Service to which any British subject with the necessary qualifications can aspire without distinction of race, religion or colour.

(6) A common Imperial currency to take the place of the present hotch-potch of sterling, rupees, and local dollars of varying denominations.

Plan For Development of Hinterland And Coastland

As Presented to the Hinterland Development Committee

1. The sugar estates of the colony should keep only the essential amount of labourers necessary to run the estates with a double or treble shift so as to ensure a steady working capacity and to provide by this means for unseasoned exigencies. This would also give a weekly distribution of wages to all workers of steady employment in fixed jobs. Surplus population unemployed to be removed to other employments or put aside for later consideration.

With a set number of employees the estates should provide good and well drained lands and help them to build houses payable by instalments with community grazing pastures, play grounds, recreation centres, farm lands, ricefields and other amenities to promote satisfaction, loyalty and a sense of live and die ownership on the estate lands, to work for the estates as if they were their own. This would mean a co-operation hitherto unknown. Villagers having their fixed abode as proprietors must be encouraged to embark on as many projects they could possibly afford, so as to employ and encourage the superfluous labourers unwanted by the estates.

There are many who would prefer to remain in the villages whilst the adventurous must be allowed to seek their fortunes a-broad with the government or in the interior.

A similar social welfare programme as that of the estates should be initiated to provide a self contained community either by co-operative societies, individual efforts or by the help of government. One potent factor should be forcefully in mind and that is to strictly discourage litigation where money useful to the poor is uselessly spent.

Bureaus for help and information must be set up and Arbitration instead of Law should be the criterion for a people aspiring to decency and prosperity for the dignity of the Empire. Government Public Works department.

ment should absorb some of the estate surplus labour as was done by the villages and secure them by proper living conditions as is envisioned to be done by both the estates and the villages.

In towns and cities where many varied interests especially commercial and industrial companies employ numberless labourers similar provisions as those of the estates villages and government must be provided so as to have a uniform system humane and beneficial to both the employers and the employees for mutual co-operation and satisfaction for colonial progress. This would naturally keep the coastal population confined to domestic employment without variation or fluctuation into a kind of routinism. All the coastal people will have been employed in some definite work eliminating the necessity to search for labour or that of labour searching for work.

(To be continued)

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The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo Again Lets Us Down

Indian Community Stabbed In The Back by its Own Dagger

The Hon. J.A. Luckhoo K.C. - Nominated Member and supposed INDIAN MOUTH PIECE in the Governor's Executive Council, to the surprise and astonishment of the masses, particularly the Indian Community, dubs the masses as being incompetent and not ripe for UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE forthwith.

We cannot be annoyed with Mr Luckhoo for expressing this opinion of his, and perhaps of his friends, for it is a divine privilege for an individual to enjoy his opinion, but when it is considered that as the Indian Mouthpiece in the Executive Council, this opinion will be taken as reflecting the opinion of the Indian people of the Colony, it is at once clear that Mr Luckhoo has done the 140 000 odd Indian in this Colony a "grievous wrong" for no one is more familiar than Mr Luckhoo of the fact that all Indian Organisations representing the Indian people in this Colony are firm, and unanimous in their advocacy of the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith.

It is a departure from our policy to write in this mood of those whom we would like to claim as ours, but under the circumstances it is inevitable. It took a Deputation to inform His Excellency the Governor Sir Gordon Letnam K.C.M.G. that the opinion expressed by Mr Luckhoo was his own opinion and not that of the Indian Community whom he ostensibly is

ushered to represent. Mr Luckhoo has yet to convince the masses of this Colony of his earnestness and sincerity as a representative of the people. So far we have nothing tangible to the credit of Mr Luckhoo as a man of the people. His career in politics with the exception of his first trial has not been a series of successes, and this is evidenced by the fact that he has been defeated by an overwhelming majority on every other occasion he tried to seek the suffrage of the masses. It suits Government to requisition the services of Mr Luckhoo for it seems that a Luckhoo must adorn the Executive Council. This is all the Government's Business. But everyone knows that the road to this rostrum by way of the electorate is a thorny one for a Luckhoo.

Inasmuch as we must respect him as a lawyer, we cannot be blind to the fact that as a politician he has at no time displayed any tendency to sympathise with the troubles of the masses... We again repeat that we are not and cannot be against Mr Luckhoo for his opinion. But it must be clearly understood that this is the view of Mr Luckhoo and not at all that of the Indian people.

Ingenious Methods of the Sugar Industry

SUGAR THE BUG-BEAR OF
DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH
GUIANA

OPPOSITION BY SUGAR TO THE
CORENTYNE DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION
SCHEME

(BY THE WATCH DOG)

The Sugar Interests contributes considerably to impede directly or indirectly progress and development in British Guiana. New Industries are nipped in the bud and not allowed to take shape, as new Industries would mean the establishment of an entirely independent economic structure, and the creation of new avenues to which labour would be attracted from all directions; there would be migration of labour from the sugar estates to the new industries and a consequent shortage of cheap labour on the estates so essential for large profits.

This industry [sugar] nourished on the blood, sweat and misery of Indians and Africans would then be destined to collapse, failure and eventual death.

The very life of Sugar in British Guiana depends and is based on the creation and maintenance of a large number of landless and unemployed

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Struggle and Fight for
its existence Or has no
right to exist at all**

(BY LIBERTY)

Whenever things seem to be coming to a head and the vital issue whether political or economic which directly affects the Indian Community is about to be taken in their own hands, every effort is made by those who rule us and by the Sugar Interests in the Colony to confuse the issue. Free advice accompanied by threats, and insults come to us in unending torrents; the administration, and its advisers, the sugar interest and its representatives warn, cajole and offer us their so-called good advice at the same time.

Around 1938 when economic difficulties were causing unrest, the focus of attention was diverted to the West India Royal Commission of Investigation. The report and findings of this August body has almost dwindled into nothing.

At the present time the masses, Indians and Africans especially are faced with the greatest crisis of all times. The widest possible Franchise Universal Adult Suffrage has been granted Jamaica and Trinidad. This is about to be denied the masses of British Guiana. The question arises as to what would the masses do in such a case. Would they take matters in their own hands? Would they fight and struggle for their existence? Are they prepared to survive or to be smothered once and for all times? Are the masses prepared to say give me liberty or give me death? The time has come for this vital decision.

people. Sugar is fully aware of the fact that its existence depends on the impeding, hampering and checking of any other industry that attracts the type of labour they are interested in.

Recent apparent cases are their open opposition to the Corentyne Drainage and Irrigation Scheme and the Land Settlement Schemes.

The Sugar Industrial Capitalists know perfectly well that their system is old and dying but are prepared to take a chance and hold to the last

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The Hon. Hubert Critchlow Somersaults

Away with Spineless Legislators

The somersault of the Hon. Hubert Critchlow in the Legislative Council recently, has surprised the community who had hoped to find in this Hon. Member a strong advocate of the rights of the working man, who obnubilate the industrial backbone of this Colony. As far back as in 1925 when Hubert Critchlow travelled to London as the accredited representative of the working man he was the strongest working advocate for the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage then 18 years ago. This is on record and can be supplied the public immediately. With in recent years the Hon. Member was one of the strongest if not the strongest advocate for Universal Adult Suffrage. Before the recent Franchise Commission, this Hon. Member sat at the Witness table with me and bellowed with all the vehemence at his disposal—We want Universal Adult Suffrage.

From this elevated rostrum Hubert Critchlow, the man who took the Bourda Green to electrify the workers about the virtue of Universal Adult Suffrage, has toppled most ignominiously to advocate now when he has a Nominated seat in the Legislative Council and elevated overnight to the Executive Council that the colony should not have Universal Adult Suffrage. Above every other consideration it is most amusing to see what a seat in the Legislative Council and especially in the Executive Council can do for a spineless legislator.

The somersault of this Hon. Member under the circumstances does affect the united front of the masses in their claims before the Secretary of State for the Colonies today for Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith, but such somersaults and such accidents are no unknown among our so called lead-

ers, and this metamorphosis of the Hon. Hubert Critchlow is just another of the many we have on record.

If Mr. Critchlow has somersaulted because he has been persuaded to think that the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith will hand power to a section of the community and deprive others of representation, he is certainly labouring under a misapprehension or delusion, for time will prove that Indians and Africans particularly cannot be divided by a handful of short-sighted politicians, who can only flourish by exploiting the masses with racial propaganda. Indians and Africans have worked and lived together in the past, they are together at present and will have to be together in the future.

Capital Blunders Again

Human Errors

VISITS OF ROYAL COMMISSION AND THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

(BY POLITICO)

The main objects behind the visits of the various Royal Commissions that came to British Guiana (the one of 1932-1939 being no exception) has been to create interminable dissensions, confuse the issues at stake, protect in the best way they could the vested British Capital Interest in the Sugar Industry and to ingeniously tighten the grip on the people by the Government.

There is a war on and in spite of it the aspirations and desires of the masses are ignored—their thoughts and actions quitted. Universal Adult Suffrage, Land Settlement etc. are glaring cases while the rest of the world is taking a step forward the people here are by major force made to step backwards.

Every conceivable ingenuity is being used to keep the people from their true rights and make them bow to the sugar interests. This Capitalised industry has seen to it that for the past hundred years no progress be made in any other direction by its inhabitants. The war with all its horrors does not seem to be sufficient an incentive to make these short sighted exploiters of human sweat, blood and misery realze their glaring folly.

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The Education Committee

The Director of Education is Chairman of the Education Committee, the discussions of the Committee seems to be interminable, and seems never to meet nor reach finality in their discussions. Two months ago a report was about forthcoming; but to date there is none.

Now there is something definitely wrong, if the committee cannot reach proper conclusions let it be dissolved and the recommendations of Mr. Hammond be accepted.

It is time that committees of this nature realize that they cannot go on having an indefinite period for presenting their reports. What is the reason of the delay? is some one trying to be smart?

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