

Indian Opinion

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Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST, 1908.

Thank God!

JUST as we go to Press we have received the glad news from Johannesburg that a settlement of the Asiatic question has been effected. Mr. Gandhi paid a visit to Pretoria on Thursday and had an interview with Mr. Smuts, the result being that voluntary registration has been accepted, the Asiatic leaders agreeing to do their utmost to complete the registrations within three months. We need scarcely say how delighted we are that an amicable agreement has been arrived at without loss of honour or self-respect

A Shocking Condition of Things

THE cablegram sent last Saturday to the South Africa British Indian Committee in London by our Transvaal brethren tells a shocking tale of cruelty—one that we had fondly hoped would never need to be told in any territory of the British Crown. We are informed that, by the end of last month, it was expected that some 300 Indians and Chinese would be lodged in gaol, whilst the rest of the community would eventually be liable to similar hardships. We learn that amongst those incarcerated are professional men, merchants, clerks, hawkers, and every grade of worker from the highest to the lowest. And in the face of this, we are told that the people have been intimidated into refusing to register. General Smuts, now some three weeks and more ago, said that, if the Asiatic communities were to go to him in a body, he would consider the question of re-opening the registration offices. Not a move has been made by the two bodies to approach the Colonial Secretary for that purpose. The people are grimly determined to lose their all rather than surrender their honour.

Either General Smuts meant what he said, when he declared that, if the leaders were taken, the followers would register, or he did not. If the latter, it is obvious that he was endeavouring to mislead the public, which we do not care to suggest. If the former, he was singularly ill-informed, and he has placed the Government in an extremely awkward position, from which extrication is most difficult.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the last thing in the world that the Transvaal Indians want is to needlessly prolong the present struggle. Nor do they wish to accentuate the difficulties of the Government. Everything that can be done by them, consistently with the preservation of their honour and their self-respect, will be done. The community does not consist of a pack of *intransigents*, but of some thousands of simple-hearted people whose only desire is to live at peace with their neighbours, provided that peace is an honourable one. What is wanted, however, is not a truce, but a permanent settlement.

THIS IS A REMARKABLE COLONY. It prides itself upon having as many hard-headed people to the square mile as any other similar-sized area of the world's superficies, and yet, paradoxically, one finds mouthing and vapouring such as have taken place at the Greenwood Park and Durban meetings. What useful purpose was expected to be served by these mock-heroic amateur debates it is difficult to discover. *Cris Britannicus* was obviously on the warpath, seeking to destroy (with his tongue) whatsoever unfortunate Indian wight should come across his path. It was an awesome determination; no doubt the idea was good in itself, but it was extremely badly executed. What with the vulgar personalities that were banded about, the cheap humour indulged in, the noisy demagoguery that took the place of reasoned argument, the only difference between these extraordinary affairs and the Pretoria bear-garden was that the latter became a bear-garden because the rancorous mob refused to give the more thoughtful section of the audience an opportunity to hear both sides, whilst here the thoughtful element was, generally speaking, conspicuous by its absence, which probably accounted for the singular unanimity that was manifested. One can, in some degree, appreciate the point of view of the detached outsider who philosophically observes these sporadic outbreaks of what is technically known as "public opinion." It is truly wonderful how narrow is the line of demarcation between such "opinion" and mob-law. Imperialism has sunk to a base degree indeed, when our local representatives of the Imperial race condescend to express their matured views in this peculiarly characteristic manner.

APPARENTLY THE QUALIFICATIONS which have fitted Mr. Rissik on Mr. Johann Rissik for the position of Minister for Native

Affairs in the Transvaal are not sufficient to entitle him to discuss reasonably the question of the Asiatics in that Colony, for he was unwise enough to say that the presence of the Asiatics contributed largely to the impoverished condition of the people. We have yet to learn that the man who enables the poorer classes of the population to purchase the necessaries of life at a low price is impoverishing still further these people. Mr. Rissik's remark seems paradoxical, and paradoxes are notoriously untrustworthy. Why he, like Mr. Augustine Birrell in England, should still talk about an invasion of the Transvaal by Asiatics, when his

brother Cabinet Minister goes out of his way to rejoice at the fact that at least 5,000 Asiatics have left the Transvaal through 'sheer fright,' we are utterly unable to imagine. No doubt it is capable of explanation, but at present the matter is certainly somewhat obscure. Whilst the issues are concealed by public men holding responsible positions, it is absurd for the *Star* to state that the Asiatics themselves have fogged the issues.

THIS WEEK TWO SERIOUS CASES OF treachery have occurred in the Transvaal community. The first and more important is the application for registration made by Richard Narasoo of Barberton. He was brought before the Magistrate there, with two others, to be sentenced to imprisonment for not leaving the Colony when ordered to do so. The others bravely went to gaol; but Narasoo turned coward. He became afraid, and told the Magistrate that he would register if given a chance. He said that he did not before know what the law was, and that when in Johannesburg the leaders there intimidated him. Both of these statements are not true, for Narasoo knew English very well and could read the Registration Act in English. Moreover, to our certain knowledge, he had presided over many meetings at which he had explained the Law to his brethren there. As to his being intimidated in Johannesburg by the leaders, even the Government has had to confess that the only "intimidation" used by British Indians was a strict boycott, including the withdrawal of social intercourse. The sooner Narasoo's name is forgotten by the community the better. The second case is that of Francis Narayansamy, who told the Magistrate at Pretoria that he had failed to register because he had been afraid to make application owing to threats of personal violence extended to him by some of the pickets. Upon investigation we learn that Mr. Narayansamy's history is somewhat as follows. Last year he received a sentence of imprisonment with hard labour for illicitly supplying natives with liquor, in contravention of the Liquor Law. His wife served a term of imprisonment for a similar offence. Upon his release, his knowledge and experience were considered by the Government to be so peculiar and extensive, as to cause them to offer him a position in the Criminal Investigation Department. On the 14th of last month, whilst still in the service of that department, he made application for registration to the Registrar of Asiatics, who, however, on the 17th refused to issue a certificate. In the face of these facts, he had the impudence to plead that he had not applied for registration through fear of personal violence. It is passing

strange that not a single Indian has so far been brought before the Courts for intimidation!

THE FEW IN ENGLAND WHO ADVERSELY criticise the action of the Transvaal Indians have involved themselves in a terrible tangle of misapprehensions. Lord Harris, for instance, is unable to understand why British Indians in the Transvaal object to giving photographs or finger-prints when European travellers to the Continent do likewise. It would be a remarkable logical fallacy if only the facts were as Lord Harris puts them. But they are not. In the case of Indians in the Transvaal, they are *already in the Colony*, and are long resident there. Moreover, they are specially selected from amongst the whole of the surrounding population for this peculiar form of differentiation that is applied, in the Transvaal, only to Criminals. The analogies drawn by Lord Harris and other adverse critics are singularly ill-conceived, and thoughtless utterances of this nature only increase the tension and intensify the difficulties of the present unhappy situation.

WE DO NOT QUITE KNOW WHAT TO make of Mr. Van Rensburg's statement, at the last meeting of the Roodepoort Town Council, that "Municipalities had been invited by the Government to co-operate with them in the action they were taking." It is not at all clear whether Mr. Van Rensburg, a lawyer, be it said, actually meant that the Transvaal Government had issued private circulars asking the Municipalities to pass resolutions to strengthen General Smuts' hands, or whether an extensive interpretation has been disingenuously given to the well-known circular issued by the Colonial Secretary to Town Councils, asking them to co-operate in the matter of refusing trading-licences to non-registered Asiatics. We prefer to accept the latter supposition, because the alternative suggestion carries with it the charge that the Government have deliberately engineered an artificial anti-Asiatic agitation, in order to induce the Imperial Government to believe that they were supported by the unanimous opinion of the white Transvaal. We all know how these public meetings have been organised. Legislators and thoughtful people have, as a rule, carefully avoided them, and the speakers have usually condemned themselves out of their own mouths, by the ignorant exaggeration that characterised most of their utterances. It is plain that most of those who composed these "representative" gatherings were under the impression that the Registration Law was intended to expel, and not to identify, the lawfully resident

Asiatic community. If the Transvaal Government are directly or indirectly responsible for this political phenomenon, there will be a heavy reckoning for them in the not distant future.

Asiatic Blue Book

Published in London

Lord Elgin's Criticisms

Press Opinions

London, January 28th.—A very extensive Blue Book has been issued dealing with the Transvaal and Asiatics.

Lord Elgin, at the outset, urges the relaxing of restrictions, though he feels he is not justified in resisting the general wish of the colonists.

The Indian Government writes, strongly opposing the principles of restriction. It recognises the Imperial Government must decide by considerations of other interests, besides those of British Indians.

Mr. Morley hopes Lord Elgin will impress on the Transvaal the strong objection from the Imperial standpoint of excluding Indians from any portion of the Empire. Sir Edward Grey, in reply to the representations by Mr. Beall, on behalf of the Chinese, declares he cannot interfere with the Transvaal's own affairs.

A communication from the Indian Government urges provision being made for the issue of temporary permits in order to prevent such a gross scandal as the exclusion of ruling chiefs and other distinguished Indians or Asiatics. Lord Selborne replied to Lord Elgin, that the Transvaal Government were willing in such cases that Asiatics should give only their signatures.

Lord Elgin, reviewing the Restriction Act, regrets that the Transvaal Government are not content with the education test, and strongly criticises the wide powers given by the Act with regard to exclusion, emphasising that the exercise of such powers in the case of foreigners would create serious difficulties. Lord Elgin accepts the Act, provided that assurances are given with reference to the admission of distinguished Asiatics, and also as to the limitation of expulsion.

The *Mercury* correspondent adds: Lord Elgin says that he is sure he can rely on the discrimination of the Transvaal Government, and hopes exclusion will result in the more favourable treatment of the Asiatics lawfully resident in the Transvaal. The Transvaal Government replied, giving assurances as requested.

Lord Elgin in giving his sanction to the Vrededorp Act, says he is satisfied that the measure effects some improvement in the position of Asiatics.

London, January 29th.—The *Daily Chronicle* says the Blue Book empha-

sises the complexity of the problem. It shows that the whole Government, and not merely Lord Elgin, is responsible for the sanction to the Act. It hopes the Transvaal, having vindicated the authority of the law, will now make a concession to Asiatic sentiment and Imperial interests.

The *Morning Leader* says it is a humiliating correspondence.

The *Daily News* hopes that the Transvaal is about to follow the Canadian precedent by remembering the interest of the Empire.

The *Standard* says even political opponents will commiserate with the Government in its awkward predicament.

The *Post* urges the Liberals and Conservatives to unite in suggesting a method for decreasing the number of Indians in Natal, even if the cost equals that of the abolition of slavery. —Reuter.

Speech by Mr. Lyttelton

A Dangerous Dilemma

Imperial Authorities Responsible

London, Jan. 25.—Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, M.P., late Secretary of State for the Colonies, speaking at Oswestry, said that full explanations must be demanded at the proper time, regarding the action of the Government in respect to the Asiatic question in the Transvaal.

He declared that the Home Government were responsible for the painful and dangerous dilemma in that Colony, which involved either resentment in India, and the breach of pledges given by Mr. Chamberlain and himself, or a contest with the self-governing Colonies.—Reuter.

London, Jan. 25.—In his speech at Oswestry, last night, Mr. Lyttelton said that he did not blame the Transvaal Government, but the Imperial Government, for the present Asiatic trouble, as the Transvaal Government were indifferent to Imperial responsibilities in India.

The *Standard* urges the necessity for statesmen of the Empire promptly uniting in endeavours to devise a practicable policy, and establishing just and harmonious relations between the various races.—*Natal Mercury*.

THE CONGRESS SPEECHES. Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Esplanade, Madras, will issue in January "The Surat Congress and Conferences," containing a collection of the Presidential, inaugural and other important speeches and addresses delivered at the Congress, the Social, Industrial, Theistic, Temperance and the All-India Swadeshi Conferences. The publication will be priced one shilling.

THE SETTLEMENT

Voluntary Registration Accepted

The first definite news of the settlement of the Transvaal Indian question reached us by way of a cable sent from London by Reuter. It runs thus: According to the Johannesburg correspondent of the *Standard*, a settlement of the Asiatic question in the Transvaal has been effected. The correspondent states that the terms comprise the abandonment of the finger-prints and the acceptance of signature in lieu thereof, and the release of Mr. Gandhi and others imprisoned for failing to register.

Then came the news from Johannesburg that a settlement had indeed been effected and that a meeting between Mr. Smuts and Mr. Gandhi had taken place at Pretoria, which resulted in the acceptance of the voluntary offer of the Asiatic communities. Reuter states that the leaders of both the Indian and Chinese communities had written a letter to the Colonial Secretary stating that opposition had never been directed so much against the finger-print requirements, as against the element of compulsion, and, therefore, they repeated their offer to undergo voluntary registration if the Act were repealed, and even at the present late hour urged the Government to adopt as far as possible the course proposed by the Asiatics. The leaders recognised that it was impossible during the recess to repeal the Act, and noted Mr. Smut's repeated declarations of the unlikelihood of a repeal. The signatories, however, pointed out that the registration periods under the Act have expired: therefore, registration must necessarily be voluntary, and, therefore, they respectfully suggested that all Asiatics over 16 be allowed three months within which to register themselves, those registering being freed from the penalties of the Act, the Government meanwhile taking whatever steps necessary to legalise such registration, this also applying to Asiatics outside the Colony legally entitled to return. The signatories did not object to the requirements of the Act, as far as possible, being observed, provided the officials did not demand information offending the religious sense of the applicants, and received discretion to dispense with finger-prints in the cases of the educated or property owner, or otherwise easily identifiable Asiatics, whose signatures would be accepted instead of finger-impressions. The signatories assumed that the acceptance of these suggestions would mean the suspension of the prosecutions or punishments during the period named, the signatories undertaking to use their influence to induce their compatriots to register,

withdraw countenance from those not registering, or those not entitled to register. The signatories stated that they were sincerely anxious to prove their loyalty and willingness to adopt a course to end the present difficulty without violating their consciences or inflicting a stigma.

This letter was signed by Gandhi and other leaders.

The Colonial Secretary, replying to-day, stated that he appreciated the wisdom of the step the Asiatics had taken in response to his repeated public declaration that if the Asiatics volunteered to register in a body the opportunity would be given them. The signatories had correctly stated the legal position—that in default of registration under the Act, which was no longer possible after the expiration of the notices, Government can only accept registration in a form similar to that prescribed by the Act, subject, as regards regulations, to small alterations which the signatories mentioned, and lay the matter before Parliament next session. Meanwhile the penalties of the Act would not be enforced against those so registering. The Government accepted the leaders' assurance that they would use their influence with their compatriots to make the legislation effective, and final.

The Government sent the following cable to Lord Elgin: "Gandhi and other leaders of Indian and Chinese communities have offered voluntary registration in a body within three months, provided signatures are only taken of educated, propertied, or well-known Asiatics, and finger-prints of rest, and that no questions against which Asiatics have religious objections be pressed. Government have accepted this offer, and undertaken, pending registration, not to enforce penalties under the Act against all those who register. The sentences of all Asiatics in prison will be remitted to-morrow. This course has been agreed to by both political parties.

Later we received a private telegram from Johannesburg stating that Mr. Gandhi and all other Asiatics had been released.

In the Imperial Parliament, Mr. Harold Cox introduced his amendment to the Address, but on Mr. Asquith explaining that there was good reason for depreciating discussion for the next few days, as the Government had the best ground for hoping that the negotiations proceeding between the Transvaal Government and the leaders of the Indian community would remove just causes of grievance.

Mr. Cox thereupon withdrew his amendment.

The Press on the Transvaal Situation

Further Interesting Comments

The *Dundee Courier* (Natal), in a well-reasoned article, says:—

We sincerely regret that many writers and speakers upon this vexed question seem incapable of considering it with minds free from bias and colour prejudice. Our desire is to see the matter dealt with in a fair and just spirit characteristic of and in a manner befitting the English speaking race. The Indians were brought here with the consent of and for the benefit of the Europeans, they have become extensive traders and obtained a sense of security and of right to remain as British subjects in British Colonies. It is not only impolitic but highly unjust to force them to sacrifice the labour of years, and subject them by indignity and imprisonment to such abject fear that they will flee the country. We can only say that such a policy practiced by the late Boer Government on the Uitlanders resulted in the Boer War. The same argument in America that the black slave was not entitled to rights and freedom with the whites resulted in the American Civil War. Both these wars left very sore feelings which will take many generations of good and wise government to heal. You may oppress the Indians until they all flee the country in fear or resist by suffering and waste their days in prison, but it will not bring back the prosperity to us, who have spent too many of our years in speculation and extravagance and too little in the production of useful necessities of life by the arts or industry and labour. If we allow the Indian community to live and trade in a manner which would seriously reduce or endanger the comfort and health of the European population it is our own fault, no one can complain should we subject them to regulations and laws sufficient to protect ourselves, but when we go beyond this and create a position where the best educated and leading members of the Indian community will suffer imprisonment and pose as martyrs rather than accept it, there is no denying we have overstepped the mark.

The *Natal Mercury*, discussing the opening of the Imperial Parliament, remarks:

South Africa, unfortunately, will probably figure more prominently in the debates in Parliament this year than even it did in the last. The Chinese question in the Transvaal is settled, but the situation which has arisen in connection with the British Indians is certain to cause the Government very much greater embarrassment than anything they have had to deal with for a long time, because the strongest criticism of their attitude will come from some of the ablest and most influential of their own party. Lord Elgin, in plain language, has made a mess of the whole business, and the Government generally will have a very difficult task to satisfy even their own supporters that they have not allowed themselves to be landed in a well-nigh impossible position, as the guardians and trustees of the subject races of the Empire. . . . A blunder has been committed which may have far-reaching consequences for the Government, and the blunder is all the worse in so far that it could have been avoided without running contrary to the desires and necessities of the Transvaal, but, whatever happens, there can be little sympathy with Lord Elgin and his colleagues in any difficulties they may be faced with, as, in their dealings with this country as a whole, the Liberals have not been the friends of the British Colonists.

The *Cape*, in its issue of the 17th ulto., says:

In one of his illuminating studies of the relations between Asia and Europe Mr. Meredith Townsend declared that the British

Empire in India is the most marvellous example the world has ever seen of the possibility of governing human beings through abstract principles, when those principles include impartial justice, perfect tolerance, and the most absolute respect, not only for personal freedom, but for personal idiosyncrasy. Every Indian, he said, is guaranteed his life, his liberty, his property and his honour, and as he universally approves those principles, when applied, he desists from dangerous opposition and becomes a quiet citizen. If the conclusions which Mr. Townsend formed in a long life devoted to the subject are correct, we can understand the conception which the Indians have of their status as British subjects and the horror which the recent legislation of the Transvaal inspires in them. If the Indian believes that being a British subject means that his life, his liberty, his property and his honour are guaranteed, we doubt whether it is intimidation, as General Smuts asserts, that restrains the Indian in the Transvaal from complying with the recent Transvaal law. We rather fear that General Smuts is approaching a difficult problem with insufficient knowledge and a lack of sympathy. Europeans have their own conception of justice, tolerance and respect for freedom, and that conception should inspire their dealings even with those whom they do not and cannot understand. If their intellectual qualities can help them but little in this respect, there is all the more reason why they should adhere to their moral principles. We think that the law of development of the European population itself prohibits differential treatment of different classes of the inhabitants. The South African Colonies may have to refuse admission to the Indian, but once they admit him they must treat him with the same justice, tolerance and respect for his freedom as the European demands. So long as South Africans uphold the principles of their own civilisation, they may leave the question whether England will retain India on the knees of the gods. The plain truth, as someone said the other day, is that most of these people who uphold the new Transvaal law and condemn the Indians as fanatics or the dupes of fanatics, hope in their inmost hearts that the Indians will not comply with the law. They merely want an excuse to drive them out of the country. When you discuss the situation with any of that large number of Europeans, here and elsewhere, who sympathise with the Transvaal law, they are sure to tell you in the heat of the argument, that "this must be a white man's country" and that "these Indians are the ruin of the whole white population and must be cleared out." That is the spirit of the man in the street. Out with the Indians! The last thing that he desires is that the Indian resistance should end and that the Indians should fall in with the law. Most of the Indians themselves are aware of this huge hypocrisy, and the knowledge is scarcely likely to increase their respect for the European, or their admiration for that British honesty and straightforwardness about which they have been taught so much.

The *Star* (January 27), remarks:

There was a real risk all the same in the simple and intelligible spectacle of a handful of men in open defiance of the law of the land; and for that reason, if for no other, we shall always hold that the Government showed the truest wisdom when they decided to make conspicuous examples of Mr. Gandhi and his companions.

But now that they have made it perfectly clear that the law is not to be defied with impunity by anyone, the time has come when the Government may reasonably take stock of the position afresh. . . . What steps do the Government propose to take when Mr. Gandhi emerges from prison on March 9th? We assume that he will still be unregistered—or do the prison authorities demand the necessary number of finger impressions from all their inmates? It would certainly be one solution of the problem of identification, which after all, is all that anyone wants, if Mr. Gandhi and his fellow-registers were to submit to registration, not

qua Asiatics, but qua prisoners. We offer the suggestion to Mr. Smuts for what it is worth. Assuming, however, that Mr. Gandhi emerges unregistered, what is to be the next step? The alternatives seem to be (1) deportation, (2) a further term of imprisonment, and (3) some new method of administering the law which would really achieve the object with which it was framed. That object, as Mr. Smuts has constantly and clearly pointed out in the face of an agitation which has incessantly changed its ground, is neither the deportation of the Asiatic community nor its perpetual imprisonment, but its complete identification in such a way as to put a stop to Asiatic immigration in the future. The Government, therefore, will really have failed in their object if they are compelled to resort as they are legally entitled to resort, to either of the two first alternatives. Is the third alternative feasible? Hitherto we have consistently refrained from supporting any solution of the deadlock which could even be quoted as a compromise, because compromise was out of the question so long as the leading Asiatics were openly inciting their compatriots to try a fall with the Government. But the Government have shown their strength so unmistakably by this time that they can afford to consider ways and means without embarrassment or loss of dignity. If they can devise any more successful plan for carrying out the essential principle of the Registration Law, about which everyone is agreed, by altering the methods of administration, about which no one cares a pin, this is clearly the moment to give it a trial. . . . It ought to be almost unnecessary at this time of day to repeat that there is no longer any question of allowing the country to be "flooded" with Asiatics. Their own leaders openly depreciate it just as strongly as anyone else, and with very good reason. It is quite irrelevant, therefore, to discuss the rights and wrongs of Asiatic immigration in general, and of British Indian immigration in particular, or to compare the coolie trader favourably with the lowest class of European immigrants, or *vice versa* to complain that the existing Asiatic community is a menace to a "white man's country." The settled policy of the Transvaal is to respect the rights of the Asiatics lawfully domiciled in the country in the past, while closing the door to future immigrants, and the only question at issue is how to carry out that policy effectively.

The *Times of Natal* comments as follows on the indentured Indian question:

These Indians have been brought here by ourselves. Their Government was and is not particularly anxious that they should come here. We bring them here for our own convenience and profit; "we all employ them more or less" (as Dr. McKenzie says); not a few of us help to establish them in business or buy in their stores, and yet we have the audacity and hypocrisy to get up on platforms and play the role of pale-faced martyrs, and bleat about the appalling depravity of the Indian, and the ruin he is bringing on the colony. Such cant is nauseating.

There is only one honest, logical, sensible thing for Natalians to do, and that is to agitate for the restriction of the influx of indentured labourers. That restriction should take the form of gradually limiting the number of indentured labourers allowed to come in every year—giving priority of claim to the planters and coal-mining companies—until such time as the tap can be finally turned off without economic or industrial injury to the colony. As for the talk of placing unfair handicaps and restrictions on those Indians who have not only been allowed to settle here, but have been invited in the first instance to come, we cannot conceive how any person with the most elementary sense of justice can dream of suggesting such a course. The resident Indian population must be treated fairly; but it is within our rights, and it is our duty, to restrict the further influx of immigrants from India.

The *Transvaal Leader*, discussing

the opening of the Imperial Parliament, says :

It is only too probable that the purport and administration of the Asiatic Registration Act will lead to discussions bitter, protracted and searching. It is a reasoned certainty that there will be denunciation of a condition of things whereunder a Colony exercises powers in regard to British subjects which an independent state would not be allowed to exercise, except after a war in which it had vanquished Britain. Private advices indicate that the Irish Party, the Labour and Radical sections, and some of the older school of Liberals are resolved to press their views upon the Government at whatever risk. The speeches of Sir R. Carson and Mr. Lytton seem to indicate that they will not lack Unionist co-operation. The Opposition is certain to urge that, while there may be doubt as to the humaneness and propriety of the action of the Europeans of Natal in regard to the Zulus, there can be none as to the Transvaal's action against the Asiatics. Nor are the Government's opponents in the least likely to stop at that point. The Unionists would be more than human if they did not call the country to witness that the Ministerialists' extreme concern—at the elections—for subjects of China who were not in chains, nor in gaol, contrasts ironically with their indifference to the fate of subjects of Britain who are in gaol, some of them at hard labour, for opposition to the administration of a registration law. . . . It is to be hoped that the East Rand will so level up municipal standards and requirements that the Asiatic who competes must do so on equal terms. This is strictly just, according to any code. It is rather along these lines, we venture to think, that relief will be found than by means of filthy, narrow locations (whose inhabitants never have before them any standard of comfort, much less refinement, and accordingly sink to one low level), or periods of imprisonment. Now and again slumdom has a way of teaching us that, willy nilly, we are our brother's keeper. We herd Asiatics and others in a wretched part of the town, under conditions hopelessly bad. Plague breaks out—and the upshot is that upwards of a million is spent, wasted, in trying to improve a condition of things which ought never to have been allowed to exist. We should have got better results if we could have risen superior to our South African slackness, and spent that million instead in wiping slumdom away, laying broad, clean streets and using competent officials to compel the Asiatic equally with the European to live up to a high standard of health and comfort.

The *Times of Natal* says :

Whatever the objections of the Transvaal Asiatics, sentimental or otherwise, reasonable or unreasonable, the fact remains that they do object to the finger-print system of registration, and are prepared to face financial ruin, the breaking up of their homes, and even imprisonment rather than submit to the law. It is futile for Europeans to say that the Asiatics ought not to object. Nobody would be more ready to be up in arms on a question of sentiment than the average European. The Asiatic happens to be the person chiefly affected in this instance. Being without parliamentary representation he has no means of protesting in the ordinary way against legislation affecting himself of which he disapproves; and consequently he has necessarily become a passive resister,

A LECTURE ON HINDUISM. We are given to understand by the Secretary of the Hindu Temple, Depot Road, Durban, that a lecture on the Hindu Religion will be given in Hindustani by the Bengali Pundit, Mr. Bannerji, at the Temple on Sunday next, the 26th instant, at 1 p.m. All are kindly invited to attend.

English Press Comments

"The Times"

The Transvaal Government, with the concurrence of "the people," is dealing very harshly with the natives of India settled in the country. Even if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that it was necessary to do something to discourage or to regulate the Indian immigration, it was not necessary to ignore the claims of those already settled in the country, or to adopt the most provocative instead of the most conciliatory attitude. A very provocative attitude has, however, been adopted, and, what is much worse, has received the sanction of the Imperial Government, apparently without protest and without any serious attempt to mitigate the harshness of legislation. . . . It is an Imperial question of very great gravity, for it directly affects in more ways than one the reputation of our rule in India. Already it may be noted that the Indians in the Transvaal are no longer playing the rôle of a patiently suffering people, submitting with Oriental fatalism to what fate decrees. To unjust legislation they are opposing sullen determined resistance. In reply to injury some of them even threaten revenge. Nor is the threat an idle one, though, unhappily, their revenge will not be at the cost of the Transvaal, which does the injury, but at that of the British Empire, which does not prevent the Transvaal from doing it. They take their stand upon the fact that they are subjects of the KING, and therefore cannot be properly considered aliens in any part of his dominions. They appeal from the indifference displayed by the Imperial Government to-day to the emphatic vindication of their rights by the Imperial Government only a few years ago, when they suffered, though to a less extent than at the present time, at the hands of PRESIDENT KRUGER'S Government. To these appeals they add the sanction. You may turn us out of the Transvaal, they say, but we shall go back to India to proclaim that the justice for the sake of which so much is forgiven to the British *raj* can no longer be obtained under its flag, and that the Power before which the Indians have quailed is impotent to control a mere handful of white Colonists. The preaching of either or both of these views throughout India is not a thing which, in the present state of affairs, this country can afford to regard with equanimity. But the preaching is hardly necessary. Every grievance from which emigrant Indians suffer anywhere is made fully known through the adjuncts of Western civilisation with which India is so well provided.

Race prejudice counts for little so long as the Asiatic is merely a coolie doing work for the capitalist which the white man does not care to undertake, and doing it dirt cheap.

That is business. But when the Asiatic becomes storekeeper, commission agent, baker, tailor, shoemaker, and, in fact, anything and everything, making money at them all, then he is hated with an unspeakable hatred, which is also business. It is most regrettable that he should not remain content with being a coolie, but his ambition is boundless, possibly because we have taught him the absurdity of the caste system and the perfectibility of man. So he incurs the business hatred, far deeper and more deadly than race hatred, the name of which it borrows because race hatred can be represented as an ordinance of nature, primal, inexorable, and rooted in the order of things. That business hatred is what we have to deal with in all these cases of race difficulty, for for there is no race difficulty until it arrives. . . . It is a real thing, founded largely upon unconfessed fear of the Oriental, whose business capacity is a more recent discovery than his industrial efficiency. . . .

. . . For us, the difficulty is domestic, while for most nations it is external. Hundreds of millions of Asiatics are inside the Empire, and can address us in a very different tone from that which any outsiders can adopt. They can also make their discontent felt in a very different way. . . . Though we have parted almost completely with Imperial control over the self-governing Colonies, chiefly for want of any consistent Colonial policy or any statesmen to work it, we are not altogether without the means of safeguarding our own interests, or of insisting upon reasonable compromises. The Colonies that most proudly proclaim their determination to be white countries depend absolutely upon the protection of the Mother Country for their power to remain white. . . . We need not deny what is substantial in the prejudices and fears aroused by a limited Asiatic immigration, but we may very well insist that they shall be placed in their true relation and proportion to other perils, the brunt of which we are expected to bear. We have a right—and this applies in its degree everywhere—to claim that things involving the Empire in immense responsibilities shall not be decided exclusively by the prejudices of a small local population.

"Morning Post"

We do not think it is any exaggeration that no incident of recent years has stirred the Imperial sentiment of of this country to greater indignation than the treatment accorded to his MAJESTY'S Indian subjects by the Boer Government. . . . To allow the Indians to live and multiply in the country, in a perpetual condition of legalised inferiority, depriving them of scope for the exercise of their inherited and civilised aptitudes, would be to ensure the ultimate demoralisation of the white race, not to mention the ill-effects to the Indians

themselves and the dangerous reaction of such a policy upon millions of their fellow countrymen in India.

Assuredly neither the conscience nor the material interest of the Empire can tolerate the present position. Rightly or wrongly, this country made the grievances of the British Indians, which are now being aggravated, a prominent part of its case against the late Transvaal Republic. This country is responsible, moreover, for the fact that the problem has reached such serious dimensions, having inaugurated through its own officials the system of importing Indians to live in South Africa, as far back as 1859. Since that time it has added to its responsibility by insisting that Indians introduced as indentured labourers should be allowed to remain in the country after their contracts expired, instead of being repatriated.

The position of subjection to which the Indians have been reduced, to a large extent by disingenuous subterfuge, does seem inconsistent alike with the dignity of British citizenship, with the security of British rule in India, and with the most elementary British ideas of liberty and justice.

The British Indian problem is permanent, over 120,000 being already domiciled as of right in the country. Therefore every Indian introduced in order to release native labour for the mines makes the problem of the future in South Africa more formidable than before.

"Westminster Gazette"

The remarkable thing is that British subjects should be exposed to this treatment in a British Colony. In Mr. Kruger's time the treatment of British Indians was one of the strongest grounds of remonstrance by Lord Milner on behalf of the British Government; to-day the British Indians are treated worse, although the Transvaal is under the British flag. But not only is it impossible for the Imperial Government to intervene to secure better treatment for British subjects, but the laws which the British Indians so strongly resent and resist can only become law as the result of Imperial sanction.

"Daily News"

Here are some thousands of British subjects, citizens of the Empire not by a fluke, but by birth, some of them veterans of our campaigns, others priests, Brahmans, and persons of birth and education, who are about to be driven out of a British Colony, as "undesirable immigrants," for no reason but their colour. We annexed the Transvaal in the name of "equal rights," destroyed the Boer Republics to extend Mr. Kruger's conceptions of citizenship, and bickered with him on the very eve of the conflict for the sake of these same Indian immigrants. To-day we are permitting to the Transvaal Colony a licence in dealing with our Indian fellow subjects which

we should never have allowed to the old Republic. . . . Lord Elgin has elected to respect one right and ignore the other. The result will be, one fears, to make Indians feel more acutely than ever the hollowness of our profession to regard them as the equals of white men before the law. That an Indian may vote in an election in England and take his seat in the House of Commons, is a poor compensation for this decision to class him as a helot in the Colonies.

"Daily Telegraph"

A studiously harsh and insulting measure has been brought in for the purpose of making the Indian subjects of King Edward feel that they are the most objectionable of aliens in a British self-governing Colony.

The case of the Indian immigrant is infinitely hard. He is penalised for his virtues. He is industrious, frugal, law-abiding, and in business his credit stands at a height which is the best index to his character. But he is a troublesome competitor.

"Manchester Courier"

The community against which the Immigration Restriction Act of the Transvaal is mainly directed consists of British subjects. The Indians in the Transvaal are as fully subjects of the Crown as any citizen in this country. They have as much right to the proud title of *Cives Britannici* and to the advantages it confers as any other subjects of the King. It is not surprising, therefore, that the British Indians in the Transvaal, whose leaders are men of position and education, should be strongly protesting against this rather violent discrimination in their disfavour. . . . The enforcement of such a law cannot fail to have an unfortunate effect on public opinion in India. The question may well be asked there—What is the advantage of being a British subject if respectable and law-abiding Indians are to be deported as "undesirables" from large areas of the Empire? It must be admitted that Mr. Gandhi and his friends have a legitimate cause of complaint. Indeed, the most serious aspect of the whole business is that right and justice are so predominantly on their side.

"Glasgow Herald"

It is useless to deny that the action of the Transvaal eludes ethics and baffles logic. Before the war, it was one of the crying sins of Krugerism that it imposed striking disabilities on the Indian subjects of the British Crown as well as on the white Uitlander. Now, when the passions of the conflict between Boer and Briton have cooled they unite in using the power conferred on both by a "magnanimous" Mother Country to inflict a hardship on their coloured neighbours and fellow-citizens.

O. R. C. Chamber of Commerce.

Discusses How to Keep Out an Indian Woman

At a meeting of the O.R.C. Chamber of Commerce held on the 23rd instant, at Bloemfontein, a letter was read from the Assistant Colonial Secretary, stating that the objection of the Chamber to the entry of an Indian woman, Halcman Adams, had been noted. It was pointed out, however, that the woman had been born in the Free State, had resided there for several years before going to Natal, and had been married in the Colony. The Government could not, therefore, interfere or prevent her returning to the Colony. This case would not, however, form a precedent, and every care would be taken to prevent the entry of Indians.

Mr. A. G. Barlow said they had all been viewing sympathetically the struggle the Transvaal Government were engaged in. This was a most difficult position. This woman might have several daughters and thus form the nucleus of an Indian settlement in the Colony.

Mr. Ruffel said he did not see how the Government could keep this woman out.

Mr. Dalldorf thought they should have another try. If this was permitted, the country in the course of a few years might be swarming with coolies.

Mr. Smetham's letter recording the objection was then read, and as no one suggested any feasible means of preventing the entry of this woman, the chairman said all they could do was to record the communication.—*The Friend.*

Another Indian View

Dr. S. A. Kapadin (Joint Editor of the "Wisdom of the East" series) in an interview, said:

I am afraid that the act is decidedly calculated to shake the loyalty of British subjects in India. As it is, Indians in the Transvaal seem to labour under a great disadvantage, and the matter must, of course, be properly represented in Parliament. I believe that if proper representations are made Indians will be allowed their rightful privileges. It will be a great hardship if the law is carried out to the very letter as regards Asiatics. A tremendous question, and one of the most serious importance, is involved. Prejudices must be cast away, and the situation must be regarded from the point of view of justice. The Indian subjects of the King have the greatest faith in British justice, and it is this that makes them proud to be British subjects. It is this very faith that, if they know a thing to be right, will make them fight to the bitter end.

More Prosecutions

The Potchefstroom Cases

Great interest (says the *Transvaal Leader*) was again taken on the 23rd ulto., in the hearing of the remanded cases against eight Indians charged under the Registration Act with not being in possession of certificates.

Mr. Louw, who defended, put each accused in the witness-box, and all stated they had objection to the new law, and that it detracted from the rights they previously enjoyed.

Pressed by the Public Prosecutor as to this right, one of the accused replied, "Right to property."

Asked if he had such a privilege previously, he said there was such in the 1885 Act.

Abdool Rahman, secretary of the Indian Association, denied that he was a native of Asia, as laid down in the Act, he being born in Mauritius. He admitted having registered under the 1885 law, but under compulsion.

In cross-examination, he said it was not necessary for all members of the Indian Association to be Europeans.

E. M. Patel claimed exemption on the ground that he was a Parsee.

The Magistrate (Mr. Bresler) declined to grant applications for further adjournment in the cases of Rahman and Patel, saying there was no need for him to wait the decision in the Parsee case in Johannesburg. There was no doubt whatever in his mind that all the accused fell under the operation of the Ordinance. He had nothing to do with religious scruples or objections. The law had to be carried out. He did not see that adjournment would help, as the thing had not been sprung upon the Indians.

The order of the Court would be that all accused leave the Colony not later than noon on January 31st.

Mr. Cama's Case

Mr. N. A. Cama came before the Court in Johannesburg on Monday last, on remand.

Mr. Cama quoted the definition of "Asiatic" under the law of 1885 and under the present law, and argued from their similarity that under the present law, it could not have been the intention of the legislators to put all Indians on a level. It could not have been their intention, he said, to include the high caste Asiatics.

The Magistrate: They have included them now.

Mr. Cama: The intention of the legislators is preserved in this law, and the intention of the former legislators being to exclude the Parsees, it should be the intention of this Act also, but if your Worship thinks I have no case I will gladly bow to your decision.

The Magistrate: I would have told you in a moment if I thought you had a case.

Mr. Cama finally asked, if there

was the slightest doubt about the matter, that it be referred to the Attorney-General.

The Magistrate saw no doubt, and Mr. Cama finally said: "I bow to your judgment, and thank you."

An order to leave the Colony within 14 days was made.

On Monday, in "D" Court Johannesburg, 6 hawkers went to gaol for 4 days rather than pay the fine imposed for trading without licences that had been refused to them under the Registration Law.

Pretoria Cases

At Pretoria, on Monday, Moosa Suliman (chief picket), M. M. Patel, (Secretary, Pretoria B. I. Committee), Govind Prag, Khusal Nita, Amod Suleman, Goolab Ruder Desai, Mahomed Essop Ninjee Anandji Khoja, Hoosen Mustapha, N. Gopal, N.K. Peter, A. P. Doorasamy Chetty, Govindasamy Chetty, and two Padiachy's (all pickets) together with 11 Chinese, before Major Dixon, A.R.M. were charged with contravening the Asiatic Registration Act by refusing to leave the Transvaal when ordered to do so by the Court.

Supt. Betts gave formal evidence that the accused had been ordered to leave the Colony before the 20th and 25th January, and had failed to comply with the order of the Court.

One of the accused, Mustapha, said that the sentence hitherto given Asiatics under the law, namely, three months, was only equal to three days. He asked the Court to make the sentence three years.

The Magistrate said that in previous cases before the Court prisoners had not appealed to the Supreme Court to have their sentences reduced, as they might well have done. The records of the Court had been sent to the Supreme Court for confirmation, and had been returned certified by the Judges that the sentences were in accord with real and substantial justice. He had been told that the Executive Council had remitted portions of the previous sentences. It was not the function of the Court to take over the functions of the Executive. He only was concerned with the administration of the law. The accused would be imprisoned with hard labour for three months.

Patel stated that he had been born under the British flag, and his father and everybody belonging to him were servants of the British Government. For their faithful service they had received grants of land from the Government. He made this statement because he was the first of his family to be brought before the Court for a criminal offence, and to show that he was going to prison for conscience sake.

Eleven Chinamen were also charged for a similar offence. They pleaded guilty, and were all sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

One of the accused, on hearing the sentences called out: "Why not six months? I would be more satisfied." Another stated that he would be cut in pieces, but would not submit; and a third said the law was not for men, out for animals.

Another Indian named Ahmod Khamissa was brought up later on a charge of being in the Transvaal without the necessary registration certificate.

The accused said he was prepared and wished to register. He was ill before, and when he asked for his registration certificate he was told he was too late. He came back from India on the third of this month, having been away for eight months.

The Magistrate said that the order of the Court was that he make application forthwith to the Registrar of Asiatics for registration.

A Barberton Scandal

Narasoo Joins the Small Minority

The *Goldfields News* of Barberton says that, on the 20th ulto., together with three other Indians, Richard Narasoo was brought before Mr. Staten, R.M., charged with the crime of contravention of Section 8, Sub-Section 3, Act No. 2 of 1907 (Asiatic Law Amendment Act), by being found within the Colony of the Transvaal without the necessary registration certificate.

He pleaded guilty.

Narasoo in his defence stated he was willing to comply with the provisions of the Act. He was directed to make application forthwith for registration or failing his making application as aforesaid on or before 27th January, to be brought before the Court for an order for his removal to be made.

Giving evidence on oath, he said: It is true I failed to register under the Act. I was misled and induced not to submit to the Registration Law. I was told that if I registered I would lose all the advantages I had had as a British subject for the last 21 years, and also that I would be boycotted by the whole of the British Indian community throughout the Transvaal. It was owing to this that I did not register, and the time for registration passed. Since that time I have made investigation into this matter, and have asked advice. I am satisfied regarding this Law, and am willing to comply with its provisions.

By the Public Prosecutor: I have been in Barberton 21 years. The members of the local Indian community formed a Committee of which I was Chairman. The orders all came from Johannesburg and Pretoria, and although I joined the resistance movement I have since changed my attitude. I was misled and coerced by the leaders in Johannesburg. I went to Johannesburg myself and on my return I decided to leave the passive resistance movement and try and get registered if I could.

At the Heart of the Empire

London, January 1, 1908.

New Year's Greetings

How many are asking to-day: What will the New Year bring to me of joy or sorrow? It is a natural question; a nobler one however, would be: What can I give to this New Year of sacrifice and service? This seems to be not merely the question but the actual deed of Indians in the Transvaal: sacrifice of position, of prospect, of property, so that self-respect and right service may ever be paid. To leaders and to followers, friends in England send a New Year's message of truest sympathy and encouragement in the hope that their courage may be strengthened sufficiently to win a great victory.

"Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain;
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.
For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

A King Among Scientists

Another name has been added to the roll of the illustrious dead entombed in Westminster Abbey: Lord Kelvin. On a dark dreary winter's day, shortly before Christmas, a King among modern scientists was laid to rest in the national Valhalla. The story of the life of William Thomson makes fairy tales quite reasonable; his intellect was a magic wand; his life-work in the realm of physics has given science a new start; future scientists will talk of the Kelvin age; it will mark an epoch in scientific discovery. Here is a record of which not only might Lord Kelvin be proud, but which brings honour to the land of his birth: matriculated at the age of eleven, arrested the attention of scientists by a notable essay on electricity at the age of seventeen, professor at the age of twenty-two; some years later he laid the first Atlantic cable; invented the mariner's compass now universally in use, also many instruments in connection with the measuring and recording of the electric current; a machine for predicting the level of tides, a depth recorder, an air condenser, an astronomical clock—even an improved water tap—these are a few more of William Thomson's services to mankind, not to mention his most valuable written works and his oral teaching. For fifty-three years he was Professor at the Glasgow University; one of the most memorable occasions in the history of science was the celebration of his jubilee as a professor. Scientists came from the ends of the earth to honour him; all nations conferred upon him titles and awards. It is said that when the University of Heidelberg wished to honour him the only degree in their power to confer, which he did not already possess, was that of Doctor of Medicine, and Doctor of Medicine he became. Knighthood

followed the laying of the Atlantic cable, and a peerage was accepted later in life. Though it fell to his lot to win during his lifetime world-wide recognition, Lord Kelvin was one of the humblest and most modest of men. When after fifty-three years' work as professor at Glasgow, he resigned the Chair, he entered himself upon the roll of members of the University as a research student. The story is told that he won his second wife through experimenting with a new method of signalling. He explained the method to her, and then leaving her on shore at the Canaries while he was obliged to return to England, he signalled to her: Will you be my wife? A prince among scientists, Lord Kelvin was also a man of simple faith and devout mind. Here is his confession: I believe that strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie round about us, and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysical or scientific, turn us away from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing to us through Nature the influence of a free will, and teaching us that all living things depend upon one everlasting Creator and Ruler.

A Notable Monarch

When Napoleon transformed the map of Europe he endeavoured to establish his family and influence on the seats of the mighty. To-day there is only one representative of the Napoleonic sovereigns, the King of Sweden. During the past month the venerable King Oscar II. of Sweden has laid down his earthly crown; his son now reigns in his stead as Gustavus V. The death of the aged monarch at the age of seventy-eight brings another member of the Royal family of England nearer to a throne. King Edward has been called the "Uncle of Europe," for he is closely related to nearly every reigning European sovereign. It seems as though His Majesty is accomplishing by foresight and diplomacy what Napoleon failed to secure by force. It remains to be seen whether a century hence the British-descended ruling families will still hold the sceptres which are now, or will be, theirs. A daughter of King Edward is Queen of Norway, a niece is now Crown Princess of Sweden, another niece is Queen of Spain, another Empress of Russia—to mention but a few. But, to come back to the late King of Sweden. History will remember him as the monarch who bowed to the will of his subjects, and allowed half his dominions to pass from him without the shedding of blood. The separation of Norway from the kingship of Sweden and the establishment of a Norwegian monarchy was one of the most notable events of modern times; it was a time of great crisis but it was largely owing to the self-denying forbearance of the late King that war was averted and a peaceful revolution took place. The King was one of the most democratic of sovereigns: the only formality required of any of his

subjects who wished to speak to him was to send in his name; and, more than this, His Majesty never forgot either a name or a face. The democratic instinct led the brother of the new King to renounce his right of succession in order that he might marry the lady he loved, who was not, however, of royal birth, but the marriage did not lead to family estrangement. The late King was not only an able ruler; he was also a poet, musician, and artist, and in addition, one of the most accomplished of public speakers. The people of Sweden were devoted to him; it is easy to understand their devotion when one remembers the following episode. After the celebration of the twenty-fifth year of his reign, the nation wished to present him with a new yacht, knowing his love for the sea, but though his old yacht was small and uncomfortable, King Oscar expressed the wish that the money should be spent in fighting tuberculosis by erecting sanatoria for his poor subjects suffering from the dread disease.

News in Brief

Early in December an event took place in London which was unique in two respects: the Lord Chancellor of England was married during his term of office; the wedding took place in the Crypt Chapel of Westminster Hall. In the long list of Chancellors of this country Lord Loreburn is the first to celebrate his marriage while holding the office, and the beautifully restored ancient chapel was specially licensed by the Bishop of London for this wedding.

Lord Curzon is just now impressing his personality upon the public; he is emerging from his retirement. Some weeks ago, as Chancellor of Oxford, he delivered the Romanes lecture at the University, choosing "Frontiers" for his subject; early last month he lectured before the Birmingham University on the "True Imperialism,"—both discourses were in the true Curzonian style. Now he is anxious to come closely into touch with public life, but has decided that the House of Lords will be a more congenial sphere than the House of Commons. His peerage is an "Irish" one, and was bestowed on his appointment to the Indian viceroyalty so that he might re-enter the Commons if he desired; but prospects do not seem favourable, and now, since a peerage in his own right has not been offered to him either by Mr. Balfour or Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, he wishes to become one of the representative Irish peers, and must be elected by their votes. Lord Curzon feels that he is out of work; he has lamented the fact for some time, and shows himself in too much of a hurry to be busy for the public welfare to await quietly the passing of his aged father, Lord Scarsdale, on whose death he would naturally succeed to a hereditary seat in the House of Lords.

A Native View of Passive Resistance

The following article appeared in a recent number of the *Basutoland Star*, a paper devoted entirely to the interests of the natives. It is headed "A Lesson in True Manliness":—

The stand made by the Asiatics in the Transvaal against the Registration Act viewed from an unbiassed standpoint commends itself most strongly to the Natives of South Africa; it is indeed worthy of emulation by them. Here we have a government like that of the Transvaal which is known all the world over as being very harsh and inconsiderate in its treatment of all persons of colour, being almost driven to climb down from its high pedestal by the exhibition of manly qualities by the Indians. It is true it has at long last after being held to public scorn imprisoned the leaders of this people in order as Gen. Smuts says to see whether the agitation against the Act was shared in by all the Asiatic community or was only the work of the leaders. Well, the leaders are in gaol and Gen. Smuts is free to test the stability of the rank and file and it is our sincerest wish that this people should remain true to the bitter end, as their chief-leader Mr. Gandhi has enjoined them so to do. We entertain this wish because we want the Transvaal to benefit by this experience. It has a population of almost a million Natives who are held in practical bondage (because we hold that a man who has no voice in his own government is nothing but a *slave*) and the laws it makes for this voiceless mass of humanity are, to say the least of it, unchristian and brutal, and yet these masses lack such manliness as even to lift their little fingers against the wrongs perpetrated on them. Even a worm turns when trampled upon. Passive resistance has never been regarded as defiance of law and authority, and if it has ever been, then the Asiatics are sinning in good company, for has not the Transvaal but recently experienced it in the shape of the WHITE Miners' Strike and besides English History is teeming with instances of passive resistors? Our famous Moshesh once said to the Cape Governor who was becoming too obtrusive and overbearing and was also apt to be threatening: "If you strike a dog it will show its teeth," from which we infer that even although man is master yet if he abuses his power of superiority over inferior animals they have not yet lost their self-respect and the shewing of teeth is a sign that they resent this treatment. Man, be his colour or nationality what it may, is superior to the canine animals and is therefore dissimilar to them in nearly every respect and one of these is in shewing his resent to anything which assails his self-respect and tends to inferiorise him. Man has two ways

of resenting or resisting: the one is by active resistance and the other is by passive resistance. The former is not commendable as it leads to bloodshed which should be avoided, and the latter is commendable as it avoids bloodshed and usually ends in a bloodless and amicable settlement of a point at issue. It is the latter mode of resistance which the Asiatics have adopted which we commend our people the Natives of South Africa to emulate. Gandhi and his compatriots are truly martyrs and come what may, true martyrs have before to-day never suffered in vain. Their steadfastness for "the cause that lacks assistance" and their manliness against "the wrong that needs resistance" will be handed down to posterity. Our sympathies go out to our oppressed fellow-subjects who are made to suffer for the same cause that we suffer, viz., our slight pigment of the skin. Truly the Transvaal has tarnished the fair name of our Mighty Empire by its blind colour-prejudice. *Ahsit Omen.*

A Model Citizen*

A Review

This little work is designated by its author "a simple exposition of civic rights and duties, and a descriptive account of British institutions, local, national, and imperial." In point of fact, Mr. H. Osman Newland has written an elementary text book upon the rights and duties of citizenship and, in so doing, has, in a few lucid chapters, performed a service for which the British Public should be duly grateful. There is a preface by the Earl of Meath. Within the space of some 200 odd pages, Mr. Newland has developed an admirable summary of the peculiarities and particularities that go to make up that curious agglomeration of strange uses and customs known as the British Constitution. The facts of interest brought out by the author are far too little known, even by the adult citizen, not to speak of the immature neophyte for whom the work is primarily intended. A brief survey of Colonial Government is included, the pages are enlivened by excellent and apt illustrations, and a useful glossary of political and civic terms in frequent use is attached. Whilst Mr. Newland's book is principally of interest to stay-at-home young Britons, its fundamental principles are such as should form an intrinsic part of the curriculum of every boy and girl in the oversea dominions, where rights are too often abused because of an incomplete apprehension of their corresponding duties.

* "The Model Citizen," by H. Osman Newland, F.R.H.S., etc. Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., London.

Interview with Sir Mancherji Bhownagree

Full Text

The following is the full text of Reuter's interview with Sir Mancherji Bhownagree, immediately after the news arrived that the Immigrants' Restriction Act had received the royal assent:—

At the present moment, with the situation in India what it is, I regard the legislation as a calamity. It will be used as a handle to show that the British Government is neither able nor willing to protect its own subjects even in its own Colonies. The position of the Indian is much worse than that of the Japanese, for Japan can and does take diplomatic action, from which India is debarred. When I was in Parliament, I devoted much time to ventilating this question. I was always persuaded that Ministers, from Mr. Chamberlain downwards, looked upon the whole question from the first with very great disapproval and irritation, but that they were more or less helpless, owing to what they thought was strong local feeling in Africa. All along the line things have gone from bad to worse. This legislation is one of the utterly unjustifiable and hideous things done in the name of the Imperial Government, which even the most ardent friend of British rule in India cannot possibly justify, and which has shaken, and will further shake, the loyalty of the Indian people and their confidence in the desire or power of the Imperial Government or the British Crown to protect them against injustice. I am not surprised at the Transvaal passing such a piece of legislation, but I should have thought the Imperial Government, when and while granting self-Government, would have warned the Transvaal against perpetrating such folly. I am surprised not only that the Imperial Government has not done so, but has readily assented to the law. Of course, things will not rest here. We shall fight in the interest of the British Government, because if we throw up the fight, and tell the people of India that there is nothing to be hoped for from the British Government on the score of justice, the delivery of such a dangerous message would render the situation desperate indeed. If it were a question of these Asiatics injuring a single Englishman I would be the first to assent to the rules being framed to prevent such injury, but this is not the case. The whole legislation proceeds from mere race prejudice, and is prompted not so much by Englishmen as by Continental low-class settlers who are not British subjects.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT. We beg to thank "A Colonial Convert" for his letter and enclosed extracts, but we are not at present able to print them.

Notes on the Campaign

We published a paragraph in these notes on the 18th ultimo stating that Messrs. Suliman Goolam & Sons, of Verulam, was the only firm which did not close its store on the day of the Durban Mass Meeting, and that the Verulam Indian merchants had decided to boycott this firm. We now find that we were not correctly informed. Several stores in town and district did some business besides Messrs. Suliman Goolam. Messrs. M. Maitrer Brothers kindly inform us that their assistants sold goods early in the morning, but it was through a misunderstanding on their part. We are led to make this explanation because Messrs. Suliman Goolam & Sons feel that some injustice has been done to them by stating, as we did, that their firm alone was open. We understand also that the boycott has been removed.

London, Jan. 29.—A meeting attended by 7,000 persons, was held at Bombay to-day to protest against the attitude of the Transvaal Government towards Indians. The attendance included Hindu, Mahomedan, and Parsee leaders, and also a number of prominent Europeans.—Reuter.

Mr. L. H. Greene, of Boshoff's Road, writes to the *Times of Natal*:

I am not aware that any economic evils exist of which the Asiatic is the sole author, or in which he is even a partially responsible factor, that is, traced to their root source.

Keen competition, trade trickery, and so forth are not confined exclusively to Asiatics. Socially the Asiatic's ways may not be altogether our ways, but even upon this score he is not by any means the solitary exception, nor are idiosyncracies in life confined to people of colour.

The economic dislocations at present obtaining in this colony are not, so far as I am able to see, traceable to the presence of the Asiatic trader. He certainly may have been taking advantage of the wreckage upon the beach, and he is not alone in the scramble, but he was not the cause of the wreck.

The Asiatic has found himself surrounded by conditions, entirely of our making, which have enabled him to thrive and grow until he has become a successful competitor in most branches of trade to the chagrin and envy of his less enterprising white rivals. We require to be superior, and to require a higher standard of living to maintain that superiority, and yet we are howling with fear at the prospective approach of an inferior people whom we affect to hold in contempt. Is this consistent? Surely we must agree that the best will survive, and if we are sincere in our belief of superiority we have nothing to fear from the Asiatic. We may, however, fear ourselves.

A mass meeting of East Rand Indians was held on Wednesday the 22nd ulto., in the grounds of the Hindu Temple at Germiston. Representatives were present from Benoni, Brakpan, Boksburg, Elsburg, Rietfontein, and other centres. The meeting was a crowded one, and was

presided over by Mr. Hazurasing, others present being Messrs. Lalbahadursing, Naidoo, Appasamy, Moosa Ismail Daya, and the following delegates from Johannesburg; Moulvi Ahmed Mukhtiar, Imam Abdool Cadir, N. A. Cama, G. K. Desai, M. D. Desai, and H. S. L. Polak.

The following resolution was proposed by Mr. K. K. Patel (Germiston) seconded by Mr. N. R. Soodivala. (Boksburg), and supported by Mr. Kasim Ally—(Boksburg) and Mr. Ismail Nana (Benoni):

"This mass meeting of British Indians resident on the East Rand resolves to continue this struggle to the end, no matter what the cost may be. This meeting regards those who are in gaol to-day as demanding of us to share their punishment with them, and that all British Indians are determined to do."

Ladysmith Farmers' Association has joined in the general chorus of praise and thanksgiving for the action of the Transvaal Government. Het Volkers at Volkrust "heartily support" the Asiatic expulsion policy.

"The inhabitants of Wakkeestroom" approve of the Transvaal's policy in regard to Asiatics.

The Durban Fruiterer's Association has contributed a sum of £100 to the funds of the Transvaal British Indian Association.

Other Societies and various branches of the British Indian Association have also forwarded substantial cheques.

It is stated in a quarter likely to be well informed, says the *Natal Mercury*, that there is a distinct movement among the Transvaal Indians in favour of emigration to British East Africa, and, so far as the populous centres of the Colony, in which the Asiatics are chiefly congregated, are concerned, this would be likely to take place for the most part through Delagoa Bay. It is suggested that the probability of the Indians turning their eyes in this direction has been entertained by the Transvaal Government from the first, and the hint is thrown out, based upon what appear to be good grounds, that the Transvaal authorities may be considering proposals for making approaches to the Indian community in this direction, and of presently encouraging them to leave by offering them State-assisted passages out of the country.

A gentleman who is said to be well in touch with the Transvaal Administration, and is for the present on a visit to Durban, informs the *Mercury* that the Government are unalterably determined to maintain their policy as regards the Indians, and that they will not hesitate at incarcerating recalcitrant Asiatics to a number considerably in excess of those now in gaol for an indefinite time as long as they

continue to defy the law. The probability of strong exceptions being raised during the coming session of the Imperial Parliament to the treatment of the Indians in the country is well realised, it is represented, by the Transvaal Ministry, but the Government, as well as both the political parties in the Legislature, are resolved, the informant declared, upon enforcing all the measures which have been set in operation up to the point of active Imperial intervention, when the strong probability—almost a certainty—would be that the Government would resign, and that their action would receive the full consent and support of the entire Legislature, and the whole of public opinion in the Transvaal.

The *Daily Telegraph*, January 27, publishes a cablegram from its Johannesburg Correspondent stating that the Transvaal Government has decided to reconsider the Asiatic situation, and will appoint a judge to examine the Act, and devise amendments. Meanwhile, the correspondent adds, the operation of the Act remains in abeyance.—Reuter.

Negotiations upon the lines indicated above have been proceeding for some time, says the *Pretoria News*. As they were, however, conducted without prejudice and were entirely confidential, they could not be made public until sufficiently far advanced to avoid a rupture by premature discussion in public. We understand that the Government, in view of the very serious nature of the Imperial situation created by the passive resistance offered to the Asiatic Registration Act, has decided to reconsider the whole position. We can only add to this news our heartiest congratulations to all concerned that counsels of justice and moderation have prevailed.

Pretoria, Jan. 27.—The statement in the London *Daily Telegraph*, that the Transvaal Government are appointing a Judge to examine the Asiatic Act, and to devise amendments to the same, and that meanwhile the Act will be held in abeyance, is emphatically denied. The Colonial Secretary (Mr. Smuts), interviewed this afternoon, said there was no truth whatever in the statement.—Reuter.

Next morning the *News* remarks: Our statements in regard to the Government's anxiety to arrive at some reasonable compromise with the Asiatics were confirmed this morning through the medium of the customary official denial, supported by the bombastic vapourings of a local publication.

London, January 28th.—Reuter learns that the Transvaal Government and the Indians are negotiating. It is hoped in well-informed circles in

London that the Transvaal's requirements will be achieved without affecting the susceptibilities of the Asiatics.

The *Daily Graphic* welcomes the reports of a possible agreement with regard to the Asiatic Registration Act, and attacks Lord Elgin for not intervening.

The *Daily Chronicle* declares that General Botha and General Smuts deserve well of the Empire if the reports of a compromise being arrived at are true.—Reuter.

The *Times of Natal* quotes from the *Transvaal Leader*: "The problem to Natalians is, how to reap all the advantages of coolie labour without having the coolie. It is not easily solved." The sneer is not undeserved, adds the *Times*. Our contemporary, however, must not suppose that the wild talk of anti-Asiatic extremists represents the views of the sober thinking population of the colony.

The Indians of Stellenbosch in Cape Colony have held a meeting expressing their sincere sympathy with Indians in the Transvaal.

Mr. N. N. Patel of Klerksdorp writes that he and the Indians in that town are determined to resist the Act at any cost.

Inquiries made among official quarters in Durban by the *Mercury* elicited no confirmation of the statement contained in their Johannesburg correspondent's telegram, despatched on Sunday, that there was a large exodus of Indians from the Transvaal.

Discussing the recent prosecutions of Indian soldiers in the Transvaal, the *Mercury* interviewed a "trustworthy authority" who denied that there was a single "pensioned Indian soldier" in the Transvaal. There was one man, he explains, who was an ex-sergeant in a Pathan regiment, and served in South Africa with an Indian hospital corps, receiving both the Queen's and King's (civilian) medals, but he is believed to be now in India. To the best of his information, there is not a single Indian in the Transvaal who served through the South African War as a combatant. There is a man who was a sergeant in some Indian transport corps, and served for a time in a similar capacity in this country. He is believed to possess the Tirah medal, but our contemporary's informant has never seen his South African medals, if he has them. Another Indian was a bombardier in a native mountain battery, resigned before the South African War broke out, and came here as a servant to a British colonel; but, though he is supposed to have been wounded, he was never a combatant. Lab Singh, an ex-sergeant in the 5th Sikhs was in the Transvaal, but has now gone back to India.

Reuter's Pretoria correspondent says that the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Smuts, speaking at a meeting in the Burgersdorp Division of Pretoria, tonight (Jan. 28), dealing with the Asiatic question, said that with regard to conscientious religious scruples as objections to registration, 100,000 Indians in Natal, and 60,000 indentured Chinese in the Transvaal, had all registered on the finger-print system without demur.

The Transvaal Government, said Mr. Smuts, still offered to register Asiatics if they volunteered to register in a body. He was in close touch with the Asiatic community, and would not be surprised if they soon recognised that the position they had taken up was an impossible one. If they registered, the Asiatic question would be finally closed in the Transvaal. Those legally here would be placed on a proper footing, and the Immigration Act would effectually close the door on the rest.

The Asiatic Law was devised as much to protect the Asiatic legally in the Transvaal, as to protect the white people and prevent further immigration. A Government constituted such as theirs, having at their back the whole of the white population of the Transvaal, with a few exceptions, was bound to be fair and just, and take into consideration all the facts and equities of the case. The Asiatics had been obstinate and wrong-headed. He now called upon the white population to recognise that they had great power as a white community, but they must be careful how they wielded it.

At a special meeting of the British Indian Association on Tuesday last, the 28th ulto., Mr. Halim Mahomed was elected Acting Chairman of the Association during the enforced absence of Mr. Essop Ismail Mia.

The Delagoa Bay Correspondent of the *Transvaal Leader*, telegraphing on Tuesday, says that during the past week 74 Indian passive resisters from the Transvaal arrived. They gave their papers to the police while there in transit.

The *Transvaal Leader*, dealing with the issue of Municipal licences in Johannesburg, says:—

In no department has there been such a great falling off as in that of hawkers' licences. This, of course, is almost, if not entirely, due to the state of affairs brought about by the Asiatic Registration Act. Last year the total number of hawkers' licences issued was 1,600. The total issued this year amounts to only 462. Not a single licence has this year been issued to an Asiatic simply because the Asiatic has not complied with the law. Assuming that every one of the 1,000 odd licences that have not been renewed this year represented an asset to the holder, taken in the aggregate

they must have been equal to a considerable sum of money. Into whose pocket is that money now to go? Into the European's? One would have thought that the greengrocery trade, for instance, would have been immediately seized upon by white traders. It would appear, however, that the hawkers' licences already issued have been nearly all renewals. They are held by some Europeans, by a good many Assyrians and by a fair number of Malays. The position of the Assyrian is somewhat peculiar. By birth he is strictly an Asiatic. If he is a Christian he is, however, exempt from the operations of the law, and is described as "a Christian subject of the Turkish Empire." If he is not a Christian then he is an Asiatic within the meaning of the Act.

Speaking at Pretoria on Thursday, the 23rd ulto., Mr. Johann Rissik, Minister for Native Affairs, said that the presence of the Asiatics contributed largely to the impoverished condition of the people. The people of Europe did not understand the position: Asiatics constituted one-twentieth of the population of the Transvaal. Calculated on the same basis, how would the people of England like it if they were invaded by two and a half millions of Asiatics? Would they not also adopt strong measures of restricting immigration?

The *Transvaal Leader* understands that all the Indians in the employ of the Johannesburg Municipality who have refused to register have received one month's notice to leave. Practically all the men are in the employ of the Parks and Estates Committee, who have not taken this step without considerable reluctance, for the Indians are ideal gardeners, patient and careful. However, their refusal to register left the committee no alternative. Steps will be taken to fill the vacancies with white men. As there are over 100 Indians in the employ of the committee, there should be at least half that number of billets open for Europeans.

The *Rand Daily Mail* states that, almost all the Indian occupants of the Municipal houses in Newtown have now been arrested. The loss of rent to the Municipality which this will entail will probably come to from £500 to £1,000 per annum. It is extremely improbable that these houses will ever be occupied by whites, and Kaffirs are prevented by law from taking the place of the Indians.

A meeting at the Caxton Hall, attended by a hundred Indians, passed a resolution sympathising with the Transvaal Indians, and pointing out that harm was being done in India by the policy of the Transvaal Government. Reuter.

Owing to a misinterpretation of a telegram, the following appeared in our issue of last week: "The general impression seems to be that it is intended to expel those Indians who are not identified."

The correct rendering should have been: "The general impression seems to be that it is intended to expel Indians and not to identify them."

The following cable was sent to the South Africa British Indian Committee in London on Saturday last by the British Indian Association, giving a summary of the position of affairs to date in the Transvaal as the result of the enforcement of the Asiatic Registration Act:—There were, on that day, 200 Indians in gaol, 120 under notice to leave the Colony, and 20 warned to appear before the Magistrate for failing to register. There were 3 Chinese in gaol and 38 under notice. Many more arrests were expected, the towns affected being Johannesburg, Pretoria, Pietersburg, Heidelberg, Vereeniging, Krugersdorp, Barberton, Germiston, Potchefstroom, and Roodepoort. The arrests include all the officials of the British Indian Association, the Hamidia Islamic Society, and the Transvaal Chinese Association. Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, Christians, a barrister, merchants, traders, hawkers, agents, clerks, interpreters, Government officials were effected. Colonial-born Indians, Indians who were married in South Africa and have children born here are not exempt. A minimum estimate of the assets belonging to those arrested and which were imperilled in Johannesburg alone was £150,000. Many families were left on the mercy of the community. Some merchants of 20 years' standing were to be imprisoned. The victims include greybeards and youths of tender years, two old soldiers bearing medals of several campaigns, leaders of the Ambulance Corps that took part in the Boer War, and the Stretcher Bearer Corps in the Natal Rebellion, and many merchants who had cheerfully lost heavily during the war. Half the Indian population had already left the Transvaal rather than register. Hundreds of municipal, railway, and Government employees had been discharged owing to non-registration. The Asiatic community was determined to continue the struggle to the bitter end.

At Krugersdorp, also, Lala Nuzla and Ruddhia Lala were ordered to leave the Colony within 14 days.

On Monday, at Roodepoort, 4 Indian hawkers from Randfontein were dealt with by the Magistrate for trading without licences, they having been refused these because they were not registered under the Registration Act. They also elected to go to gaol for 14 days. They asked the Magistrate why they were arrested under the

Municipal By-laws and not under the Asiatic Law Amendment Act.

At Pretoria, on Saturday last, Bhikha Lallu and Naran Daya, together with one Chinaman were brought before the Magistrate on a charge of being in the Colony without a registration certificate issued under the new Registration Act. They were ordered to leave the Colony by the 5th instant. The Chinaman stated that he considered the Law was cruelty to animals.

At Potchefstroom, on Saturday, Osman Jiga and Moosa Alalkharia were ordered to leave the Colony by the 31st ultimo.

Fourteen hawkers were dealt with on Saturday by the Magistrate at Krugersdorp and ordered to pay a fine of £2 or go to prison without hard labour for fourteen days. They all chose imprisonment.

At Pretoria, on Monday, 15 Indians and 11 Chinese were sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment with hard labour each for failing to leave the Colony when ordered to do so.

In B Court, Johannesburg, on Monday, Narsi Jeram and David Ernest were ordered to leave the Colony within 14 days. The former said "I have been in the Colony for 12 years and worked up a business." The latter said that he had been in the Transvaal for 21 years. He was born in Natal, was married in South Africa, and had eight children born in the Transvaal. He would not register. Eight others received a similar sentence.

Ladhasingh at Boksburg was ordered to leave the Colony within 14 days for not being in possession of a registration certificate under the Registration Act, on Monday last. At the conclusion of the case, the large number of Indians present in the Court formed in procession and marched to the Location. This is the first prosecution in Boksburg under the Registration Act.

At Germiston, on Monday, B. Hazurasingh, Chairman of the local Hindu Society, was ordered to leave the Colony within 48 hours, for a similar offence.

Amongst those who were first ordered to leave in Barberton were A. Benjamin and J. S. Moonsamy.

Umtali (Rhodesia) Indians have donated £11 to the funds of the British Indian Association.

The secretaries of the Natal Indian Congress request the various Indian associations in different parts of South Africa to send the names of their officials with their postal and telegraphic addresses.

A few white men are taking up the work of the Indian hawkers and pedlars. It is unlikely that anything much will come of this.

Meetings of Europeans have been held at different places in the Transvaal to support the Government. The usual resolutions have been passed.

At the Germiston Town Council meeting recently a discussion took place as to whether they themselves or the Chamber of Commerce should call a meeting to support the Government's Asiatic policy.

Mr. T. A. White (Deputy-Mayor) said it was not a Municipal but a political matter, and that if the Council called the meeting they would be surcharged with the cost. If, however, the members of the Council were prepared to pay their share of the cost, he did not see why the meeting should not be held. He would like to know from Mr. Freddy whether the Asiatics leasing a portion of the Market-Square were registered.

Mr. Freddy: I don't know, but I hope they are not! (Laughter.)

After further discussion it was resolved that the Mayor convene a public meeting, the place and date being left to him to arrange, the voting being ten for the meeting and five against.

It was agreed that if the cost of the meeting was surcharged by the auditors, those whose votes were recorded in favour of the meeting should bear the cost between them, those against it being freed from any liability.

A meeting was held at Klerksdorp to support the Government's attitude in regard to the Asiatic question. The Mayor presided and resolutions were passed approving of the policy of the Government and urging firmness in carrying out the Asiatic Act.

A deputation of "Oude Ambtenaren," consisting of Messrs. G. B. van Legglo, P. Dietzsch, J. H. Munnik, E. Olivier and P. Pretorius, had an interview with the Premier and submitted to him the various resolutions passed at the meeting on January 18, at Johannesburg. The resolutions put forward included the one that "The meeting resolves to request the Government to appoint in future more of the late Republican officers, so that the comparison shall be at least one half of the ex-officials to the more recently appointed officials, and then not only to the lower positions but to the more responsible positions."

The Dundee Farmers have passed a resolution supporting the Transvaal Government, and another resolution requesting legislation restricting Asiatic immigration and licences.

The Aboobaker Case Again

No Relief

The following copies of correspondence have been forwarded for publication:—

Johannesburg,
18th December, 1907.

The Honourable,
the Colonial Secretary,
Sir,

Re Estate Late Aboobaker Amod.

As the Government is aware, Clause 17 of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act was inserted in order to give relief to the heirs of this Estate and to enable them to hold Erf 373 in Church Street, Pretoria, purchased by the late Mr. Aboobaker Amod before Law 3 of 1885 was passed. Before the Clause was drafted last year, the circumstances under which the property was transferred in favour of Mr. Polak were placed before the then Attorney-General and it was understood that the Clause was drawn up in order to meet the case. A Deed of Transfer was duly framed to register the Erf in favour of the heirs, who are British Indians, and submitted to the Registrar of Deeds. He, however, threw out the transfer, because, in his opinion the case was not covered by the clause in question. The matter then went before Mr. Justice Wessels in Chambers, who upheld the Registrar's contention. The Clause in question has thus proved ineffectual for giving relief to the heirs. May I venture to trust that the Government will grant relief to the heirs? In my humble opinion, the most expeditious method of doing this would be to declare that portion of the street capable of being held by British Indians.

I have, etc.,
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.

Pretoria,
January 6th, 1908.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Johannesburg.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, and to inform you that the Government is unable to declare the area situate in Church Street, Pretoria, and formerly the property of the late Aboobaker Amod to be a place in which Asiatics may hold real property.

I have, etc.,
(Sd.) E. M. GORGES,
Act. Asst. Colonial Secretary.

MR. CHURCHILL AS SECRETARY OF STATE. It is reported that Mr. Winston Churchill will be appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies, and that Lord Elgin will replace the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Privy Seal in the House of Lords. Lord Ripon is retiring.—Reuter.

Invited by the Government

Strange Statement at Roodepoort

At the last meeting of the Roodepoort Town Council, a petition was read in which the petitioners urged the Council to convene a public meeting as soon as possible for the purpose of passing a resolution endorsing the action of the Government in relation to the Asiatics.

Mr. De Lacy thought that as the question savoured of politics it should not be considered by the Council.

Mr. Van Rensburg moved that such a meeting should be convened by the Mayor. He pointed out that Municipalities had been invited by the Government to co-operate with them in the action they were taking.

The Mayor said that it was rather like dabbling in higher politics.

Mr. Campbell then seconded the motion, and it was carried, the decision as to date to be fixed later.

Alleged Illtreatment of Indians

At Delagoa Bay

The following is a copy of a letter addressed by the Foreign Office, to the Secretary of the South Africa British Indian Committee in London:—

Sir,—With reference to the letter from this Department of July 26th last, respecting the alleged illtreatment of certain British Indians at Delagoa Bay, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state that he has received further particulars by mail on the object.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Lourenco Marques reports that the Regulations require an Asiatic before disembarking at Delagoa Bay to produce a certificate showing either that he has been previously domiciled in Portuguese East Africa, or that he is authorised to proceed to the Transvaal. These certificates or passports are issued either at Lourenco Marques or in the Transvaal as the case may be. Asiatics in possession of the necessary documents are furnished with a landing permit, called *Salvo-conducto*.

On the occasion in question the British Indian subjects above referred to, had no certificates and landed by means of forged permits and it was not considered feasible to compel them to re-embark.

They were, however, ordered to leave Portuguese East Africa and the majority did so at once. Fourteen, however, who were not provided with the requisite means, remained in the Colony.

The Government of Portuguese East Africa could not have compelled the men to work in prison, but Sir E. Grey understands that in this case

they were offered the alternative of working on the railway for the usual wages until they had earned enough money to purchase their return passage.

I am to add that Major Baldwin was informed that none of the men objected to working under these conditions and that none were refused permission to leave the country.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
(Sgd.) W. LANGLEY.

Late News

The Prime Minister, the Hon. F. R. Moor, has consented to receive a deputation of six representative Indians on the question of licences, on a day next week to be fixed later. The Indians met on Thursday night and appointed the following to meet the Premier: Dr Nanji, Messrs. Dawad Mahomed, Abdul Cadir, M. C. Anglia, Amod Bayat, and another gentleman from Ladysmith.

Johannesburg, Friday.

The compromise effected is generally considered satisfactory by the Asiatic communities.

Mr. Gandhi and others, numbering over two hundred, were released this morning; there were no public demonstrations.

All prosecutions still pending have been withdrawn.

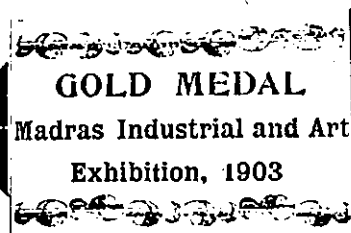
Asiatics will be trading without licences until the meeting of Parliament.

The official correspondence has been published.

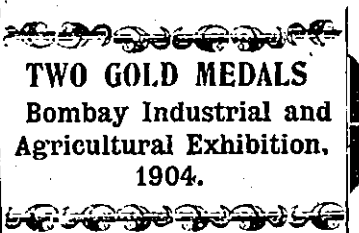
Johannesburg, January 30.—Interviewed by the *Rand Daily Mail* representative to-night, Mr. Gandhi said in effect that the compromise must not be considered a victory for the Indians, as the compromise, in his opinion, was a fair one. Mr. Smuts by it had retained his honour and self-esteem, while the Indians' scruples and objections had received every consideration.—Reuter.

IMPERIAL RESPONSIBILITY. Chief-Justice Sir Henry Bale, when speaking recently at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute in London said: It may, of course, be we Colonists do not always, perhaps, sufficiently recognise the Imperial interests which are involved in questions which, to us, may not always present themselves, as it were, in an Imperial aspect. It may be due to some extent to our environment, but, as I have said, I have felt we do not always sufficiently realise that what may be good for us may not be good for the Empire as a whole, and that some questions have an Imperial bearing and tendency which we, perhaps, do not sufficiently appreciate.

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Miscellaneous Leather Goods :—Puttee and lace gaiters, collar boxes, brush cases, cigar and cigarette cases, school bags, Peon's bags, Mussacks, Syce's belts, bottle, and tumbler cases, luggage labels, etc., etc., etc.

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Indian Opinion

VOL. VI.

PHOENIX, NATAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH, 1908

No. 6

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Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8th, 1908.

Humility

THERE is an Indian proverb that "The more the mango tree flourishes, the more it droops." There can be no gainsaying the fact that Indians in the Transvaal have come out of their struggle with honour, and, what is more, without their sacred resolution having been broken. The suffering that they have gone through must be taken as a necessary process of purification.

The compromise contemplates the ultimate repeal of the Act, which was the soul of the objection. The voluntary registration which has been offered often has now been accepted, and the condition stated in the dignified, yet humble, letter written by Messrs. Gandhi, Quinn, and Naidoo is that the Act is not to apply to those who voluntarily register themselves. The Government receive all they wanted in the way of identification, so that each party gets the substance it was striving for. Looked at in that light, the compromise reflects credit alike on the Government and on the Indian community. The Government have

shown their strength in having even at the eleventh hour recognised the necessity of consulting Indian sentiment. The much-discussed finger-prints remain, though in an elastic manner, and their acceptance by the Indian community shows not only its prudence, but it shows that the Indian objection has never centred round finger-prints.

We must decline to call this compromise a victory for Indians. That were an abuse of terms, but, if it be at all applicable in this connection, the victory is for Truth. Indians have always stated, and rightly so, that this was a religious fight. People who only give a superficial meaning to the word religion, have failed to see any in the Indian struggle, but Indians themselves have thought otherwise. They undertook it in the name of God, and they have to humble themselves before Him for having received sufficient strength to come through the ordeal.

Moreover, Indians have little reason to glory over the compromise, but every incentive to walk humbly, because the work of a different and higher type has only just commenced. The community has, of its own asking, been put upon its trial. Instead of the Law requiring it on pain of suffering the penalties, they have incurred a moral and, therefore, a higher obligation by offering the Government every facility for identifying all Indians entitled to reside in the Transvaal. It is, therefore, now constructive work, and, whilst the community has proved itself capable of carrying on in an orderly, peaceful and perfectly courteous manner, the necessary work of destruction, it has now to show that it is capable of solid and substantial constructive work. When it has proved itself worthy of the confidence reposed in it, the Indian community may have reason to congratulate itself, and will certainly have risen very high indeed in the estimation of all thoughtful men.

WE ARE AFRAID THAT IT WILL BE needful for British Indians in this Colony to keep a watchful eye on the turn of events here. From inspired reports, it appears that the Imperial Government are quite prepared to deprive the Natal Indians of the municipal franchise, under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Bill, if only this Colony will amend the Licensing Law to the extent of allowing appeal to the Supreme Court from the decisions of Licensing Courts' Officers. We hope that the Indian community will accept no compromise upon such

a basis. The two matters are entirely distinct and should be dealt with each on its own merits. A franchise once granted ought not to be taken away. We are at a loss to understand why, for instance, an Indian merchant's name should be allowed to remain on the municipal roll (for there are signs that even the Imperial Government will not permit an attack upon vested interests), whereas his son, who may be, from the European point of view, more highly qualified for citizenship, will be debarred from exercising the civic franchise. And what the municipal franchise has to do with the question of meting out justice to the licensed dealer it is not easy to explain. If an injustice has already been done the Indian community, we are unable to conceive that it can be remedied by its replacement by another injury. It is plain that Natal Indians are called upon to take a strong position if they wish to safeguard their children's privileges. There seems, indeed, to be much ado about nothing, for, though, to-day, the Indian is, in theory, qualified as a municipal voter, in practice, he has not exercised his rights, realising, with great self-restraint, the expediency of not adding fuel to the fire of prejudice against him. Surely it is the height of unfairness to penalise him for this display of common-sense and patriotic duty.

A Theatrical Performance

In Aid of Transvaal Indians

A Theatrical Play entitled *Dage Hasarat*, in Hindustani, was given on the first instant, in the Victoria Theatre, Durban, under the auspices of the Durban Fruiterers' Association. The actors of the East Indian Theatrical Company and other amateurs took a prominent part in the proceedings. The net proceeds are to go to the funds of the British Indian Association, Johannesburg, in aid of Indians in the Transvaal. The Theatre was closely packed by all sections of the Indian community.

Mr. Dada Osman thanked the audience on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress, and Messrs. Dawad Mahomed, Parsee S. J. Randeria, and U. M. Shelat also addressed the audience.

Mr. Parsee Rustonjee paid a tribute to the communities represented by the audience and specially thanked those present on behalf of the British Indian Association, under the direction of the Assistant-Secretary of that body. Mr. Rustonjee also asked the people to extend the same generous support on the next Saturday when a

Gujarati play is to be given for the same purpose.

Mr. O. K. Patel, on behalf of the Fruiterers' Association, thanked the leaders of the Natal Indian Congress and the audience for their presence.

Voluntary Registration

Full Instructions

We have been informed that the work of voluntary registration for all the Indians in the Transvaal and which has been accepted by the Government commences in earnest on Monday next, the 10th instant, at Johannesburg, in the Old Dutch Church, Von Brandis Square, from 9 o'clock in the morning, except on the first day, when it will be from 10 o'clock. Due information will be given with reference to registration in other places, and it is stated that, except in Pretoria and Johannesburg, the receiving of applications will be left in the hands of the Magistrates in the different parts.

The form of registration certificate and the form of application have been considerably changed, in order to suit the new situation. Every adult male Indian should present himself for registration, and all those who are entitled to receive the certificate will be registered. Roughly, those who are in possession of permits *bona-fide* issued to them, and those who are in possession of Old Dutch registration certificates, being their property, and all children who entered the country openly when they were under the age of 16 years will be registered. The following may be, to all intents and purposes, laid down as the rule regarding the methods of identification:—

(a) At the discretion of the Registrar, signatures, that is to say signatures well-formed, bearing the impress of the signatory and not a mere tracing of letters, will be accepted in place of finger-prints from those who may possess property qualifications, or may be otherwise known as residents of the Transvaal.

(b) Signatures in place of finger-prints will be accepted from those who possess educational qualification sufficient to satisfy the test under the Immigrants' Restriction Act.

(c) Those who have any real or conscientious objections to giving ten finger-prints, and who do not fall under either of the above clauses, may be allowed to give thumb-prints instead of digit impressions.

Whilst all these are very liberal concessions, in our opinion, it will be more becoming of the Indian community not to take advantage of them. The main point having been secured, we are of opinion that everyone should give digit impressions without the slightest hesitation. In any case, the holders who have a right not to give 10 finger-prints should be the first to waive this and offer to give those

impressions, so as to facilitate the work of identification, and make the process easier for the Government. We believe that the Indian community will show its real dignity by making as limited a use of the concession as possible. We understand that Messrs. Essop Mia, Gandhi, and others who have been closely identified with the struggle, have decided not to claim the concession.

Indian Women and the Struggle

A Magnificent Example

[SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED]

The record of the struggle so satisfactorily ended in the Transvaal would be incomplete without a word said of the heroism of the Indian women. There are not very many of them in the Transvaal, owing to the many unfortunate circumstances attending the residence in that Colony of British Indians, but their courage and self-denial have received as trying a test as could well be imagined.

No one who is at all acquainted with the intense family affection existing amongst Indians can be unaware of the supreme self-sacrifice of the Transvaal Indian women. Not one knew from one day to another when her husband would be torn from her side and consigned to the gaols of the Colony, when the father of her children would suddenly disappear, when her natural protector and the family bread-winner would be swiftly withdrawn, and she and her children left to starve, or obliged to rely upon the honour of the Indian community, that it would be true to the solemn pledge taken in September, 1906, and would maintain the women and children of those who should be incarcerated.

One thing these brave women did know. They were positive that it was impossible for their husbands to fulfil the religious vows, taken on the occasion of their nuptial ceremonies, if the latter could forswear their sacred oath not to register under an enslaving law. They realised instinctively that, whereas their husbands were, in a sense, fighting for themselves alone and their own freedom, they, the women, not only had to regard the honour of their husbands and the preservation of the spirit of the marriage rites of themselves, but they had also to secure the permanent liberty of their children. Thus they realised that a double duty, a heavier responsibility, was imposed upon them. It was for them to safeguard the present and the future.

And nobly did they fulfil their honourable task. One of the men arrested at Pietersburg was in Pretoria when the Pretoria men were sentenced so barbarously, terrified at the thought of heavy penalties, including hard labour, he hastily proceeded to Natal,

where his wife lay upon a bed of sickness whence she might never again arise. Upon his arrival in Durban, however, she demanded of him the cause of his departure from the Transvaal, and when she heard the cause peremptorily ordered him to return by the next train and submit to his punishment. He returned, surrendered to the police in Pietersburg, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Another man, in Pretoria, who had disobeyed the magisterial order to leave the Colony, was to appear before the Court to receive sentence. His courage began to leave him, but his wife informed him that if he were a coward, she would don his clothes and herself receive punishment on his behalf. He went to gaol.

The Madraśsi women of Pretoria informed their husbands, sons, and brothers, who had undertaken picket duty, that they need not be alarmed for them. If the men were arrested and sent to gaol, they themselves would at once take their places in the pickets' ranks and warn the people of the perils awaiting them.

At Gernistown, on Tuesday week, a mass meeting of Indian women was held, to protest against the iniquities of the law. A resolution was passed calling upon the Government to respect Indian marital vows, which forbade the separation of husbands from wives and wives from husbands, and demanding the right to share their husbands' imprisonment. A similar meeting was being arranged for Friday week last in Johannesburg, when the happy culmination of events rendered unnecessary such a proceeding.

Instances such as these make us realise something of the religious spirit that animated the opposition of the Indian community to the Registration Act. When the women could show such courage, it was impossible to doubt the success of the passive resistance movement, for the men dared not prove themselves weaker than the women. In the light, then, of these incidents, who shall say that the Transvaal Indian community was without its heroines. And better still, who can doubt the possibilities for good of their offspring. To be born of such mothers as these is an honour not easily deserved, and the European colonists should rejoice at the prospect of the advent of a generation of Indians born in times of heroism and struggle, imbued at birth with the very instinct of self-sacrifice and deep religious duty.

A. CHESEL PIQUET.

INDIANS IN JAMAICA. Free Indian Immigrants into Jamaica can obtain employment as agricultural labourers and can buy good land at from £1 to £5 per acre, with good prospect of making a comfortable livelihood.

The Settlement

News and Views

The Position Up to Date

In the House of Commons on the 31st ult., Mr. John Morley (Secretary of State for India), amidst cheers, announced the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty in the Transvaal. He paid a tribute to the Transvaal Government for accelerating the good end of a most critical episode. Mr. Morley added that a good spirit had been shown throughout the trouble. Reuter.

On the same date a *Mercury* special cable states :

The Times to-day expresses profound thankfulness at the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty in the Transvaal, and congratulates all parties concerned in the matter. The newspaper praises especially the conduct of Mr. Gandhi and his friends.

At the same time, *The Times* remarks, that nobody in the Transvaal, whether Government or Opposition, English or Boer, seems to have looked at the question from any point of view but that of the most limited provincialism; and deplores the fact that this provincial spirit seems to have prevented the idea of an earlier compromise.

The Times correspondent in Calcutta telegraphs that the Transvaal settlement of the Indian question has been received with unqualified satisfaction in India. The sympathetic attitude of the Indian Government will, he says, appease the indignation hitherto prevailing regarding this matter.

Speaking to a *Transvaal Leader* reporter Mr. William Hosken, M.L.A. said he believed the settlement was agreeable to all sides. "I think," he added, "the Government is to be commended for recognising the extremely difficult position that has arisen, and meeting it in a practical and statesmanlike manner."

The London correspondent of the *Star*, telegraphing on Saturday, says that *The Times* prints in a prominent position a letter signed by Mr. Patrick Duncan (late Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal) and by Messrs. Curtis, Feetham and Martin (members of the Transvaal Legislative Council), explaining that the real object and effect of the Registration Act is not mainly the question of trade rivalry, but regard for the future population of the country, at the gates of which a flood of immigrants is waiting.

After insisting on the necessity of the Registration Act and denying that the finger print system is degrading, the writers declare that the question in South Africa, as in Canada and Australia, is whether partnership in the Empire necessarily carries the obligation to allow Asiatics to enter

freely, knowing that they can compel the European shopkeepers and artisans to adopt lower standards of living or give place to them. The writers refuse to believe that the partnership is incompatible with the firm belief of the European in South Africa that the future of the country lies with him and his race.

London, Feb. 3.—Lord Amptill, replying to the recent letter to the Press from Mr. Patrick Duncan, former Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, and members of the Transvaal Legislative Council, dealing with the Asiatic Registration Act, and the ideal of a white South Africa, deprecates such letters at the present moment. He repudiates the assertions that the objections of Indians to the regulations are insincere.

His Lordship advocates regarding the matter in favour of the Imperial standpoint, and wants restricted immigration.—Reuter.

London, Feb. 4.—A further Blue book was issued to-day publishing additional dispatches on the Asiatic question in the Transvaal of which the following is a synopsis:—

On Jan. 25, Lord Elgin sent a communication to Lord Selborne explaining the methods of taking the finger-prints in use in India. His Lordship points out that the practice of taking ten finger-prints is confined to cases of criminals.

Lord Selborne, in reply, dated Jan. 28, replied, that the Transvaal Government will gladly accept the same practice as is in vogue in India, but that the Indians object to the spirit rather than the details of the law.

In a dispatch on the following day, the High Commissioner announces that a settlement has been arrived at.

The final dispatch is one from Lord Elgin on Jan. 31, which congratulates Lord Selborne and the Transvaal Ministers upon the settlement, and acknowledges their uniform courtesy throughout the correspondence on the subject.

Johannesburg, Feb. 5 (Reuter).—Speaking at a political meeting to-night, Mr. Smuts devoted the most part of his remarks to the Asiatic question. He maintained that there had been no climb down on the part of the Government. The Government did not wish to exclude the Asiatics in the country, but to have a proper registration of those who had the right to be here. The object of the Act had been attained, and the Immigration Act would keep from henceforth all Asiatics out. He eulogised very highly the action of the British Government in not interfering with them on the question, especially as the vast majority of the British Empire was not constituted of white people. He also thanked the Progressive Party for helping the Government.

General Smuts on the Compromise

An Interview by the "Star"

The Colonial Secretary, interviewed on Friday morning on his way to the Sterkstroom meeting as to the arrangement arrived at between the Government and the Asiatic leaders, made the following statement to the *Star* correspondent:—

"The position is this: I have repeatedly stated at meetings that we are not going to receive the registration of A, B, and C as they might come along. If the Indians come to us as a body and offer to register within a certain period, then we will accept their registration. But the matter will have to be legalised by Parliament. There will be no special sitting of Parliament. The matter will be laid before Parliament at the next ordinary session. The arrangement that we have arrived at is that all those Indians who are well known, who have property, and who are educated, will be exempt from the finger-print system, and they will not be pushed to answer questions about which they have religious scruples. The Colonial Secretary reserves the discretion to state who are to be exempt. This offer, which I have been asking them to make for a month past, they are making now, and they promise to register in three months. Then I will bring the matter before Parliament, which will have to pass a special law legalising the arrangement. Meanwhile I undertake not to prosecute them. No licences will, however, be issued to them pending the decision of Parliament, but they can trade without licences. There is no question of the Government having given in. These people have insisted that before they register the law must be repealed; but the Government has refused, as it considered this a preposterous proposal, and now the Indians have dropped it."

At Sterkstroom, General Smuts said the Government had never any objections to taking the signatures instead of the finger-prints of the few hundred men of education, property or standing among the Asiatics in the Transvaal. The Indians had now offered that they would come in and register, all of them giving their finger impressions except those who were educated, were owners of property, or were men of sufficient standing and length of residence to make their identification certain. Registration would now take place within three months. This would place the Colony in a position to prevent any further Asiatic immigration; most of the Asiatics in this country did not have wives here, consequently the Asiatic population would decrease, and in twenty years or more there would be no Asiatic questions, and then they could fight out the native question for themselves.

Mr. Gandhi Interviewed

"Playing the Game"

Mr. Gandhi made a statement to representatives of the Press immediately on his arrival at his office. He said: This campaign has undoubtedly shown one thing, if it has shown anything—that Indians in the Transvaal are deserving of self-respect and of being classed as men. The charge has often been brought against them that they are incapable of acting in concert for the common good. I think I can fairly claim for my countrymen that they have shown unexampled self-sacrifice. Hundreds of poor hawkers, rather than pay the small fines that were inflicted on them by the Magistrate, underwent the hardships of prison life, simply for the sake of principle. In the course of my practice I have not noticed many clients who have been willing to go to gaol when there has been the option of a fine. They have been willing to pay the heaviest fines if thereby they could avoid imprisonment. I must say that, to a certain extent, the cohesion that has been shown by the poorest Indians in the Colony has been an eye-opener even to me, and I have no doubt it has been to the Colonists. I think it might also, therefore, be claimed that if the compromise that has now been arrived at is honourable to Indians, as it undoubtedly is to the Government, Indians have figuratively bled for it. It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the sacrifice made by hundreds of Indians, and in this category I include those Indians who left the Colony because they did not consider themselves strong enough to brave the struggle. Merchants with large stocks in the Colony were perfectly resigned to any consequences, but they would not submit to a law which in their estimation degraded them. It was necessary, I think, for British Indians to show as much as they have before they could claim to be trusted, and in accepting the petition the Government have done nothing more than give British Indians three months' grace. We are now put upon our mettle. To my mind the real work commences only now. We have

TO PLAY THE GAME.

We have to show to the Government and to the Colonists that Indians as a body have nothing to do with surreptitious entry—that although there is no legal obligation we recognise a moral obligation to give the Government complete identification of every Asiatic who is entitled to remain in the Colony or to re-enter it, and if we succeed in doing that I think that the bitterest opponent of British Indians will have to admit that those who prove their right to domicile and give the Government full particulars as to identification should not only be left in the Colony unmolested, but that they should have every encourage-

ment, so that instead of remaining in the Colony as a festering sore they may so far as possible be assimilated and form part of the future South African nation. I do think that the highest statesmanship in South Africa consists not in treating any class of its inhabitants as almost animals or pariahs, but it consists in

TREATING THEM AS MEN,

and raising them to a higher level. The question of unfair competition and such other questions crop up only because sometimes one notices cases of unfair competition, but all these matters can certainly be remedied if the different races living in South Africa were to be educated up to a proper sense of citizenship. By proper citizenship I don't for one moment claim that all the races should be clothed with the franchise, but I do claim that the dominant race should look forward to a time when those lower races will be raised higher in the scale. Looking at the whole question in that light, I for one have no hesitation in agreeing entirely with General Smuts' remarks with reference to the indentured Indians in Natal. As a matter of fact, the British Indian population there has always submitted that indentured labour should be stopped, no matter at what sacrifice. Indians—that is, free Indians—have never countenanced nor wanted the system of indentured labour, and I admit that, but for the system of indentured labour in Natal, the Asiatic question would not have caused the trouble it has. I certainly believe that, so long as Natal continues to import indentured labour, so long will there be some trouble or other in connection with Asiatics, but I don't wish, in making this statement, to be understood as saying that indentured Indians, after regaining their freedom, have been flooding the Transvaal. I know such statements have been made before now, but I am positive there is absolutely no foundation for them, if only for the reason that the supervision over indentured Indians is very strict, and no Indian from India is allowed to leave the Colony unless he has received his free pass. The Immigration Department of Natal is practically in a position to trace every indentured Indian.

Questioned with regard to his

EXPERIENCES IN THE FORT

Mr. Gandhi said: So far as the gaol authorities are concerned, they could not have been more considerate. The Governor and all other officials were most kind and courteous. The Governor paid a visit every day, and regularly enquired whether we had any complaints or requests to make, and, if there were any, they were promptly remedied. Any request that could be granted within the regulations was immediately granted. Facilities were given for taking out books from the Prison Library and for receiving books from outside.

Mr. Gandhi added that, lest a remark in yesterday's *Transvaal Leader* should be misunderstood, he desired to state that the gaol premises, so far as he was concerned, were kept scrupulously clean, the only exception being a place where prisoners who could not be sent to their respective cells had to wait. This place was full of bugs, which came, however, from the woodwork, and its condition was not the fault of the gaol officials, but was due to the cramped space at their disposal.

"Leader" Interview with Mr. Gandhi

Late on Thursday night, a *Leader* representative interviewed Mr. Gandhi on the settlement. In the course of the interview, Mr. Gandhi remarked:

"The compromise arrived at is largely the same that was offered by the Asiatic communities before proceedings under the Registration Act were commenced. This compromise will give complete identification of every Asiatic over the age of 16 years in the Colony, and those who may be entitled to remain in or re-enter it. The main distinction between the Act and the identification under the offer will consist in a sting of compulsion being removed. The compromise puts Asiatics on their honour and responsibility, and if it is not carried out faithfully by my countrymen I have no doubt that our position will deservedly be worse than it would have been under the Act. But I do not anticipate any difficulty. With reference to the wholesale arrests that have taken place during the last three weeks, I do not think that Asiatics can have any cause to grumble; that procedure was necessary in order to test the intensity—as also the reality—of our feeling about the Act. I may state that we who were at the Fort were allowed to petition the Government offering once more voluntary registration, and the course adopted by the Government was in response to that petition. In my humble opinion the Government have shown real strength in acceding to the request. I would further and at this stage say that the leaders of the Asiatic communities, so far as I am aware, will loyally abide by the decision of the colonists to avoid further immigration of Asiatics not entitled to enter by reason of previous domicile."

THE ASSISTANT PROTECTOR. A Government *Gazette* notice informs the public that "H. Robinson, Assistant Protector of Immigrants, is authorised to enter upon all estates or places where Indians are employed.

Meeting at Caxton Hall

Huge Success

Expressions of Sympathy

[SPECIAL TO INDIAN OPINION]

The meeting at Caxton Hall, London, on Thursday, 9th Jan. convened under the auspices of the South Africa British Indian Committee, was extensively advertised for a week in advance by the whole of the Metropolitan and Provincial Press. It had been one of the chief subjects of conversation and discussion since the Immigration Restriction Act was sanctioned. The hall was packed, crowds standing at the back blocking the aisles and stretching through the door into the passage beyond. Some dozen M.P.'s were present. The majority of the audience were English sympathisers; the proportion of Indians which ordinarily would have been considered to be numerically large, was small. A great number of those present were delegates from important organizations numbering thousands of members, so that the meeting may not improperly be regarded as a huge mass meeting expressing the feeling of the Metropolis on the subject. Among the organizations represented were:—The New Reform Club, The London Indian Society, The National Indian Congress, The Fabian Society, The Union of Ethical Societies, The West London Ethical Society, The Positivist Society, The Wandsworth Trades and Labour Council, The Lambeth and District Trades and Labour Council, The East Indian Association, The Wesleyan Methodist Society and others. The accompanying extracts from telegrams and letters are but a few of the chief expressions of regret received from sympathisers who were for various reasons unable to be present. The proceedings were characterised by an earnestness and enthusiasm such as has seldom been experienced. The difficulty of the Chairman was to restrain the indignation of the audience and some of the speakers. Of the latter, the Labour representatives especially sought to press the Government to go much further than, in the circumstances, the conveners of the meeting felt to be politic. They insisted upon an additional resolution being put to the meeting demanding equal rights for British Indians in South Africa, and over twenty, mostly delegates, actually voted in support.

The resolutions were carried unanimously, only one amendment, that of Mr. Rees, M.P., to resolution No. 1, being proposed and finding no more than two supporters. It was impossible to bring the proceedings to a conclusion before 7 o'clock, they lasting not less than three hours. Fully a dozen Press men took reports, and the whole of the next morning's press dealt at length with the matter. There must have been present not fewer

than two hundred and fifty people representing in the aggregate very many thousands. Had the meeting been a public one, and an invitation been extended to all and sundry, there is little doubt that scarcely any hall would have been too large to have been filled.

The following expressions of sympathy were read:

Lord Roberts wired from Ascot: "I much regret being unable to attend Meeting to-day, the object of which appeals to me."

The Natal Indian Congress, representing the Indians of Natal, cabled:—"Natal Indians thank your Lordship for fighting nobly for self-respecting Indians domiciled Transvaal. Hope to-morrow's meeting will show the might of Right."

Sir William Brampton Gurdin, M.P. wrote:—"I am afraid there is no chance of my being able to be in Town next week."

Mr. C. E. Mallet, M.P. wrote:—"I am greatly in sympathy with the objects of your meeting."

Mr. S. R. Richards, M.P. wrote:—"Being in Scotland will prevent my being at your meeting although with you in spirit."

Mr. J. F. Cheetham, M.P. wrote:—"I am in full sympathy with the objects of the meeting but greatly fear I may not find it in my power to be present on an occasion, the interest and importance of which, at the present juncture, it would be difficult to over estimate."

Mr. Tom Burt, M.P. wrote:—"I am fully in sympathy with the object of the conference on the 9th inst. and regret that it is impossible for me to be present. Best wishes."

The Deptford and Greenwich Trades Council wrote:—"Convey to your Committee our earnest hope that one result of our meeting may be to have the Government intervene on behalf of our fellow subjects in the Transvaal who are suffering such injustice by the application of the Transvaal Immigrants' Restriction Act. May I assure you that those whom our Council represent hope that your efforts may meet with every success."

Mr. H. F. B. Lynch, M.P.:—"I am waiting in London especially to attend your meeting to-morrow."

Sir Charles Bruce, formerly Governor of Mauritius and British Guiana: "I am sorry to find that I am unable to undertake a journey to London to be present at the meeting at Caxton Hall to-morrow. I need hardly assure you of my complete sympathy with the objects of the meeting, and I observe with pleasure that this question of the position of British Indians in the Transvaal to-day occupies a position of the first rank among Imperial problems. It may be a difficult problem, but as Mr. Morley wisely said, 'people who find political problems insoluble are not for political life.' Your meeting will, I hope, do much to persuade the Government

that a solution is a necessity, and necessity will no doubt prove the mother of invention of an appropriate method."

The Bishop of Southampton: "As a former Bishop of Bombay, I have been much distressed by the attitude adopted towards British Indians by the Transvaal Government. I have it in my mind to bring forward a resolution on the subject at the February Session of Convocation."

The National Indian Association wrote:—"This Association sympathises with the cause of the better treatment of British Indians in the Transvaal."

Mr. Murray Macdonald, M.P.:—"I shall not be in Town on Thursday, otherwise I should certainly have attended the meeting."

Mr. W. H. Cowan, M.P.:—"I regret my absence abroad will prevent my attending the Meeting. I feel strongly that His Majesty's Government ought to use all its influence in favour of British subjects so unjustly and harshly treated in a Colony which owes so much to British generosity."

Mr. Mill, Secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. Incorporated: "Regrets that a Meeting in Session prevents their attendance and adds it may be assumed I think that every Englishman quite irrespective of political bias or connection will be only too thankful if means can be devised by which the harshness of the Transvaal Immigrants' Restriction Act, in its application to British Indians lawfully resident in the Transvaal, can be mitigated."

The Secretary, Hornsey Trades Council (Mr. H. Tomkins): "Regrets the absence of the representative at the meeting but is requested to state that at their last meeting a strong resolution of sympathy was unanimously agreed to. It is deeply to be regretted" he continues "that almost the youngest of our self-governing colonies should so soon sully its reputation with vexatious and insulting treatment of fellow-subjects, but it cannot but be apparent that over and above the colour prejudice, that so strongly afflicts so many of our over-sea communities, there is also an underlying economic reason for the persecution. Wishing you every possible success in your agitation."

Mr. Ian Malcolm writes: "I am particularly sorry that it will be impossible for me to attend the meeting. I need hardly say that I am in complete agreement with the considerations which are down for discussion at the Emergency Meeting."

Mr. J. Walton, M.P.: "I hope that you will have a good attendance and that an effective intervention on behalf of our British Indian fellow-citizens may be made. When Parliament re-assembles, I shall be pleased to do all in my power to secure for them their full rights of British citizenship."

Mr. Roland Hunt, M.P.:—"If the British Indians had been rebels and

enemies of the British Empire, they would have everything possible done for them by the present Government."

Mr. G. Ridsdale: "I think the whole proceedings quite monstrous and likely to be fraught with the gravest consequence to our rule in India. I shall be happy to support any well considered steps that it may be thought desirable to take on my return."

Dr. John Clifford (Nonconformist Passive Resister): "I regret I am not able to attend the meeting, but I join your protest and appeal with all my heart. It is lamentable that we should fall so far short of practical brotherhood within our Empire."

Mr. Arnold Lupton, M.P.: "If it had been possible for me I should have attended the meeting to petition against the ill-treatment of British Indians in the Transvaal. I consider it is a mockery to talk about the British Empire and then allow British citizens to be subjected to such indignity."

The following is the text of the Resolutions passed:

RESOLUTION I.

"That this meeting deeply regrets the imposition by the Transvaal Government of differential Laws and Regulations such as the Asiatic Law Amendment Act and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1907 upon British Indians lawfully resident in that Colony to whom these laws seem humiliating and degrading, and regards with the gravest concern the enforcement of these Laws, in spite of the offer of the resident Indian community to re-register voluntarily, as an attempt at the expulsion rather than identification of that section of British subjects, and the extinction of their vested rights and property."

Proposed by Harold Cox, Esq., M.P., seconded by Ameer Ali, Esq., C.I.E., and supported by General Laurie, Mayor of Paddington.

RESOLUTION II.

"That this meeting deeply regrets that His Majesty's Government should have given its sanction to a measure so drastic as the Immigration Restriction Act which allows the deportation for a purely statutory offence of British citizens."

Proposed by Sir Mancherjee Bownagjee, K.C.I.E., and seconded by J. O'Grady, Esq., M.P.

RESOLUTION III.

"That this meeting earnestly appeals to the Secretary of State for the Colonies even now to instruct the Governor of the Transvaal to exercise the power of refusing to order deportation vested in him by Clause 6, Section (c) of the said Act, viz.,

"No such person.....shall be removed from this Colony except on the order of the Governor provided further that every such person arrested shall be discharged from custody unless an order be made by

the Governor for his removal from this Colony within 10 days after the date of his arrest."

Proposed by Sir William Wedderburn, Bart. and seconded by Sir Raymond West, K.C.I.E.

RESOLUTION IV.

"That the Chairman of this public meeting be requested to forward copies of the above Resolutions to the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and India and the High Commissioner."

Proposed by Sir Henry Cotton, M.P., and seconded by Sir William Bull, M.P.

General Botha on the Situation

In the course of his Potchefstroom speech on Saturday last, General Botha said one little thing was touched upon about which he would also like to speak, and that was the Asiatic question. They knew with what object the law was promulgated. There was only one object—to see which Asiatics were in the country lawfully and which resided here unlawfully, and also to prevent the immigration of Asiatics into this country. The Government had suffered strong opposition from the side of the Asiatics from the day that this law was promulgated, but the Government, supported by the whole population of the Transvaal, had continued to carry out the law, and ultimately had to resort to measures which nobody liked to resort to. But the Government resorted to those measures in the carrying out of law and order in the country. The Asiatics had already agitated for the Government to withdraw this law, and had said when this law was withdrawn they would register voluntarily. The Government had refused to listen to that. Now, after most of the leaders had been put in gaol, the Government had received a letter in which they did not ask for a withdrawal of the law any more, but asked to be allowed to voluntarily register. Now no other registration was possible at the present time. They could only do it voluntarily, because no other way of registering was given under the law. The Government therefore, had accepted that proposal, and promised to put these proposals before the next session of Parliament. The Government had also promised not to continue further prosecutions until this matter had been put before Parliament again. He hoped that everyone of them would take up an honest attitude towards these people. It was not a question for them to say they did not wish these people in the country. These people were here lawfully, whether they liked it or not. The position was a most difficult one. I was impossible to take a man who lived here lawfully and put him over the border. Only men who were not

entitled to reside in this country could be put over the border. In his opinion, the Government and the population had attained their object with this law. Six thousand of these Asiatics who were here unlawfully had become afraid and had left the country, and they certainly would not come back again. So these who were still here were justified in thinking they had a right to remain here, unless, of course, they refused to register. Now they came to the Government, and said: Give us the opportunity of registering within three months and we will do so voluntarily. The white people were the victors, and they were the people who could show generosity. They must not look at this matter from the small Transvaal standpoint. They must also look at wider Imperial interests. The parties in Parliament had unanimsly consented to this law, and he was glad to be able to say that all parties in Parliament had worked together, and had consented to the present policy.

The "Leader's" Comment

Commenting on the above in Tuesday's issue, the *Transvaal Leader* says:

The Premier is reported to have said: "Six thousand of those Asiatics who were here unlawfully had become afraid, and had left the country, and they certainly would not come back." We are constrained to ask, if the officials know that 6,000 "unlawfuls" have left the country, how does it happen they did not know they were coming in, and check them? Will the Premier be good enough to state by what method this computation was arrived at? It has always been argued in support of the new Asiatic Law that there was no adequate way of detecting the entrance of Asiatics to this Colony. But, if it has been possible to detect the outgoing with such precision as seems to be at the command of General Botha, why did not the same method apply to the incoming?

The Right Prevails

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth" I said:
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth He
sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to
men!"

LONGFELLOW.

The Press on the Transvaal Situation

The *Transvaal Leader* (January 31), in a leading article, says:

The news of the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty, of which details will be found in another column, will be received with relief by the bulk of British citizens all over the world. Upon reading the rather piquant report from Pretoria, that Mr. Gandhi was recognised in that pleasant Capital yesterday, the plain man is likely to remark that it is a pity the Indian leader was not seen there earlier and oftener. If he had been, it is possible that the taxpayer would have been saved considerable expense, the Asiatic bodily suffering and mental distress, and the Colony an agitation which has not added to its reputation. . . . It would be interesting if one could know two elementary facts affecting the present situation. First, what has been the official experience in Asiatic communities of the permanent officials charged with the work of administering this Act, and with what languages of India are they conversant? Second, upon how many occasions have the Government taken counsel with the heads of the Asiatic community before passing and administering a novel law? This course is taken every day in India in regard to races not directly represented in the Government, and it is one reason why British administration is the success it is. It is significant that so soon as the Asiatic leaders and the Colonial Secretary are brought into direct touch, what had seemed a deadlock became a not unhopeful situation.

The Government might have gone on imprisoning the protestors, to the number of thousands, thereby, apart from physical difficulties—and they were not trifling—inflicting upon the white population a degree of moral injury not easy to be estimated. But the available evidence goes to show that this would have been futile, as far as the Government's object was concerned. It is to the credit of both sides that they have had enough commonsense to agree upon a compromise which seems reasonable and—given a right tendency of the official mind—workable. The reasonable-minded majority of white colonials will, we venture to predict, approve of the settlement. There have been a few demands for an extreme and vindictive policy towards the Asiatics. But the spectacle of men going to prison for semi-political offences, and giving up profitable businesses rather than do what seemed to them just and wrong, has left most white Transvaalers unhappy; and the consideration that the prisoners hail from a State of the Empire of which every Briton feels proud increased their unhappiness. . . . What has led to the present modification is in part recognition of the insuperable difficulties in the way of applying the Act as it stood, and in part the growing alienation of intelligent public opinion from the administrative course adopted.

Even a hasty reference to the situation would be incomplete if no mention were made of the admirable part which the Opposition has played throughout. Although it was responsible equally with the Government for the passage of the Bill, the Opposition was not responsible for the administration of the Act. It might easily, fortified by this consideration, have taken up an attitude which would have gravely embarrassed both the British and Transvaal Governments. It declined to take any such view of its responsibilities, remembering the British citizenship of most of the Asiatics involved, the claims of India and the desirability of bringing to an end an agitation injurious to the Colony. It is to be hoped, however, that in agreeing, as it finally did, to acquiesce in the course provisionally agreed to by the Government, the Opposition has urged, or will urge, earnestly upon the Colonial Secretary the necessity either for bringing a fresh official mind to bear on the delicate work to be done during the next few weeks, or for making clear to the existing wielders of official authority that

the references to discretionary power in the Asiatics' communication are to be construed in a wide sense. It is no question of favouring Asiatics. The *Transvaal Leader* has from the first expressed doubts as to the workableness of the Act in its present form.

There is a feeling among men of all parties that the proceedings now happily brought to an end have not been deserved by those against whom they were directed. Mr. Gandhi's statement, made upon his release last night, will not lessen this feeling.

The *Star*, the same day, remarks:

The extent of their (the Government's) concession to Asiatic sentiment is to test the *bona fides* of the passive resistance movement by reopening the registration offices for a limited period of voluntary registration.

If the Government are satisfied that they can make an end of a troublesome business by this change of method, we think they are very well advised to give it a trial.

To do Mr. Gandhi justice, he does not show the smallest disposition to abuse his liberty. His dignified reticence does him the greatest possible credit, and the complete control which he exercises over his compatriots is the best possible omen for the success of the new arrangements. We confess that the distinction between "voluntary" registration within three months and "compulsory" registration of precisely the same nature is just a little too subtle for the average European mind; but if the change will satisfy a sensitive Oriental people, we are all for making it. At least it will be the last nail in the coffin of the grotesque theory that a single thumb mark is the extreme limit of human self-respect. As for the intention to discriminate between Indians of recognised social standing and the rest, that is entirely a matter for the European officials whose business it is to identify them. No one whose opinion is worth having has ever underrated the social gulf which yawns between Mr. Gandhi, for instance, and the average coolie hawkker. But there are minor distinctions which, however apparent to the Asiatics themselves, are not readily appreciated by Europeans even of long Asiatic experience. The essential condition of any concession of this kind is that every lawful Asiatic resident must be susceptible of prompt identification, and so long as that condition is absolutely fulfilled the precise method is of little consequence.

The Registration Bill and the Immigration Bill were both passed with the unanimous approval of Parliament. The policy which these laws represent, viz., the restriction of the Asiatic community to the immigrants lawfully resident in the country already, is the Progressive policy just as much as the *Het Volk* policy. . . . In the light of experience we are all entitled to doubt whether the wisest methods were always chosen to carry it out, whether the regulations framed under the Registration Law were well considered, whether the advice of the Government experts, which the Opposition was bound to take on trust, has not been at fault from first to last. If there have been mistakes in administration the Government must bear the responsibility.

The *Rand Daily Mail* writes as follows:

We have been treated to bombastic protestations of inflexible resolution. To-day the citadel has been abandoned. The Government has surrendered.

It has for a long time been apparent that the legislation passed last March in order to deal with the Asiatics was ill-advised. We did not scruple to state, in spite of declarations to the contrary, that the Immigrants' Restriction Bill, the weapon upon which the Government appeared to be relying, was practically useless; and for many months now grave doubts have been entertained by a large section of the public as to the outcome of the Government's campaign against the Asiatics. Therefore we should not have been inclined to quarrel with the decision now arrived at to accept a compromise; and no one of us is entitled to throw a stone at any other

on account of the hasty, ill-framed law which was passed last March. For that we must all bear our share of the blame. But the principal object of that legislation, it must always be remembered, was not directly to keep fresh Asiatics from coming in, but to register those who were already here; and inasmuch as that object will be achieved by the compromise which has now been accepted, the Government cannot be said to have violated any principle of policy to which it was committed. It is once more in its methods of administration that it has erred. It would never at this moment appear to be so weak, if it had not for the past ten months professed to be so strong. For the compromise which has now been accepted is no new proposal.

Mr. Smuts informed Mr. Gandhi, on the eve of the commencement of hostilities, that "the Colonial Secretary will carry out in full the provisions of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, and if the resistance of the Indians residing in this country leads to results, which they do not seriously face at present, they will only have themselves and their leaders to blame." He was adamant; not only inflexible, but even minatory. Those who defied the law, and incited others to defy it, should have been forced to pay the penalty which they had deliberately incurred. That they should have achieved a moral victory is a fact which will not have a wholesome effect either on the Asiatic or the native mind. That they should have set the law at defiance and go unpunished is simply to encourage the spread of organised passive resistance.

The *Rand Daily Mail* (February 1), adds the following:

Mr. Smuts has stated that "there is no question of the Government having given in," but he will find it very difficult to persuade the public to agree with him. . . . It is certain that the compromise now agreed upon differs in no material respect from that suggested by the Indians themselves in May last; and it is just as certain that, for this reason, every Indian regards the compromise as a complete victory over the Government, in spite of the very generous and exemplary attitude adopted in public by Mr. Gandhi himself.

The *Transvaal Leader*, on the same day, remarks:

Copies of the official correspondence between the Colonial Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition, with reference to the Asiatic question, will be found in another column. Perusal of them serves to strengthen one's feeling of satisfaction, on the one hand, that the Government called into its councils the members of His Majesty's Opposition, and on the other at the attitude taken up at Thursday's meeting by Sir George Farrar and those who think with him in politics. It is an attitude of keeping with the conduct of the Opposition in this difficult matter from the outset. "We feel it essential to success that the law should be administered with the least possible friction, and as far as possible with due consideration for the responsibilities and difficulties of the Imperial Government." So runs the closing paragraph of the letter sent by Sir George Farrar on behalf of his party. It breathes a spirit which reflects high honour on every man who subscribed to its terms. The Government cannot complain that, when it seeks the co-operation of the Opposition in matters which lie outside the legitimate scope of party, it is met in any but a frank and patriotic spirit.

The *Sunday Times* has the following:

Putting the best complexion on the settlement, one must admit that the Government have rendered themselves liable to criticism over the manner in which the question has been handled. . . . The Ministry have only now agreed to a plan which they could have obtained a year ago nearly, by the exercise of the tact they have now displayed.

The public cannot be blamed for grumbling. They were led to expect an exhibition of remarkable firmness. Almost daily they were adjured to witness the stern and immovable attitude of the Government. The law was to be enforced as it stood. Compromise was not to be thought of for a moment. And then suddenly the whole structure goes down with a run, and the unalterable law is to be modified by the consent of both political parties.

The *Pretoria News* has the following brief comment:

The official communication issued to the Press last night by the Colonial Secretary so completely and entirely vindicates the action taken up by this newspaper since first the position in regard to Asiatics became critical, and is so satisfactory and whole-hearted an acceptance of the policy which we have so persistently urged upon the Government, that nothing more remains for us to say but to congratulate both Mr. Smuts and the leaders of the Asiatic community upon having, by the adoption of a mutually forbearing and moderate attitude, arrived at a solution of the registration difficulty, which is not only statesmanlike, but which has been brought about without loss of dignity on either side.

The Friend (Bloemfontein), says:

Right-minded South Africans will be glad that General Smuts has been able to effect a compromise with the Asiatics. What General Smuts and his Government has yielded to has been no danger or difficulty, but their own sense of honour. They had no taste for making martyrs of conscientious, even if wrong-headed, men. Since Mr. Gandhi and his friends believed genuinely that to give their finger-prints would be to forfeit their self-respect, it became necessary to save them from themselves. This has been accomplished by waiving or modifying the provisions of the Registration Law. Apparently it has been arranged that Asiatics who can write shall be permitted to give their signatures, a suggestion which was first made in the columns of this paper. Probably, too, there will be recommendations to Parliament to cancel the clauses which distinguish Asiatics according to their religion. The requirement of the names of female relatives has never been insisted on by the Executive, and is not likely to reappear in any future legislation. We are sorry to see it stated by our Rand correspondent that the news of the compromise is likely to cause indignation and disappointment, the hope having been cherished by many that the conscientious scruples of the Asiatics would lead to their exclusion from the country. A meaner thought there could not be. The white man who cherishes it deracialises himself beneath the level of the meanest black. General Smuts can want no better certificate that he has done right than the indignation of men of this stamp. The compromise is proof that the principle of *noblesse oblige* is still a working force in the world.

The *Krugersdorp Standard*, in the current issue, remarks as follows:

The news that an amicable arrangement has been arrived at between the Government and the Asiatics over the terms and conditions of registration will have been heard with general satisfaction. Affairs had become critical. On the one hand was the Cabinet, bound to carry into execution an Act passed by the unanimous votes of both political parties in Parliament assembled, and on the other a solidly united body of men sworn to passive resistance, not against registration, but against a special form of it or special circumstances connected with it. The way to a compromise was obviously pointed out by the Asiatics themselves. They desired to be law-abiding, but they refused to obey in violation of certain religious scruples. History has repeated itself. Our Scottish friends some centuries ago found it necessary to say: "It is not the marriage we object to, but the manner of the wooing." The Indian has not objected to registration but to the mode of its

carrying out. It has now been settled that all Asiatics shall register voluntarily in a body within three months. We consider the above a statesmanlike adjustment of differences creditable to all concerned in it.

The *Natal Mercury* says:

Now that a settlement has been arrived at in the Transvaal over the question of Asiatic registration it is unnecessary to say much more about it, but, although every effort is being made to save the face of the Transvaal Government in the matter, and Mr. Gandhi has been diplomatically assisting in the process, nothing can alter the fact that the Government have simply had to retire from an impossible position, and from one which they could not carry out. There is no dispute as to the necessity and desirability of both restriction and registration. The trouble has been occasioned by the administrative methods adopted. These methods having now been abandoned, the laws can, unquestionably, be worked as effectively by other means.

The methods which have now been agreed to are those which, as far back as May last, were put before General Botha when he was in London on behalf of the Indian community in the Transvaal, and subsequently have been put forward by Mr. Gandhi on more than one occasion. These proposals were deliberately rejected at the time, and we have had General Smuts declaring on the public platform that the Government intended to carry out the law and the regulations to the letter; but, all the same, the regulations have been modified to the full extent proposed in May last by the Indians, and some other little concessions not then mentioned have been made. No amount of argument or sophistry can alter the fact that the Transvaal Government has backed down.

The *Heidelberg News* bluntly remarks:

It was the servility involved which they (the Indians) would not submit to. And that is exactly what they *must* submit to. A native of India must not expect to be treated any better in South Africa than a native of South Africa. In fact the native of South Africa has a prior right to consideration, because this is his country. Any Indian who expects to establish a better footing here than our own natives enjoy is doomed to disappointment and he may as well know it first as last.

"The Great Collapse"

In our issue of the 11th ulto., we reproduced a cartoon from the *Sunday Times* representing the Transvaal Government "Steam Roller" up against the elephant representing the Indian community, the idea being to illustrate the meeting of an "irresistible force" and an "immovable object." Last Sunday, the same paper published a sequel, the elephant surveying the wreckage of the steam roller, in the midst of which the driver, Mr. Smuts, is unhappily receiving an impression of the fingers of a typical passive resister, the digits being extended fan-wise at the extremity of the nose. The elephant inquires "Everybody happy?" Underneath is given the following extract from a speech of General Smuts at Pretoria, on the 11th ulto.: "When a law is passed by the unanimous voice of the people, and the Government was too weak to carry it out, that was a terrible condition of affairs; there must be a screw dreadfully loose somewhere."

The Release

The release of the passive resisters in gaol was a very quiet affair. On Thursday, the 30th ulto., Mr. Gandhi left the fort, and journeyed by the 11-30 a.m. train to Pretoria, in charge of Supt. Vernon, of the T.T.P., to interview General Smuts. The train was stopped specially at Fountains Halt, and Mr. Gandhi and his companion entered a closed carriage and drove to Government Buildings. Although the departure from Johannesburg was intended to be strictly private, Mr. Gandhi's movements were notified by watchful pickets and others from the moment he left the Fort until he arrived at Pretoria. There the Government Buildings were carefully picketed. Mr. Gandhi returned alone by the 7-45 p.m. train for Johannesburg, being provisionally released. He arrived at Park Station, and was met there by Mr. Essop Mia, Chairman of the British Indian Association, and drove to the Mosque, at Newtown, where a large gathering of Indians met, and shortly after midnight Mr. Gandhi addressed his eager hearers briefly, explaining to them generally the new position that was before them. Shortly after eight on Friday morning, Mr. Gandhi surrendered himself to the gaol authorities, and later, with the rest of the "gaol-birds," received his formal discharge. There was no demonstration whatever, less than a hundred members of the two Asiatic communities being present to welcome the "Emigrants." At Pretoria, about three hundred people waited outside the gaol, and afterwards walked to the location. Only in Krugersdorp was there any display of excitement, and that soon wore off.

On Friday afternoon a large private meeting was held in the Mosque grounds, and another on Sunday, where the position was more closely examined.

On Monday, partly in celebration of the Chinese new year, and partly in honour of the three Chinese gentlemen who had so courageously suffered imprisonment, a luncheon party was held at the Cantonese Club, whereat the Rev. Chas. Phillips and Mr. H. S. L. Polak were present. Afterwards, the guests adjourned to the premises of the Chinese Association, where addresses were given Mr. Leung Quinn, the Chairman, the Imperial Chinese Consul-General, Rev. Chas. Phillips and Mr. H. S. L. Polak speaking, the situation being carefully explained.

Registration commences on Monday next, in Johannesburg, at the Old Dutch Church, Von Brandis Square.

INDIAN MAIL. For India, Ceylon and the Far East per *S. S. Umfuli*, until 4 p.m. Tuesday, the 11th inst.

A British Colonial's Protest

The following letter, dated the 27th ulto., appeared in the *Transvaal Leader* of the 3rd inst. over the signature of Mr. Walter Evans, secular leader of the Johannesburg Baptists. Though somewhat belated, it shows a phase of public opinion that has been none too well advertised in the recent past, and we therefore reprint in *extenso* in justice to that large section of the European community that has regretted the bitterness that has been imported into the late struggle by the exponents of rabid anti-Asiaticism:—

I foresee a time when a great many of our citizens, including certain ministers of the Gospel, who are at present busily engaged in saying "Sah!" to the Government in the matter of the Asiatics, will bitterly regret the course they have taken and the injustice they have done. There are always extremists. Before the war there were violent partisans among both Dutch and English, who, by dint of persistence and shouting, succeeded in bringing about a conflict which would have been avoided if the moderate men on either side could have had their way. I am a Colonist of over 30 years, and I have always found extremists on the colour question—men who are ready to ignore the first principles of justice, not to speak of mercy, and to go to any lengths to keep down or to get rid of the Asiatics or the natives, whom they class together and designate, according to their own nationality, as "blooming niggers" or "zwart goed." This section of the people may not be numerous compared to those who wish to deal justly and fairly, though firmly, with the subject races, but their voices are loud and insistent. To-day they are shouting their loudest, and are carrying with them men who ought to know better, while many who radically differ from them seem afraid to raise a protest. "History repeats itself," and I believe that in every case where a nation has done injustice, either to an individual or to a community, the noisy minority has swayed the more mobile majority—the tail has wagged the dog. It was so in that greatest of all instances, in Judea 1,800 years ago, when the cry went forth, "Crucify Him!" The voices of the noisy clique prevailed. We have a case parallel in many points to-day, though I will only mention one resemblance, namely, that the rulers are on the side of the shouters. It may be thought that I am speaking too strongly; but I feel strongly. I believe that the law is needlessly stringent, and that the way in which it is being carried out is a disgrace to our race and our religion. What do the Asiatics ask for? They know that the inhabitants of the Transvaal have decided that further immigration of their people

shall be carefully restricted, and they accept the situation; they offer to co-operate to make the Asiatic Immigration Restriction Act a success. It may not be a pleasant dose for them to swallow, but they do not refuse it; they only ask that the draught may not be made too nauseous. They tell us that the Crown Colony Government promised them that those who had already registered should not be compelled to register again; yet they are ready to register if the regulations can be altered somewhat so as not to conflict with their ideas of religion and propriety. We Europeans may not be able to understand their views on these matters, but that does not prove that they are not vitally important in their eyes, or that we may safely disregard them. Remember that it was European disregard of Indian prejudice in the matter of the greased cartridges which was the immediate cause of the great Indian mutiny of 50 years ago. We are dealing with a body of men the great majority of whom are subjects of the Empire of which we are proud—an Empire whose boast is that it rules the subject races with justice and righteousness—and surely it should be an axiom dealing with these people that, inasmuch as they have no representation in our Parliament, special care should be taken to see that we do not even appear to oppress them. What is taking place to-day? The moderate requests of the Asiatics for enquiry and for revision of the regulations are ignored. Willing prisoners, who would not deign to attempt to escape, are handcuffed in droves and subjected to unnecessary indignity. Old soldiers, who have fought and bled for the Empire—men clothed in the King's uniform and wearing his medals—are being thrown into his gaols. Mr. Gandhi, a courteous and refined gentleman, who organised the Indian stretcher-bearers in the late war, who left the comfort of his home to nurse his plague-stricken fellow-countrymen, and so earned their lifelong love and esteem, singled out as one of the first victims. We see the "steam-roller" mercilessly and needlessly at work, the extremists rejoicing that, as they think, the Asiatics have played into their hands, and that not only will further immigration be stopped, but every Asiatic, born here or imported, will be kicked over the border. And, oh! the pity of it! we see the men who ought to speak up for a little forbearance, a little judicious concession, upholding the fanatics and urging on the Government.

I do not ask that the Asiatics should be coddled and given in to in all that they ask. It is possible that they are asking for more than they can expect to get, but I insist that they should have every opportunity to state their case, and that every effort should have been made on the part of the Government to avoid the present deplorable state of affairs. Surely by a little graceful concession the whole trouble might

have been avoided? Is it too late even now to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to induce them to meet the Asiatics in some way? Concession is not necessarily weakness, and in this case I believe it would strengthen the hands of the Government immensely, for if the Asiatics did not accept it a right no one could raise a voice if stringent measures were then adopted.

It is folly to think that the Indians are going to give in now that their leaders are arrested. They are united and resolved, and we shall see our gaols overflowing with 10,000 men who are no criminals, and even then they will not yield. We pride ourselves on our British love of justice and fair-play: we fancy ourselves because we are descendants of the men who freed the slave; yet we stand by and allow the extremists to carry the country into an act of folly, injustice and wrong. In conclusion, let me put two questions to those of your readers who wish to look at the matter in a fair way: (1) Is it not an axiom of good government that punishment should only be resorted to as a last resource, and after methods of conciliation have failed. (2) Have these methods been given anything like a fair trial in this instance?

Proposed Boycott of Asiatics

As a result of the settlement, it is proposed in certain circles in Johannesburg to boycott Asiatics. A meeting was held in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg, on Monday night last, when the following resolution was submitted:

"(1) That this meeting of the citizens of Johannesburg pledges itself to refrain from dealing with or otherwise supporting the Asiatics in South Africa."

"(2) That this meeting is of opinion that the best means of giving effect to the above resolution is 'co-operation.'"

Leading sympathisers with the Asiatics in their struggle against the original registration proposals, interviewed by a *Mail* representative, expressed themselves as heartily in sympathy with the boycott method of fighting the Asiatics. This could not but be viewed, it was admitted, as an evidence of grit and principle in the whites. They did not, however, consider that the proposal would be at all successfully worked out, because they did not think that the class of whites in the Transvaal were capable of showing the grit and principle necessary, nor did they think that the opposition to the Asiatic trader was as widespread and sincere as the organisers of the boycott would have them believe.

White Leagues on the above lines are being formed in the East and West Rand.

Government and Opposition

The following copies of correspondence between the Transvaal Colonial Secretary and Sir George Farrar, leader of the Opposition are published:

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Pretoria, January 27, 1908.

Dear Sir George Farrar,—Will you kindly consult your friends to see whether there would be any objection to registration being re-opened for Asiatics and the chance being given them to register voluntarily, as they desire to do, and to dispense with finger-prints in the case of educated or well-known Indians? It is probable that Parliamentary ratification of such registration will have to take place, and in the meantime the penalties under the Act will not be enforced against those who register voluntarily. I understand that Asiatics may be willing to make such an offer to Government, and before closing with it we should like to have your concurrence in so doing.—Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) J. C. SMUTS.

Sir George Farrar, D.S.O., M.L.A.,
Johannesburg.

January 30, 1908.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Pretoria.

Dear Mr. Smuts,—I am in receipt of your letter of January 27, and have communicated its contents to my friends.

From it we extract certain questions or suggestions, which I append together with our replies.

Question No. 1: Is there any objection to registration being re-opened for Asiatics and the chance being given them to register voluntarily as they desire to do?

Answer: No, provided time is limited.

Question No. 2: Is there any objection to dispense with finger prints in the case of educated or well-known Indians?

Answer: No, provided that other adequate evidence of identity be forthcoming.

Question No. 3: Is there any objection to the penalties not being enforced in the meantime against those who voluntarily register?

Answer: No.

Am I to understand from the concluding sentence of your letter that the Government do not intend to make the above concessions unless they are satisfied that the Asiatic community is prepared to accept the new position?

I desire to make our position in this matter perfectly clear.

We agreed to the law and adhere to it, and its objects must be secured. We would, however, point out that as the present regulations were not submitted to us before promulgation the

Government must accept all responsibility in regard to them.

We feel it essential to success that the law be administered with the least possible friction, and, as far as possible, with due consideration for the responsibilities and difficulties of the Imperial Government.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) GEORGE FARRAR.

Imperial Parliament

Transvaal Asiatics

The Debate in the Lords

London, Feb. 4.—Lord Amptill, in the House of Lords, congratulated the Transvaal Government on their courageous and statesmanlike action, also the Indians upon their modesty and constancy to ideals. He also congratulated the Imperial Government on obtaining the compromise, though he declared that the bargain should have been made when granting the Constitution or loan.

Lord Roberts expressed regret that an Indian Government official had not been deputed to confer with the Transvaal Government.

Lord Curzon declared that the Transvaal had rushed its anti-Asiatic legislation through with indecent speed.

Lord Elgin declared that the settlement was satisfactory. The Transvaal Government throughout had acted in a reasonable and conciliatory manner, and the policy of the restriction of immigration had been maintained unbroken for 20 years. The finger-print system had been introduced purely as a means of identification.

Lord Lansdowne said that the Imperial Government would have shown more courage if they had interfered earlier.

Lord Ripon insisted that a self-governing Colony should be left to manage its own affairs.—Reuter.

The *Natal Mercury's* London correspondent cables:—

London, Feb. 4.—During the debate on the Asiatic situation in the Transvaal, in the House of Lords, Lord Curzon complained that Lord Elgin had shown excessive deference to the pleas put forward by the Transvaal Government.

Lord Elgin contended that the influx of Asiatics would destroy the political equilibrium necessary for the development of the Colonies. He did not believe that the Transvaal intended to degrade the Indians, and thought that all the most serious grievances existing before the war had been removed. He declared that he rejoiced that the Indians, instead of being subjected to disabilities, though restricted as regards immigration, would in the future be

maintained in a definite and honourable position.

London, Feb. 5.—The House of Lords last night discussed the position of the Indians in the Transvaal with tact and moderation.

Lord Lansdowne expressed the general feeling of the House by unreservedly admitting the right of a self-governing Colony to decide whether it should be the home of the British rather than of an Asiatic race.

At the same time, the speakers recognised the enormous difficulties in which the Empire is involved by the complexity of its composition.

Lord Amptill criticised the dilatory conduct of the Colonial Office in allowing a dangerous situation to continue so long.

Lord Curzon deplored that the Colonial Office showed lack of the imagination absolutely indispensable in dealing with Orientals.

In this connection, *The Times* credits the Transvaal Government very handsomely for admitting the force of Imperial interests when these were tardily pointed out to them by the Colonial Office, who are responsible for the period of painful tension.

Press Comments

Both the *Morning Post* and *The Times* commenting upon the debate in the House of Lords yesterday on the Asiatic settlement in the Transvaal, discuss the Imperial aspects of Asiatic Immigration.

The *Morning Post* urges that the need for federal, and not provincial, control of this question has been exemplified in the Transvaal and Vancouver Island.

The Times declares that, in view of the certainty of the recurrence of such difficulties, the time has surely come to establish some public body in fuller touch than the Imperial Cabinet with the communities and races of the Empire—a body which will provide information where needed, and nip trouble in the bud.

Indian National Congress

And the Transvaal Trouble

We learn that, after the dispersal of the Congress, at Surat, the majority of the delegates remained behind to conduct an informal discussion. The debate was mainly devoted to the grievances of the Transvaal Indians.

The Natal delegate, Mr. Omar Haji Amod Johari, dwelt on the sufferings and indignities inflicted by the Registration Act, which, he said, reduced Indians to the level of culprits and vagabonds. He feared for the plight of the Indians in Natal if the example of the Transvaal were followed. He appealed to the audience to strive for the repeal of the Act.

Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee read drafts of telegrams to the Viceroy and the Colonial Office, asking the Imperial Government to intervene.

South African Indian Association

Congratulates the Transvaal

A mass meeting of British Indians from all parts of the Cape District was held on Friday evening, the 31st. ult., in the premises of the above Association. All seating accommodation was occupied and a good number were obliged to stand on the balcony. The room was beautifully decorated with flags and the whole building was illuminated with electric lights, showing the great display of bunting to advantage.

The meeting was called by the Chairman with the object of celebrating the success obtained by the leaders of the Indian community in their gigantic struggle with the Transvaal Government over the enforcement of the provisions of the Asiatic Act of that Colony.

Notwithstanding the short time which had elapsed since the receipt of the information from the Transvaal centre announcing the glad news a very large attendance was nevertheless assured.

Mr. Ebrahim Norodien, the Chairman of the Association, took the chair, and amongst those on the platform were Messrs. Ahmed Abbas, Abdul Ganie Perker, Mahomed Sale, J. M. H. Gool, M. I. Dala, S. Ismail, A. G. Kuble, Esuff Ahmedjee Patel, Mahomed Bagas, Khachoo Ganoo (Woodstock), Ali Adam (Salt River), Hasan Shamsudin Guray (Observatory), A. G. Ghansoar and Yakoob Dalvi (Maitland), R. Nowrosjee, M. I. Rawood, Hoosen Ahmed (Claremont), Mahomed Hoosen Goteker (Parow), F. Ismail (Goodwood), Moosa Abdul Carim Noormahomed (Stellenbosch), S. Casimali and many other prominent Indians. The Chairman, in a very telling speech, expressed his heartfelt gratitude at the result of the decision of the Transvaal Government and affirmed the fact that this peaceful settlement of a very involved question had not only gladdened the hearts of the many who were carefully watching events but had occasioned a feeling of gratitude towards the Government who at the height of the crisis had the good sense to well consider the gravity of the situation and make amends which every honourable man has to applaud.

Mr. Ahmed Abbas proposed that a telegram be sent to the Transvaal Government thanking them for their consideration for meeting the Indian community in their struggle to obtain amelioration of restrictions hurtful to their religious susceptibilities.

This was seconded by Mr. A. G. Ghansar and supported by Mr. Esuff Ahmedjee Patel.

It was further proposed by Mr. R. Nowrosjee, seconded by Mr. M. Sale and supported by Mr. J. M. H. Gool, that a telegram be sent to the British Indian Association of Johannesburg,

thanking them for the firm position taken up by them in the struggle with the Transvaal Government and congratulating them on the success which crowned their efforts. Mr. S. Casimali proposed, Mr. Rawood seconded, and Mr. Abdool Gani Perker supported, amidst enthusiastic applause, that a telegram be sent to Mr. Gandhi applauding him on the great stand taken up by him with the Transvaal Government and congratulating him on the successful issue of his endeavours.

A Progressive View

Mr. A. E. Balfour, speaking at Johannesburg last week, said that the Asiatic question had happily been settled. He had no doubt that most of them had read the Colonial Secretary's speeches—he had made at least half-a-dozen of them—which he thought were admirable in tone and temper. He (the speaker) had only one criticism to make, and this was a strange and remarkable omission that occurred in every one of them. So far as he could remember, he thought they would not find one single reference to the fact that the action that might be taken by the Transvaal—by one small community in the whole Empire—might have very serious effects upon the continent which belonged to the Empire and which contained 300 millions of people. It was left to the Progressive Party, in a letter they wrote agreeing to the modification of the regulations of the Asiatic Ordinance, to point out that such a law as that should be carried out with due regard to Imperial difficulties and responsibilities. He agreed with the policy, on which they were all united, of restricting Asiatic immigration. It was what they intended to carry out. Given that condition, he would ask them to remember that while carrying out their fixed policy they should be careful that they did it with the least possible friction and embarrassment to the Imperial Government, which had to think not only of what was going on in the Transvaal but also of its millions of subjects in India and of the other coloured subjects all over the world; and, last but not least, of its allies and the other nations of the world who were its rivals.

THE IRON HEEL. At a meeting of the Vryburg Municipal Council, held on the 21st ult., a letter was read from Messrs. Rosenblatt & De Beer, on behalf of Mr. Ebrahim Khan, asking the Council to grant the necessary certificate to allow their client to transfer his business to Mr. Hajee M. Khan. The application was refused. An application from Messrs. Jesla and Kika, through Mr. F. J. Croxford, to rent three acres of the town commonage for gardening purposes was also refused.

Mr. Harold Cox writes to the "Spectator"

Mr. Harold Cox, M.P., replying to a leading article in a previous issue of the *Spectator*, concludes a well-reasoned argument in favour of just treatment of Transvaal Indians with the following words:

You also lay stress on the unwillingness of the Colonies to allow their territory to be "filled with a new population of two colours." But surely this consideration has no relevance to the South African problem. The predominant colour throughout South Africa is already black, and the blacks are rapidly gaining upon the whites, not only by increase of numbers, but by advance in education. South Africa cannot be a white man's land, and the only question is whether Indians should not be allowed to live there as well as Hottentots, Kafirs, Zulus, Malays, Cape Boys, Poles, Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians. That is the whole issue at the present moment, and I see no reason why it should not be dealt with on its merits alone. Let us apply the principle of liberty to the question immediately before us, and wait to see whether those same principles cannot equally well be applied to other difficulties that may arise in the future.

As, however, you have touched on a larger problems that lie ahead, I will venture to put forward a doctrine which may not meet with immediate acceptance, but which I believe to be the only possible basis for a permanent British Empire. That doctrine is that the strength of our Empire ultimately depends, not upon the supremacy of the English race, but upon the maintenance of English principles. However proud we may be of our English blood, we cannot study the history of our country without learning that the population of England has been recruited from many countries, and that this readiness to receive and absorb other races has been one of the main causes of our national expansion. Aliens have come here: they have imbibed our traditions and learnt our language, and have become English in soul without a drop of English blood in their veins; and then they or their sons have gone forth to build up the Empire. Those who have lived among natives of India as friends rather than as rulers have seen the same creation of English-minded men there in progress. Our ideals take root even where our race cannot flourish. I contend that this is the true conception of Empire for Englishmen to set before them. We cannot hope to people the earth with men of our own stock. In the competition of the cradle we are beaten by the Teuton and hopelessly outdistanced by the Slav; in the competition of ideals we may hold our own for ever. My faith is that if we adhere to the principles of liberty, which have brought us safely so far, we need never

fail. It may conceivably happen in some far-distant future that Rajpoots will rule at Westminster instead of Scotchmen; but they will speak our language, they will be inspired with our ideals, and they will carry on our Empire. This may seem a fantastic dream, but it is better to dwell even on such dreams as these than to contemplate the destruction of the Empire by racial conflicts.

Trading Licences and Franchise

Conference at Maritzburg

The Maritzburg correspondent of the *Star*, telegraphing on the 30th ulto., states:

The Premier to-day met the Mayors and the chairmen of the local boards. The meeting was of an entirely confidential nature, but I understand that the principal object was to gather the opinion of the Mayors and chairmen of local boards in regard to certain vexed questions relating to the Municipal Laws Consolidation Bill, which is still before the Imperial authorities awaiting approval or rejection.

For a long time the Natal Government has been in negotiation with the Imperial authorities in respect of the clauses in the Municipal Laws Bill which refer particularly to Asiatics and Indians, both in respect to trading licences and the franchise. The Imperial authorities expressed their willingness to concur in the Government depriving Asiatics of the franchise, but only on the understanding that in respect to trading licences they should be granted the right to appeal to the Supreme Court in cases of refusal by the licensing boards of the Colony. When the Municipal Association of Natal last considered the matter all the delegates, excepting those from Maritzburg, would not agree to the concession, insisting that the only appeal from the decision of the licensing officers should be to the town councils, or in the case of country places to the licensing boards appointed by the Government.

The situation has since become further complicated by a movement of recent date to insist upon all Indian indentures concluding in India and not in Natal. Lord Curzon, then Viceroy, broke off negotiations at the point when Natal pointed out that it could not see its way to grant the right of appeal to the Supreme Court in respect of licences.

The position in regard to Indian traders in Natal has since been rendered more acute owing to the recent action of the Transvaal, and presumably the Natal Ministry have realised the desirability of being *au fait* with the circumstances so far as they concern the people of Natal, in order that they may be prepared with an amendment to the Consolidation Bill when Parliament next meets.

Regarding the question of licences, it is a fact worthy of note that at present the old law providing for appeal only to the town and country licensing boards still holds good in the absence of the Consolidated Act, which awaits the approval of the Home authorities.

Education in Natal

Superintendent's Report

The report of the Superintendent of Education, Mr. C. J. Mudie, on the work of his Department for the year ended June 30, 1907, has just been issued as an official Blue Book. We take the following facts from the *Natal Mercury*:

During the year there were 523 schools under Government inspection—301 European, 170 Native, 33 Indian, and 19 for coloured (other than native or Indian) children—with an average enrolment of 28,847 (14,783 boys, and 14,064 girls), consisting of 12,504 Europeans (6,671 boys and 5,833 girls) 12,246 natives (4,774 boys 7,472 girls), 3,174 Indians (2,837 boys and 337 girls), 923 coloured children (501 boys and 422 girls). The average daily attendance is, in European schools, 85 per cent. of the number enrolled; in native schools, 67 per cent.; in Indian schools, 72 per cent.; and in schools for coloured children, 79 per cent. Of the 523 schools, 49 have been established and are maintained exclusively by the Government. All the other schools are either private, denominational, or board schools receiving grants varying from £3 to £500 a year. Nearly all the native and Indian schools are directly connected with the various religious bodies in the Colony. The Government schools consist of two high schools, 38 primary schools, two art schools, five Indian schools, and two schools for coloured children. Maritzburg has one high school and three primary schools, and Durban one high school and four primary schools. Of the remaining primary schools, one is at Addington, two at Greyville, one at Bellair, and 27 are country schools established in the chief centres of population. Maritzburg has one art, one Indian, and one school for coloured children; while Durban has the other art, the other school for coloured children, and the remaining four Indian schools. The European aided schools are divided into fixed and farm schools. There are 104 of the former, and 155 of the latter. The revenue derived from the Government schools for the year ended June 30, 1907, amounted to £14,222 7s.—£13,443 6s. 11d. from Europeans, £635 8s. 9d. from Indians, and £143 11s. 4d. from coloured children. All these fees have been paid into the Treasury.

One Government and six aided schools provide education for coloured

children. Two new Maritzburg schools have received recognition. Examinations at two farm schools have taken place during the year. The Indian syllabus has been introduced into some of the smaller schools, and it is hoped that its wealth of detail may make the instruction more definite. The want of school material is a grave trouble almost everywhere. One Government school (higher grade) and five aided schools educate about 500 Indian children. There is but one trained teacher in these schools. The work cannot be described as satisfactory, nor is it likely to be until the trained teacher is forced upon the managements. Overcrowding has been checked to a very large extent, but there is much uncleanliness and weak discipline. The higher grade school appears to be suffering from a mild form of boycott, and is fed but to the smallest extent by the very schools which it was intended to supplement; the instruction down to Standard II. here is quite good, but Standard IV. should really be the lowest class. A weekly visit from an inspector, if time permitted, might achieve some reform.

"The Man on the Spot"

An Imperial View

The *Aberdeen Free Press*, commenting on the Transvaal crisis, says:

Some of our colonial friends are sometimes very fond of reminding us of the complete freedom of action which should be conceded to "the man on the spot." But who in this case is "the man on the spot?" Is it the British Indian boiling with passion at the humiliation sought to be imposed upon him by the finger print method of registration—which tears his British citizenship to tatters and labels him an alien—or is it the white man who, thinking solely of his own garden patch, rushes the Indian beyond the horizon? The garden patch has its worth, but what of the Empire that gave it its value and to that end has spent blood and treasure heavily? "The man on the spot" in the Empire—represented by those who in holding the reins of military and civil administration are daily confronting herculean tasks with a courage and devotion that cannot be surpassed—is surely as much entitled as he of the garden patch to a say with regard to proceedings that tie his hands and tend to make him reel in the saddle.

EAST AFRICA FOR INDIANS. To make the East African territories an open Colony for our Indian fellow-subjects, to be directly developed in the interests of India, would be in our conviction a brilliant stroke of equal statecraftship. *Observer.*

Indian Opinion

VOL. VI.

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Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15th, 1908.

A Set-Back?

THE stupid assault committed on Messrs. Essop Mia, Naidoo and Gandhi, while they were on their way to the Registration Office to register, has temporarily checked Indian progress. The Indians in the Transvaal seemed to be gaining in internal peace and nobility of character. We are satisfied that the assault was the work of a few misguided and fanatical Pathans. Mr. Gandhi's refusal to prosecute will break the force of the Pathan fury and the affair should be forgotten as a passing though painful incident of a historical campaign. It would have been wondrous if it had remained free from untoward events.

The assault, however, does but show that the leaders have really been much more moderate than the rank and file and that they have hitherto given a constitutional shape to the Indian indignation roused over the now almost defunct Asiatic Act.

Pathan fury has raged round the ten finger prints. Nor is it surprising. To the vast majority of Indians finger prints were the grossest embodiment of the law. Much argument and eloquence were centred on them. It was shown, as Lord Elgin has now admitted, that they had criminal associations. Many Asiatics could not

think of the Act without the finger prints.

But it was hoped that finger prints voluntarily and in a modified form given would not cause any trouble. Under the voluntary offer they have lost their racial application, but are to be applied for identifying those who could not be otherwise identified. Moreover, they lose their sting in the Transvaal because they are made of general application under the Immigration Act.

It was, therefore, the duty of Indian leaders to bear down ignorant opposition and to prevail upon the community to give their finger prints. In spite of the assault, Mr. Gandhi insisted on giving his finger prints and the other leaders have done likewise. The leaders have, therefore, done all they could. And the Government have responded by making the option of giving two thumb impressions more general. After all, thumb prints are enough for identification. The assault, then, has served its purpose. Those who would lead public opinion must be prepared to suffer. Theirs must ever be a crown of thorns.

THE QUESTION WAS PUT IN THE House of Commons

The Old Story recently as to the number of prosecutions on permit charges against Indians in the Transvaal. The official reply was that there were some 1500. It would almost seem as though all these prosecutions were of a most serious order, but it is curious to note that more than one-third of these took place within a period of 3½ months, extending from November 1902 to February 1903, and that the balance of less than two-thirds had been spread over a period of 4½ years. Of all these prosecutions the great bulk were against Asiatics who attempted to enter the Colony without permits.

These men were successfully prevented from doing so, having been prosecuted and ordered to leave the Colony. But it may be added that very many people came to the Transvaal without permits under the *bona fide* impression that no permits were required, and, as a matter of fact, at a certain period of 1902-3 there was free entry into the Transvaal of Asiatics. It must also be stated that extremely few prosecutions have been brought against Asiatics for using forged permits in any way and not a single one for forging permits. Obviously, therefore, the delinquency was a very trivial one, and in no way demonstrates that there has ever been a vast undetected influx of Asiatics unlawfully entering the Transvaal.

THE WHOLE INDIAN COMMUNITY OF South Africa owes

Christian Charity a very deep debt of gratitude to the Rev. Mr. J. J. Doke and his wife. These generous-hearted people have exhibited the Christian virtues in a manner that must have been a source of pride and joy to everyone of the Christian faith. They have gone out of their way to minister to Mr. Gandhi's comfort. They have nursed him in sickness, after having previously encouraged him in health. British Indians should hold before their eyes constantly the splendid example of charity, humility, and goodness of heart exhibited by Mr. and Mrs. Doke, and should regard them as exponents of all that is best in European and Christian thought and feeling. We are sure that work such as that so nobly and so humbly done by these two noble-hearted people will do more than anything else to bring the two races together on a common basis of human sympathy and brotherly love.

Mr. Gandhi's Letter to the Press

The following has been sent to the Transvaal Press:

Johannesburg,

15th February, 1908.

My dear Friends,—I am well in the brotherly and sisterly hands of Mr. and Mrs. Doke. I hope to take up my duty shortly.

Those who have committed the act did not know what they were doing. They thought that I was doing what was wrong. They have had their redress in the only manner they know. I therefore request that no steps be taken against them.

Seeing that the assault was committed by a Mahomedan or Mahomedans, the Hindus might probably feel hurt. If so, they would put themselves in the wrong before the world and their Maker. Rather let the blood spilt to-day cement the two Communities indissolubly—such is my heartfelt prayer. May God grant it.

Assault or no assault, my advice remains the same. The large majority of Asiatics ought to give finger prints. Those who have real conscientious scruples will be exempted by the Government. To ask for more would be to show ourselves as children.

The spirit of passive resistance rightly understood should make the people fear none and nothing, but God—no cowardly fear, therefore, should deter the vast majority of sober-minded Indians from doing their duty. I am, of course, in favour of repeal of

the Act against voluntary registration having been given, it is the sacred duty of every good Indian to help the Government and the Colony to the uttermost.

I am,
Your faithful friend and servant,
M. K. GANDHI.

The Beginning of Registration

Mr. Gandhi and others Assaulted

A Cowardly Attack

[SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED]

Shortly after a quarter to ten on Monday morning, Mr. Gandhi with other leaders left his office to attend upon the Registrar of Asiatics at Von Brandis Square in order to make application for registration under the new voluntary arrangement. He was passing along Von Brandis Street, when, outside the premises of Messrs. Arnott & Gibson, not more than three minutes' walk from the Registration Office some 8 Panjabis and Pathans accosted Mr. Essop Mia, the Chairman of the Association, and Mr. Gandhi, inquiring where they intended to go. Upon it being explained to them that the leaders were going to the Registration office to make application for registration, the further question was put as to the manner in which they intended to register. The answer was that they intended to give ten finger impressions. If, however, any man had conscientious objections to giving ten finger impressions, he need only give an impression of the two thumbs, making, at the same time, a statement as to the nature of his objection. Apparently, the reply was not satisfactory, for one Pathan named Meer Allam Khan raised a heavy stick which he was carrying and struck Mr. Gandhi a terrific blow aimed with the intention of killing him on the spot. The stick missed the spinal cord, fortunately, but felled Mr. Gandhi to the ground senseless. Mr. Gandhi in falling struck his head against a jagged stone, with the result that his upper lip and cheek were badly lacerated and a tooth loosened, whilst his forehead just above the eye struck another stone, and a third stone just missed the eye itself. Whilst on the ground, several of the Pathans dealt terrible blows upon Mr. Gandhi's body, one of the men being armed with an iron rod. Mr. Thambi Naidoo and Mr. Essop Mia hastily intervened, but Mr. Essop Mia was soon put out of action by a blow upon the hand, which slightly injured the finger, and he thereupon hastened into Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's offices to seek help. Meanwhile, Mr. Thambi Naidoo engaged the attention of Meer Allam, who rained blow after blow upon him, which, fortunately, Naidoo was able to ward off by means of an umbrella which he was carrying at the time. Eventually,

the umbrella broke, and one more blow felled Naidoo to the ground, his head being badly gashed, and, when he was on the ground, further blows were struck at him and he was considerably bruised. Assistance now came from Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's office and a number of Europeans, including constables, hastened to the scene and eventually put an end to the disturbance. All the Pathans with the exception of Meer Allam managed to escape. Meer Allam, however, was arrested, together with a certain Abdul Rahman, a Konkni, who had also taken part in the assault, and these men were detained by the police inside Messrs. Arnott & Gibson's offices and were eventually taken to Marshall Square where they awaited the formal charge to be laid against them. Meanwhile, Mr. Gandhi had issued definite instructions that he refused to prosecute under any circumstances. He was picked up by kind friends just as he was recovering consciousness and carried into Mr. J. C. Gibson's private office, where he lay prostrate on the floor whilst Dr. Thwaites, a medical man, was sent for. Dr. Thwaites immediately examined the wound and pronounced Mr. Gandhi out of any immediate danger. He also examined Mr. Thambi Naidoo's wound, and asked Mr. Naidoo to go off immediately to the hospital to be attended to. Mr. Naidoo was afterwards told that he would not be needed any longer at the hospital after he had been bandaged. Meanwhile the Rev. Mr. Doke, who had been talking with Mr. Polak at the Registration Office, awaiting Mr. Gandhi's arrival there, and who followed Mr. Polak hastily, on receipt of the news, suggested that Mr. Gandhi, instead of being taken to the hospital, should be taken to his own house where he could receive every attention, and the suggestion was immediately acted upon. Mr. Gandhi was accompanied to Mr. Doke's house by Mr. Doke himself, Mr. Chamney, who had been hastily summoned, and a constable. Mr. Gandhi, however, was very eager that there should be no delay in starting registration and he accordingly begged Mr. Chamney to allow him to register immediately and fulfil his promise. Mr. Chamney accordingly sent for one of his clerks who shortly afterwards arrived at 163 Smit Street. Mr. Doke's residence, and there Mr. Gandhi made formal application for registration, giving every particular required by the form which had been mutually agreed on between the leaders of the Indian community and Mr. Smuts which form, of course, makes no mention whatever of the Registration Act. Mr. Gandhi also, although in great pain, gave ten digit impressions and then the simultaneous impressions of the four digits of each hand, the object being to show that there was nothing degrading in the mere giving of finger-impressions, it

was a voluntary act and not under a degrading, humiliating Law like criminals. The Doctor now made preparation to make a further examination of Mr. Gandhi's injuries. Eventually, he said that the face and lip would have to be stitched up, and accordingly five stitches were put in, whilst the remaining injuries which were in the nature of severe bruises and contusions were bandaged.

This brutal attack effectively upset all the arrangements for registration. As if to intensify the nervousness and irritation, by a foolish error, some five receipt forms were issued by the registration officials on which the words "Registered under the Asiatic Law Amendment Act" had not been obliterated. The result was to immediately arouse the suspicions of the people, who thought they were being trapped into registering under the Law. There is no doubt that it will take considerable time to allay this uneasy feeling, and, since then, owing to another stupid mistake of a similar nature, it has been found necessary to re-print the form of receipt.

The Chinese have steadfastly refused to register under the new arrangement, as they feel that they have sworn an oath not to give ten finger impressions. They are quite willing to give two thumb impressions. They have not yet realised that nobody at all is obliged to give ten finger impressions, but that he should do it as an act of duty and wisdom, in view of the fact that upon the satisfactory carrying out of a sensible arrangement within the next three months will depend the new legislation that will be brought forward when Parliament meets.

There is no doubt that all along the community has led the Government to believe that there was no opposition to finger-prints as finger-prints, but only when it was a matter of compulsion under a Law that degraded, the associations being then criminal, and naturally the Government expect that the community as a whole, now that the element of compulsion has been removed, will not make any ado about a matter which is on the part of the community, an act of grace. Unfortunately, the Government is not itself free from blame, seeing that the officials have, in many instances, created the impression that the ten finger impressions were going to be compulsorily demanded, and one or two tactless mistakes have not made the position easier. Mr. Marris, the expert advisor from India, who has been brought to the Transvaal in order to thoroughly go into the question of the personnel of the Civil Service with a view to retrenchment, has been attached to the Registration Office in order to advise in cases of difficulty, owing to his expert knowledge of Indian peoples.

Registration is going on more satisfactory now; and, on Wednesday, many of the leaders made application and with them a large number of others—Hindus and Mahomedans

alike. The statement that there is a split between the two faiths is absolutely incorrect. No distinction is being made, for, as explained above, practically all the leaders—both Hindu and Mahomedan—registered by Wednesday afternoon. There is not likely to be any considerable hitch in the work of further registration, except through some mistake on the part of some officials. The community is realising the significance of the present proceedings, and is readily falling in with the settlement arrived at. Mr. Gandhi himself is progressing rapidly towards recovery. The wounds are healing well, the bruises are disappearing, and he is getting through a good deal of work. He has been staying with the Rev. Mr. Doke, who, with his wife, has ministered to his comfort in a truly Christian manner. Everything that was possible was done for Mr. Gandhi's convenience, and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Doke's house has been used more as a reception room than anything else, as Mr. Gandhi has been receiving a constant stream of visitors—both Indians and Europeans—since last Monday. A large number of telegrams of thanks was received by Mr. and Mrs. Doke from all parts of South Africa, and many messages of regret at what had happened were received by the British Indian Association.

Meer Allam Khan and Abdool Rahman, two of the men who assaulted Mr. Gandhi, the former being the chief assailant, were re-arrested on Tuesday afternoon by Supt. Vernon. They were brought before Mr. Jordan on Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

Mr. Van Diggelen and Mr. Reuter announced that they appeared for the defence. Mr. Reuter said he had been instructed by a friend of the accused, while Mr. Van Diggelen claimed to be instructed by the accused. The accused were given the choice of representatives, and Mr. Van Diggelen was selected. He at once asked for a remand.

The Public Prosecutor, while not objecting, said he had all his witnesses present and was prepared to go on.

The Magistrate remanded the accused till the 19th and fixed bail at £100.

What the Papers Say

The *Transvaal Leader* comments as under:—

Among decent-minded people the brutal assault committed upon Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Naidoo yesterday will give rise to feelings of profound regret and sympathy, coupled with the hope that the victims will before long regain their health.

Apparently the assault took place before the work of registration was begun—or attempted to be begun. Had the affray occurred after instead of before the officials began their duties it seems likely that the Government would have had placed upon it, morally if not legally, a terrible re-

sponsibility. It seems incredible that, despite the Colonial Secretary's statement, that registration under the Act is no longer possible in view of the expiry of the period named in the notices, the receipts or certificates handed out to the few who registered yesterday stated that they had registered under the Act and agreed to abide by all its regulations! The effect upon a suspicious and excited people was to make them believe that their leaders or the Government, or both, were betraying them. It is impossible, within the limits of conventional language, to do justice to those responsible for this, equally with preceding blunders in connection with the administration of the Act. The Colonial Secretary is in a position in which he deserves the sympathy of all good men. He is standing and has from the first stood by his department. He is observing the best traditions of responsible government. The pity of it is that from the first there have been writ large in the Asiatic branch the marks of incompetence, if not worse. Every Indian race and caste represented here had been dealt with as if all races and castes were alike, which is the first thing an experienced Indian official would avoid. So soon as the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Gandhi came together an understanding was arrived at. Yet even after this plain hint the Asiatic branch continued along its blundering path. Residents who recall registration a few years ago will remember that the then officials asked for and obtained the co-operation of the Asiatic leaders, so that, instead of hordes of Asiatics lining the streets and crowding the vicinity of offices, as took place yesterday, a few men were brought at a time, and the work went off smoothly. The work of registration, which requires patience, tact and diplomacy, has from the first been carried out in the narrowest and harshest spirit. Instead of all mention of the Act which proved so unworkable being avoided, its name and its provisions are insisted upon at every point, and the whole conduct of the registration branch gives colour to the view that its desire is less to aid the Government and the Colony in finding a way out of an awkward and delicate situation than to show the Asiatics that it is their master.

What is wanted is that the official who is the eye and hand and brain of the Government at the present conjuncture should bring a fresh mind to bear upon a fresh situation. Of the ability to do this there is no indication. On the injustice to Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Naidoo and Mr. Leung Quinn which the present state of things involves it would be waste of words to comment at length. The Government has assisting it a high official of the Indian Government, Mr. Marris. Since it has involved no loss of dignity by other departments of the public service to have Mr. Marris enquire into their working and arrangements, may we ask if it is not

possible for the Government to call in Mr. Marris to preside at the work of registration, insisting upon the whole of the proceedings being transacted before his eyes—not in another room? And is it not the part of wisdom only to employ Europeans as registration officials? We are informed that the departure from this rule is strongly condemned by Anglo-Indians here. It is pretty evident that unless reform be promptly initiated in this work of registration, the well-meant efforts of the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Gandhi will go for little.

The *Star* says:

Possibly yesterday's fracas was simply an outburst of an ancient feud between the hills and the plains with an extra touch of jealousy that the whole credit of the passive resistance campaign had gone to the plains. It should be remembered too that the bearers, water-carriers, and camp-followers who came to South Africa with the British Army had a good deal less to gain by a peaceful settlement than the Bengali traders with their old established business. Though less prominent in controversy these men have always been in the forefront of the opposition to the Government, and Mr. Smuts has more than once made merry over their heroic offer to face death rather than registration. They seem to have been regarded from the first as a new and rather complicating factor in the situation by the main body of their compatriots, who could always count on their support while it was a question of fighting, but have very little in common with them now that the fight is over.

The fact that Mr. Gandhi's assailants only represent a small section of the Asiatic community means, we hope, that yesterday's occurrence will have no serious bearing on the success of Mr. Smuts' new experiment. The subsequent proceedings, however, seem to have revealed some minor defects in the arrangements which are not altogether creditable to the tact and foresight of the Asiatic Department. The form of receipt, for instance, a perfectly immaterial document, still bore the offensive stigma of "compulsion," and has had to be altered in ink since registration actually began. It is a trifling matter, no doubt; but the Government have had every reason to learn by this time that they are dealing with a suspicious and sensitive people, and it seems a pity that there should ever have been the smallest ground for the belief that Mr. Smuts' settlement was not being carried out in the broad spirit of toleration in which it was framed. We have no desire to offer advice to the experts in matters of detail. As we have always insisted, the precise form and manner of registration is a matter of profound indifference to the public, which is only concerned with its effect. So long as it is perfectly clear that the whole Asiatic com-

munity is being registered in such a way as to place an absolute bar to illicit immigration, no one is going to cavil at the Government's methods. But there has been so much friction and miscalculation and hurried change of front that the public is quite justified in coming to the conclusion that a certain amount at least of the recent trouble has been due to departmental carelessness, and it is satisfactory to know that Mr. Smuts is back in Pretoria and in close touch with the local officials. We learn, too, that in Pretoria the work of registration is proceeding smoothly and expeditiously, so that there is no reason to suppose that there is any general opposition to the settlement on the side of the Asiatics.

The *Rand Daily Mail* has the following:—

We feel sure that all the better class Asiatics in South Africa will sincerely regret the cowardly attack made upon Mr. Gandhi yesterday at the opening of the registration office. However much the European population may disagree with Mr. Gandhi's ideas, they recognise his absolute honesty of purpose and the fairness of his methods. When he came to a compromise with the Government it was hoped that the whole of the Indians would endorse his policy. It is now evident that a handful of fanatics insist upon standing out of an arrangement which the Asiatics generally have every reason to regard as reasonable and satisfactory. It is to be hoped, however, that the opposition is only confined to a few malcontents, and that the bulk of the Asiatics will quietly and quickly fulfil their part in the settlement which has been reached. The obstinate ones can be left alone to ultimately incur the penalties they will richly deserve.

A Distinguished Coloured Student

Alain LeRoy Locke, the successful candidate at Harvard University for the Cecil Rhodes Oxford Scholarship, which knows nothing of race, color or nationality, and which is given for "scholarship, manliness and athletic ability," is one more example to be quoted in evidence of the brain-power that resides in the pure Negro race. He was born in 1885 and was consequently 22 years of age when he was graduated at Harvard, having taken the entire course in three years instead of the usual four, winning honours, through the various terms.

His great triumph in scholarship was the winning of the Bowdoin Scholarship in March. Even without having secured the Rhodes Oxford Scholarship of \$1,500 annually, this would have been in itself a rare achievement. It carries with it a medal and \$250 in money with the public presentation of his thesis. In

the Rhodes Scholarship he was one of the five out of fifty contestants.—*The American Missionary*.

Asiatic Trading in Natal

The Working Man's Point of View

Mr. John Connolly, M.L.A., speaking at a Ladysmith public meeting on the Asiatic question said, while he fully sympathised with the white storekeepers, and while he believed that it was difficult, if not impossible, to compete with the Arabs, he felt that the question would have to be dealt with in a different manner from that which was being advocated on platforms throughout the Colony at the present moment. He was personally of opinion that it could only be settled by the strict enforcement of the present sanitary and other laws by which they had the power to eliminate to certain extent the elements of unfairness from the competition. The same thing was happening in regard to the skilled and semi-skilled workers in the Colony. Asiatics were everywhere taking the place of white artisans and clerks, and the result was that there were upwards of 1,000 white men out of employment in Durban to-day, ("Shame.") As a representative of the workers, he felt this keenly, but, at the same time, he believed that it would not be in accordance with our ideas of what was right or just to deny the coloured races an opportunity of raising themselves; but they were justified in protecting the interests of the white men. This could be done by laws regulating wages. If they believed that cheap labour was a curse, then they were justified in abolishing it. A resolution was brought forward at each of the two last sessions of Parliament, calling upon the Government to insert a fair-wage clause in their contracts. The proposal was rejected, but he was of opinion that it was the only possible way of dealing with the question. The first thing to be done, however, was to stop the further influx of Asiatics in any shape or form. Mr. Sparks had suggested that the white people should band themselves together and refuse to support the Indian trader. This was all very well, but as long as the Indian was free to compete with the white worker the latter should be allowed the right to choose what he considered the cheapest market. If competition was bad, they should abolish it, if possible; but, if not, it should be free to one side as well as to the other. If the white traders employed nothing but white men, he would certainly be in favour of supporting them, but as long as they took advantage of cheap labour, the workers were justified in taking advantage of the cheap market provided by the Arabs; that was, if it was cheap. Personally, he did not believe it was, as, although the prices charged by the Arab were certainly lower in many

cases, the article itself was usually of inferior quality. This, however, was a matter of opinion. If the working men believed that it was to his interest to deal with the Indians, he was not prepared to deny him the right to do so under present circumstances.—*Natal Mercury*.

A Jewish View of the Indian Question

Writing under date of January 3, the London correspondent of the *S. A. Jewish Chronicle* remarks: A prominent part in the agitation here on behalf of the British Indians in the Transvaal is being taken by Mr. L. W. Ritch, who has written frequent letters to the Press on the subject, and whose remarks are treated by editors with a good deal of respect. Mr. Ritch is very well known to the Jewish community of Johannesburg, which he left for London two or three years ago. He is not the only a Jew of education who, in the Transvaal, found himself attracted by the high-spirited qualities of the religion of the Hindus, and was keenly touched by the injustices under which they seemed to labour. The letters of "Disgusted Jew," on the subject, in your journal some two years ago, will no doubt still be fresh in the memory of your readers. At that time there seemed to be a danger that Jews might be subjected to the same disabilities as the Indians, and, having to fight for their own hand, they could not afford to spend any sympathy on their neighbours. Now that they have happily secured their objects, they can lend an ear to the complaints of their dusky fellow-subjects, and may feel legitimate pride in the fact that a co-religionist is fighting so sturdily for what appears to him the cause of justice and humanity. Of course Jews, whether in England or in South Africa, are not bound to agree with Mr. Ritch, nor to wish him success in his endeavours. There is a good old saying that charity begins at home; it is possible that some Jews will feel that their own position would be endangered were the Indians to obtain all they ask for. There is every sign that this question will be brought into English politics before long. The public here, of course, cannot understand the antipathy of the white population of South Africa to the Indians, and no doubt public protests will soon be raised against, what seems to be here, their very harsh and unjust treatment. In that case it will probably be placed to the credit of the Jewish community of the Transvaal that a Jewish gentleman from Johannesburg has been foremost in championing the cause of the Indians. In this way Mr. Ritch's action may ultimately prove to the advantage of the Jews in the Transvaal, though at present the line he is taking up may seem alien from their interests.

General Smuts' Apologia

Speech at Richmond

Speaking at Richmond, Johannesburg, last week, General Smuts, in the course of a lengthy address, said:

There was one question on which he had come to speak especially, one that had been very much to the fore, especially in the last few days, and he thought this an appropriate occasion on which to review the whole position as it presented itself to-day. He referred to the Asiatic question. When the whole case was before them he was sure they would absolutely approve of their course, and would say that a statesmanlike thing had been done, and that it really was not possible for the Government to do anything save what it had done. This Asiatic question was no new thing. It started after the first war of independence. He need not remind them that the Transvaal had been very much—perhaps over—advertised, and so far back as 1881 the war of independence had carried their fame to the East, and people began to come in from India and other parts of the world. They wanted to put a stop to it, but the Government was unable to do so—they would know why that was. The Transvaal did not receive complete independence under the London Convention of 1881, but remained under the suzerainty of England, and the Indians who came here were very largely British subjects. When the Government of that day wanted to tackle the question the Home Government stepped in and said "These Indians are our subjects, and you have not, under the terms of the Convention, the power to put them over the border or keep them out of the country." The treatment of the question in the O.R.C. was quite different, but the O.R.C. was a sovereign independent State, and could take the Asiatic by the neck, and put him out—and keep him out, too. They had been very lax in the Transvaal in those days. He was talking recently to a shrewd old man, who told him that when the first coolies came here he spoke to a merchant, who said, "We have a lot of old stock we can't dispose of, and these coolies would carry it about the country for us and sell it to the Boers and Kaffirs." (Laughter.) Some years afterwards, in 1885, the question had assumed much larger proportions, and by that time the merchants had come to quite a different idea as to the uses of the coolies, and clamoured to have them regulated. The Volksraad passed the first law on the subject—a law very much like the law they had passed last year. They could not put the Indian out because the British Empire sat behind him, but the Government could say, "You will have to register, so that we can know who is in the country and who has the right to be here." Every Asiatic had to pay a certain fee—£25, he thought

it was, though later it was reduced to £3. The whole object was to legalise those who were here, and, if possible, to keep the others out; but this was impossible, and the Asiatics streamed into the country till before the war they had 10,000 or 12,000—he did not know the exact number—coolies in the Transvaal. When the war broke out many left the country and went away, and the Indian population decreased sensibly, while during the war matters were at a standstill except for some Indians coming in with the army. The Pathans and others were now very clamorous because they came in with the British army and seemed to wish to be taken into a field by himself (the speaker) and General Botha and shot dead. (Laughter.) They had not been fighters but camp followers.

AFTER THE WAR.

After the war—though Mr. Gandhi would not admit it—the stream of immigrants increased very largely, and it became certain that the registration certificates of the old Republic were forged, and as the terms were not very particular it was easy that they could be forged. The result was that thousands poured into the country, and the question assumed dangerous proportions. That was the state of affairs in 1906, when the Crown Colony Government felt it right to put a stop to it. Unless they were to follow the fatal course of Natal they had to make a firm stand, and a law was introduced into the Legislative Council and passed. It was identical with the terms of the law passed last year. Was the object to put the Asiatics over the border or expel them or put them in prison? No. Lord Selborne had a long correspondence with the British Government, and this was all in a Blue-book, from which they would see the reasons that actuated the late Government in passing the measure. The object was to register in the most unmistakable way, a way that could not be subject to fraud or forgery, to register every Asiatic who was legally entitled to be here. The object was indeed twofold—to give a definite status to the Indians who were here before the war and to see that the rest of Asia was kept out of the country. What happened? A deputation from the Indian community interviewed the British Government and made a great show of resistance, with the result that the Home Government would not advise His Majesty the King to assent to the law.

THE FIRST PARLIAMENT.

That was the state of affairs when the first Parliament of the Transvaal met in March last and that was the first law tackled; which was the same as that lying in the pigeon-holes of the Government at Home. The people of the Colony were anxious to have the measure assented to and the old law was approved of verbatim. If he had done it, provisions would have

been included in the law which, as a matter of fact, were not in it. It was unanimously approved of and on the unanimous vote of this Parliament it was assented to. But it was never intended to put people over the border or to put them in prison; the one object was the registration of those who were in the country so that the Government might keep others out.

ONLY 500 REGISTERED.

In what way did the law propose to do that? The law proposed that the Government should notify a period within which Asiatics in this country entitled to register should come forward and register themselves. There was no legal compulsion, but a period was fixed, and after that period had expired no registration could take place. The character of that law was that it should come into force once, and should have its effect once, and once for all. It was a very risky law, because if the Asiatics did not come forward during that period, registration became impossible, and the law became a dead letter. What happened? They put the law into force. Notice was given to Indians to register, and after the period had expired and the Indians had not registered, he added another month. He knew some of them blamed him for that; but he did it because he wanted to give the law and the Indian population in the country every chance. That month also expired, and no registrations took place. Of the 10,000 Indians in the country only 500 registered. Well that month also expired, and registration became impossible.

▼ THREE ALTERNATIVES.

Three alternatives remained to the Government. They might have put them over the border; they could have sent them all to prison; or they could have gone to Parliament again, and said to Parliament, "You have passed a law which was in operation for a certain period; that period has passed, the virtue of the law has gone, and we want further powers." Take the first alternative—putting the Indians who refused to register over the border. It was not easy putting men over the border. It was not a question for the Transvaal alone, but an international question. As soon as the measure was carried Natal gave notice "No coolie to be sent to us." The Transvaal could not send them to the Orange River Colony; could not send them to Rhodesia; could not send them to the Cape. There was one way open, which might have been open for a brief period. That was Delagoa Bay; but no one knew at what date that gate also might have been closed. It was a very difficult international question—a question which would have given rise to serious complications—and the Government, after full consideration, decided that that course should not be adopted. The next alternative was to put the Indians in prison. He had sent every leader to prison, and hundreds more