

# Indian Opinion

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## LAND TENURE ACT IN THE INDIAN LEGISLATURE

### MR. BAJPAI'S STATEMENT

**Q**UESTIONS on the Transvaal Land Tenure Act were put in the Indian Legislative Assembly at Simla in mail week. The following is a full report of the proceedings, as contained in the Indian exchange.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Aiyar's interpellation, which brought forth a long statement by Mr. Bajpai on behalf of the Government, was followed by a string of supplementary questions and as the Assembly still showed a desire to have the subject discussed on a special day, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Leader of the House, promised to consider the point, subject to certain discussions between the party leaders and the Chair.

Mr. Bajpai recalled the three main points dealt with in the statement made in the Assembly on the 5th April, and pointed out that special staff engaged to explain the provisions of the assisted scheme of emigration had been dismissed as the possibilities of such emigration had now been exhausted. As for the Government of India co-operating with the Union Government in exploring the possibilities of the colonisation scheme for settling of Indians both from India and from South Africa, Mr. Bajpai stated that the initiative lay with the Union Government, from whom no suggestion had been yet received. The South African Indian Congress had recently decided to appoint a delegate to the proposed committee of investigation.

As regards the Land Tenure Bill, the changes made by Union Parliament had the effect of further safeguarding Indians. Clause 5 had been deleted, and the Minister for the Interior had been empowered to withdraw any land from the operation of Sections 130 and 131 of the Gold Law where they prohibited residence upon or occupation of any land by coloured persons. This power would be exercised after enquiry into individual cases by an impartial Commission presided over by a judge, to validate the present illegal occupations and permit exceptions to be made in future from the occupational restrictions of the Gold Law.

After explaining the features of the Act like protection of fixed property acquired by Asiatic Companies till 1st May 1930 and the provision of appeal against the decisions of local bodies regarding certificates of fitness to trade, Mr. Bajpai informed the House that the Indian Congress in South Africa had decided to passively resist the Act, and had appointed a Committee to organise resistance. Probably, no action would be taken until the Commission to enquire into individual titles of occupation had reported. Finally, he stated that the Government of India had instructed the Agent to watch developments.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Aiyar wanted to know the strength of the feeling of Indians against the Act. Mr. Bajpai

stated that a great majority of those affected by the Bill were not very keen on passive resistance. Sir H. S. Gour was told that far from the Act complained of being a violation of the agreement, certain changes had been made which improved it.

Mr. Ranga Iyer here hinted that the privileges enjoyed by the Indian Agent were fewer than those of the Japanese Counsel.

Mr. Bajpai later assured the member that the Government of India were corresponding with the Union Government on the question of entry of Indians on temporary basis. He added that some changes made in the Bill were the result of representations made by the Government of India.

Mr. S. O. Mitra preferred a special day for discussions and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer said that Government were willing to allot a special day subject to certain discussions between party leaders and the Chair.

Further supplementary questions still followed and Mr. Bajpai informed that the new Agent had full confidence in the South African community. Private agencies were already exploring the possibilities of emigration into Brazil. But no information had been received from the Union Government with whom the initiative lay.

The *Hindu* of Madras comments as follows on the proceedings in a leader:—

Mr. Bajpai's attempt to elucidate the position of Indians in South Africa in the Legislative Assembly does not appear to have been successful because following the statement, there was a general demand for the allotment of a day to discuss the subject. The Leader of the House, finding that there was a general desire for a more elaborate discussion, has promised to consider the point and we do not hope that, in view of the growing importance of the question, an opportunity would be given for a full debate. Mr. Bajpai stated that the special staff appointed to explain the provisions of the scheme of assisted emigration had been dismissed "as the possibilities of such emigration have now been exhausted." As a matter of fact, the position seems to be that even, without the special staff, large number of Indians are availing themselves of the scheme contrary to expectations on account of the acute distress felt by the community owing to unemployment. We hope that the Government would explain to the Assembly the measures which are being taken by the Union Government to relieve unemployment among Indians. The reports that have reached India about the way in which Indians are being replaced by whites point to the fact that the Union Government do not feel that any obligation rests upon them to look after the interests

of Indians; and yet one of the cardinal features of the Cape Town Agreement is that Indians who remain in South Africa have to be looked upon as permanent members of the community whose uplift should be the special care of the Government. Mr. Bajpai, referring to the Land Tenure Act, point out the few improvements which have been introduced as a result of the representations made by the delegation from India at the beginning of the year. It was stated that the Minister for the Interior had been empowered to withdraw any land from the operation of Sections 180 and 181 of the Gold Law which prohibited residence upon or occupation of any land by coloured persons. This power would be exercised by a Commission presided over by a judge assisted by two other members, all of them, it must be remembered, being officials of the Union Government. It will be remembered that the Indian community have stated at the Congress recently held that they would passively resist the Act after this Commission has reported. It is generally feared, however, that the recommendations of this Commission when they are made would be so unsatisfactory as to be unacceptable to Indians. Mr. Bajpai, we are afraid, ventured into speculation when he stated that a great majority of those affected by the Act were not very keen on passive resistance. The Act has brought relief only to a small number of persons and even these are being persecuted under the licensing laws. The public would like to know whether the serious statement made by Mr. Bajpai as regards the attitude of the bulk of the community is founded upon the reports received from the Agent for India in South Africa. On the other hand, the fact that the resolution on passive resistance was passed by the Transvaal Indian Congress and later on by the South African Indian Congress is proof that the matter is very keenly felt by the Indian community and that they are prepared to make huge sacrifices in order to vindicate not only their honour but the honour of India. The general impression left on one's mind after reading Mr. Bajpai's statement is that the Government of India feel that they have done all they could and that the Indian community are not likely to get any further help in fighting that retrograde measure.

#### MR. BAJPAI'S STATEMENT

MR. BAJPAI does credit to his training and is loyal to his salt. His handling of the debate, as reflected in our Indian exchanges, which we publish elsewhere in this issue, appears to have been in quite the best manner along approved ministerial lines, and according to accepted parliamentary standards.

Ministerial and parliamentary ethics, of course, preclude the smallest departure from the truth, the literal truth, that is. But no obligation would appear to be recognised necessitating a disclosure of unpleasant aspects of the matter under enquiry, of imparting the *whole* truth.

Mr. Bajpai's self-satisfaction over the labours of the Fazli Hussain Delegation almost makes us doubt our own understanding of the Act and its consequences to ourselves, and to even wonder whether we really ought not to welcome this freshly imposed branding of us as undesirables, *because we are Indians*, (will Mr. Bajpai

please note the italicised words) and this now successful move to effectuate our segregation because we as Indians fall into the category of "coloured persons."

The essential difference between Mr. Bajpai, and other Indian gentlemen circumstanced as he is, on the one hand, and ourselves on the other, is that we Indians of the Transvaal occupy the unenviable position of the toad beneath the harrow, while they, from a safe vantage point, calmly and a little patronisingly assure us that the harrow is not nearly as painful as it might have been but for their kindly offices, and that they entertain hopes that if we are good toads, and survive our harrowing experiences of the next few years, a way out from our trials and troubles may be found.

What Mr. Bajpai and those who think along his line evidently overlook—or if they do not overlook, observe with indifference—is, that the racial discrimination involved in the Act is a slur upon *every Indian everywhere*; that the implication of racial inferiority expressed in the Gold Law of the Transvaal or the Immigration Laws of the Union is equally a stigma upon Mr. Bajpai, who happens to be a highly-placed Indian in India, as upon Mr. Greengrocer Patel, who is trying to earn a livelihood by hawking vegetables in Johannesburg.

To the practical official mind, to which the scoring of points is all-important, the grounds of our objection to being treated as undesirables and outcasts is perhaps somewhat difficult to appreciate. It is thought, apparently, that as long as we are not wholly deprived of our opportunities to make little money or even a living, our lot is not serious enough to justify such a very great fuss. That principles—regard for honour and dignity—mean anything of real value to us seems unbelievable. Happily, of a not insignificant portion of our people, it may be said, they would rather live as lean men than as fat dogs. Our radical objection to the Land Tenure Act; our quarrel with its protagonists, is, it reiterates, it re-emphasises the denial of our manhood; it cancels out the much talked-of promise of "uplift," we prized greatly; it relegates us to whatever kennels we may be ordered to occupy and imposes chains that will effectively prevent our operating outside of the defined limitations.

## Indian Press On Transvaal Situation

### 'The Leader'

Indian affairs in South Africa seem to be approaching a crisis. At the recent session of the South African Indian Congress which discussed the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Amendment Act, a resolution was passed advocating passive resistance after the commission appointed under the Act had submitted its report. Now though as a result of the last Round Table Conference, the evils of the new anti-Asiatic legislation were mitigated to some extent, what the first Capetown agreement promised in its upliftment clause was that the Union Government would take "all possible steps for the uplifting of every section of the permanent population to the full extent of their capacity and opportunities," and consequently what Indian public opinion can reasonably demand is that if the Union Government are not willing or able to repeal the Gold Law of 1908 and Law 3 of 1895, they can at least let the old obnoxious laws remain dormant as they have remained so far, instead of reviving them. As it is, even after the amendments made as a result of the discussions at the last Round Table Conference, the present Act gives enough power to enable an unsympathetic administration to injure Indian interests. Therefore we can fully appreciate the feelings of the members of the Indian community who are advocating a policy of passive resistance. But the question is whether such action is likely to improve our position or ruin them altogether. Few persons can speak with greater authority on the capacity of Indian leadership and other conditions relating to the Indian community in South Africa than Mr. Sastri. He has expressed the opinion that 'passive resistance will end in great disaster' and has exhorted Kunwar Maharaj Singh to 'win the community from the path of irretrievable blunder.' Therefore let the leaders of the community consider well before they decide on a course of action. As we have always held, the Asiatic Land Tenure Act is a most obnoxious measure which a justice-loving government should be ashamed to place on its statute book in the year of grace 1932, and we would urge the British Government who otherwise claim to be the sole guardians of the interests of the depressed and oppressed communities to pay some attention to the conditions prevailing in South Africa. But let not the Indian community embark upon a policy of action which would land them into even greater difficulties.

### 'The Bombay Chronicle'

We do not know what justification Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has for sending a cable to Durban advising Indians that "passive resistance is no remedy for political ills and is likely to end in great political disaster. Much less why he should ask the Agent-General in South Africa to plead with Indians "in my name" to win South African Indians from the "path of irretrievable blunder." The answer from the South African Indian Congress however, has been prompt and conclusive. It comes in a message that South African Indians "have decided unanimously to resist passively the Asiatic Land Tenure Act" and that they are enrolling volunteers for the purpose. They now appeal to their Mother country to stand by them and help them financially.

### Ungenerous

To advise Indians in the Sastri manner at a stage, when it would obviously be difficult and weakening for them to retrace their steps and at a moment when they require all the material and moral assistance that their fellow-countrymen in India can

them, is, to say the least, invidious and ungenerous. Mr. Sastri has said or done nothing all these months when South African Indians were preparing themselves for passive resistance and it is unreasonable to intervene at the last moment with gratuitous advice from his placid retreat in South India. Mr. Sastri has such an overfine sense of fairness, said the late Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer, that he is sometimes less than fair to his own side, and we now find him discouraging Indians with warnings of committing of an "irretrievable blunder" when they are appealing to their Mother country for assistance.

### What Alternative?

Indians have done but little for their brothers beyond the seas, who are suffering under the brand of semi-slavery. Without discussing the ethics of passive resistance we would ask Mr. Sastri what is the alternative that he suggests to Indians in South Africa, who are branded as inferior human beings and treated with insults which they feel to be beyond human endurance. Does he wish them quietly to suffer their humiliations without a manly fight for their rights? Not even their worst enemies can complain that they have not used all the means available to them to find a way out of the difficulty which now faces them. Mr. Sastri well knows that they have exhausted almost all constitutional methods to induce the Union Government to spare them this one more indignity, but their protests have been contemptuously brushed aside and the Asiatic Land Tenure Bill passed into law.

### Our Duty

What more can they do? They are aware that in such a struggle they can expect little or no help from the Government of India, since the latter have already given their approval to the measure. Mahatma Gandhi in the face of overwhelming odds once led his countrymen in South Africa to victory, though we are aware that there is no Hardinge ruling over India now to approve a course similar to that Mahatma Gandhi adopted. We have no hesitation in hoping that Indians in South Africa will have the fullest support of all patriotic Indians in this country. Indians here must realise that their countrymen in South Africa are fighting their battle to remove the brand of inferiority, and it is the duty of every Indian to help them in every possible way.

### 'The Tribune'

The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, Bombay, has just received a cable from the South African Indian Congress stating that it was unanimously decided at the recent session of the Conference of the South African Indian Congress "to resist passively" the Asiatic Land Tenure Act. The cable also states that the Transvaal Indian Congress is enrolling volunteers for the purpose and appeals to India to render financial and other assistance to the South African Indians when the struggle actually starts. We have no doubt all patriotic and right-thinking Indians will render all possible help to their afflicted compatriots in South Africa, if the worst comes to the worst and they are compelled to resort to Satyagraha to resist the racial arrogance of the Union Government. May we, however, remind the Government of India of their own duty in the matter. If the Union Government refuses to repeal the Asiatic Land Tenure Act, it is the imperative duty of the Government of India not only to extend their moral support to the proposed Satyagraha in South Africa but to refuse to ask the Indian Legislature to ratify the Ottawa agreements, in so far as they relate to South Africa. It is only by taking such action and by adopting a general policy of retaliation, that the Government can hope to effectively safeguard the interests of South African Indians and give a practical proof of its sympathy with them.

## The Premier's Statement Relating To The Communal Award

(By RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE)

On the publication of the text of the decision of His Majesty's Government regarding communal problems, the British Prime Minister has issued a statement, in the course of which he says :

"We never wished to intervene in the communal controversies of India.....We have realised from the very first that any decision that we make is likely, to begin with at any rate, to be criticised by every community purely from the point of view of its own complete demands, but we believe that in the end considerations of Indian needs will prevail and all communities will see that their duty is to co-operate in working the new constitution which is to give India a new place in the British Commonwealth of Nations."

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald adds that the British Government had to undertake the duty of giving their decision on India's constitutional communal problems, because of "the failure of the communities to agree amongst themselves" and "in response to repeated appeals from representative Indians."

In order to apportion blame fairly it is necessary to refer briefly to the origin of the communal controversies and their subsequent history.

It may be true that the present Prime Minister and his former and present colleagues, who had to do with the first and second sessions of the Round Table Conference, never wished to *intervene* in the communal controversies of India. But who were responsible for the *origin and growth* of communal controversies in the field of Indian politics? It is a matter of common knowledge that our communal problems in their political aspects were virtually created by Governor-General Lord Minto in the first decade of this century. To prove this it is not necessary to state that the late Maulana Mahomed Ali said in his Congress presidential address that the Muhammadan deputation which waited upon Lord Minto, asking for separate favourable treatment for the Muslims as regards seats in the legislative bodies and appointments in the public services, was a "command performance"; nor is it necessary to refer to a similar statement made by Maulvi Abdus Samad, M.L.C., as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Murshidabad session of the Bengal Provincial Conference. For, Lord Morley, as Secretary of State for India, wrote on the 6th December, 1909, to Lord Minto :

"I won't follow you again into our Mahometan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was *your* early speech about their extra claims that first started the Mahometan hare."

Sir Bampfylde Fuller's "favourite wife" theory and Lord Olivier's observations on the British attitude towards Moslems are well known. For decades, there has been discrimination in favour of Mussalmans in the public services and in the provision of special educational facilities. Both in the Morley-Minto and Montagu-Chelmsford constitutions separate electorates were provided for the Mussalmans, thus whetting their appetite for such things. Lastly, during both the sessions of the Round Table Conference the Imperialist die-hards and the members of the European Association then in England had been constantly strengthening and stimulating the separatist communal zeal of the Muslim delegates to the R.T.C. The Prime Minister need not be reminded that all the Muslim delegates were separatists, except latterly Sir Ali Imam, who was not allowed to or did not take part in the Round Table Conference. Is it any wonder then that there has been no communal agreement?

The British rulers being thus, in part at least, responsible for political disagreement among the communi-

ties, it was *their* bounden duty to devise a scheme which would tend to produce agreement among them. This they have not done.

The failure of Government's own nominated men to come to an agreement cannot be rightly spoken of as the failure of the communities themselves. Nor were most of them "representative Indians." It may be that, even if the communities had chosen their own representatives, they too would perhaps have failed to reach an agreement. That would, however, have been due in no small measure to the communalist mentality created and fostered by the Government's own policy and measures. But the British Government neither asked nor allowed the communities to choose their own representatives for the purpose of arriving at an agreement. It has never also been definitely stated by the British Government in Britain or in India what degree of agreement would be acceptable to them, assuming of course that they would really welcome a communal agreement. If perfect unanimity were required, that would perhaps be unattainable. Even in Britain and other Western countries there is no unanimity, there is great divergence of opinion, among different parties, in relation to many matters of the greatest importance. So, it ought to suffice, if in India important and influential sections of different communities come to an agreement on essential constitutional points.

Now, Nationalist Muslims, assembled at the Lucknow Conference, voted in favour of joint electorates. At the Faridpur Conference they did the same. These decisions were approved and welcomed by the Hindua. The Bengal Presidency Muslim League's resolution in favour of joint electorates was fully endorsed by Hindu leaders of all shades of political opinion, and this endorsement was published in the papers. Similar resolutions have been passed at meetings of other Muslim associations. At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council, attended by Muslim, Hindu, European and other members, a resolution in favour of joint electorates has been carried. At the same Council, in the course of the debate on the Municipal Bill, a similar voting in favour of joint electorates has taken place.

But in spite of these clear indications that all Hindus and an important section of the Muslims are in favour of joint electorates—at least in Bengal, the communal award has been given in favour of separate electorates in all provinces. And why? Apparently because a section of Muslims want separate electorates. On the one side, there were an important section of Mussalmans and all Hindus and many Christians etc. in favour of joint electorates; on the other, there was a section of Mussalmans in favour of separate electorates, to which all Hindus were opposed. Hence, to all fair-minded men, it should have been clear that the preponderating opinion was in favour of joint electorates. Under the circumstances, it would not be unfair to conclude that the award has gone in favour of separate electorates, because British Imperialists do not want a united India, they want a divided India, and also because Britishers in India want a decisive voice in the government of the country by means of separate electorates. What they really care for above all is a separate and secure effective voice for themselves in Indian legislatures. Instead of saying so plainly, they profess great anxiety for safeguarding the interests of Muslims and some others by separate electorates. But sometimes in unguarded moments the real truth comes out. For example, in a recent issue of *The Statesman* of Calcutta it has been observed :

"It is from the hands of Britishers that the new constitution must come, and in no circumstances is it conceivable that the British community here with its enormous stake in the country would accept annihilation."

It is understood, of course, that "annihilation" means "not having for themselves the casting vote," as it were, in the legislative bodies by means of over-representation by separate electorates for themselves—and by securing a permanent overwhelming statutory majority in the

Councils for themselves and the subservient section of Muslims combined. This Calcutta British organ advocates the system of separate electorates for selfish reasons knowing quite well all the while that it is an evil thing. For it writes :

"Nobody will argue that separate electorates are beneficial, that they promote the feeling of nationhood, or that they do not tend to keep open sores and prevent the healing of differences."

I have shown that there has been substantial agreement between the Hindus and an important section of the Muslims—the Nationalist Muslims, particularly in Bengal, in favour of joint electorates. Hence the British Cabinet should and could have given their decision in its favour—at least in Bengal. The Premier has stated that the Government will "be ready and willing to substitute for their scheme any scheme either in respect of any one or more of the Governor's provinces or in respect of the whole of British India that is generally agreed to and accepted by all the parties affected." This assurance has been repeated in the Government's award. Therefore, Government could have given joint electorates at least to some of the provinces, e.g., Bengal. That they have not done so, shows that they do not desire even a partial mitigation of the harmful features of their scheme—they appear to want from the vast population of India a complete scheme of which all points are agreed to and accepted by all the present and any possible future mushroom parties affected. It is and would be impossible to satisfy such a condition. For at any moment at the dictate of the British imperialists, who are in a position to offer inducements, dissident parties may make their appearance. Hence it would be foolish to build any hopes on the words in the award which say that Government "are most desirous to close no door to an agreed settlement," as "agreed" appears to imply perfect unanimity on all points on the part of all possible parties.

Another "agreed settlement" which the British Cabinet have not accepted is the Rajah-Moonje pact between Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, the leader of the vast majority of the Depressed Classes and Dr. B. S. Moonje, working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, according to which the Depressed Class Hindus were to have a number of seats reserved for them in proportion to their numbers to be filled by election by joint electorates. Mr. Rajah has pointed out that the Depressed Classes have got less seats by the award than they would have got by this pact.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald claims to be a friend of India. But what he has done completely belies the claim.

He defends the continuance of separate electorates on the ground that they have been regarded by minority communities as an essential protection for their rights. But this is not true of all minority communities. For example : except in Madras, there have not been separate electorates for Indian Christians, and generally speaking, in Bengal at any rate, they have not asked for, but are rather opposed to, separate electorates; the most important organisations of the depressed classes—who by the by are not a religious community by themselves, have insisted on joint electorates; and the foremost leaders of the women of India, who also are not at all a community by themselves, have been opposed to separate communal electorates. Yet all these groups have been cursed with that evil thing.

Even if Mr. MacDonald's defence of separate electorates for minority communities were assumed to be valid, why has he given separate electorates to the Muslim majority communities in Bengal and the Punjab, where the Hindu and Sikh minority communities did not initiate the claim to protection by such electorates ?

It is not true and it has not been proved that separate electorates give protection to minorities, or that their

interests are promoted or safeguarded when those of India as a whole suffer.

The Premier says : "I want to see greater and smaller communities working together in peace and amity." If he be really sincere, he must be blessed, or rather cursed, with a perfectly illogical and obtuse mind. For, with his colleagues, he has divided the people of India into political groups in such a way that, if they were not hitherto mutually suspicious and distrustful, they would henceforth suspect and be envious and jealous of one another, and, if already mutually distrustful, would have that distrust greatly increased. And having done this, he asks the world to believe that he sincerely desires the people of India to work together in peace and amity !

He says : "Government have to face facts as they are and must maintain this exceptional form of representation." But when will British politicians have the honesty and courage to face the other and prior fact that facts are as they are, at least partly because it was Lord Minto's early speech about the Moslems' extra claims "that first started the Moslem hare," as Lord Morley put it, and that the Morley-Minto reforms and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms have been such as to lead that hare to keep itself in evidence ever since ?

In the Premier's opinion,

"The anomaly of giving certain members of the Depressed Classes two votes is abundantly justified by the urgent need of securing that their claims should be effectively expressed and the prospects of improving their actual condition promoted."

We do not object to the depressed classes having any real advantage. What is strongly objected to is their separation from the main body of the Hindus.

The enlightened and progressive sections of the Hindu community have been making considerable efforts to improve the condition of the depressed classes, so that they may not long remain depressed. But Government now in effect declare that all "caste" Hindus, as Britishers call them, are hostile to the depressed classes, or at least indifferent to their lot, and that therefore separate electorates are required for them to protect their interests against the imaginary attacks of the "caste" Hindus. And Government have also offered inducements to these classes to continue to deserve the title "depressed" so as to remain entitled to separate seats. Under the circumstances, "the prospects of improving their actual condition," social, educational and economic, must be poor indeed.

Regarding the representation of women, Mr. MacDonald observes :

"As regards women voters, it has been widely recognised in recent years that the women's movement in India holds one of the keys of progress. It is not too much to say that India cannot reach the position to which it aspires in the world until its women play their due part as *educated* and influential citizens. There are undoubtedly serious objections to extending to representation of women the communal method, but if seats are to be reserved for women as such and women members are to be fairly distributed among the communities, there is in the existing circumstances no alternative." (Italics mine. R.C.)

I have already pointed out that the leading exponents of women's rights never wanted a communal distribution of seats for themselves. Hence separate communal electorates ought not to have been thrust upon them. The Premier talks of women playing their due part as "*educated* and influential citizens," for which education and interest and participation in public movements are essential, and he talks of a *fair* distribution of women's seats among the communities. I suppose that his never-

theless thinks that if women's seats are distributed merely by counting heads, and not according to the extent of education and the comparative absence or presence of public spirit among the women of different communities, that is a *fair* distribution! It is well known that the leaders of the section of Mussalman Bengalis whose views have found acceptance with the Government think that the women who would stand as candidates and cast votes are undesirable specimens of their sex. It is also well known that female education has made comparatively much less progress among the Muslim community of Bengal than among the Hindus. And owing to their social and educational handicap, Muslim women in Bengal can take very much smaller interest and part in civic and other public movements and affairs than Hindu women. In spite of these facts, the Premier thinks it fair to give the same number of seats to Muslim women as to Hindu women! Let me not be misunderstood. I cordially welcome the prospect of Muslim women taking part in public affairs. It is only the Premier's claim of *fair* distribution of women's seats which I repudiate.

One can imagine the inward glee with which the Premier rubs in the failure of the Government nominees at the R. T. O. to produce an agreed scheme, by telling "the Indian communities":

"Let them remember when examining the scheme that they themselves failed when pressed again and again to produce to us some plan which would give general satisfaction."

Assuming that the failure of the Government nominees must mean the failure of "the Indian communities," who did not choose them, is that any reason why the British Cabinet should feel justified in expecting the people to accept their manifestly mischievous scheme? The Premier thinks it a "fair and honest attempt." It does not seem axiomatic that it is either.

"The most that Government can hope for is that their decision will remove an obstacle from the path of constitutional advance." It is a curious hope, seeing that the decision keeps the old obstacles intact and creates new ones. There can never be any constitutional advance by means of constitutional methods without the joint endeavour of all communities; but the word "joint" is taboo, and 'separate' is the word beloved of the rulers of India. Inconsistently enough, however, the Premier says to the Indian communities, whom the scheme practically requires to non-co-operate with one another, "their duty is to co-operate in working the new constitution which is to give India a new place in the British Commonwealth of Nations"; and he concludes his sanctimonious homily with the similar observation that "communal co-operation is a condition of progress and that it is their special duty to put upon themselves the responsibility of making the new constitution work." As Mr. MacDonald is neither Machiavelli nor Mephistophelds but the Prime Minister of a great people, one ought to think that he is not indulging in a grim joke. It is my considered opinion that, in spite of the disruptive tendencies of what the British Cabinet have done, all Indian communities ought to co-operate—not, of course, for making the new constitution work, but for radically mending it, or, if that be possible, for ending it and making a beneficent one in its stead. For, even if it were workable, it cannot produce any balance of good result.

What is the "new place" which "the new constitution" is to give India in the British Commonwealth of Nations? That of a habitation of helots who must not make any joint endeavours to be and remain free?

What are the precious rights of free men for which different communities and groups are going to scramble and fight? Of what kind of Swaraj, of what rights, are the communalists going to get a big share. The Premier's statement and the award are both silent.

## Chambers Of Commerce Congress And Trade Licences

There was some opposition from the Natal delegates to the Chambers of Commerce Congress to-day to the Transvaal resolution asking for the reform of licensing boards, but it was carried by a big majority in these terms:—

"That in the opinion of this Congress to minimise the evil of over-trading, legislation is required to provide for the reconstruction of the personnel of the existing licensing boards dealing with trade licences.

"That such boards should include resident magistrates and that they should have the power to refuse the granting of licences, if they consider there are already sufficient licences in existence to meet public requirements and for any other reasons they consider necessary in the public interests and which they shall disclose."

## "United India In A Fortnight"

Lucknow, Monday.

"After, Poona, Lucknow," is the keynote of the deliberations of all parties at the Moslem Conference which met in the week-end to close up the Moslem ranks preparatory to reaching Hindu-Moslem solidarity.

Complete agreement was reached to-night among the protagonists of the separatist and joint electorate schools of Moslem thought.

A representative committee was appointed for the purpose of negotiating with Hindus and others.

Addressing a meeting after the conference Shaikit Ali predicted: "Within a fortnight we shall have a united India."—Renter.

## Hindu Temple Dispute

### Finding Of Board Of Arbitrators

On Sunday, Oct. 9, Mr. T. M. Naicker, Chairman of the Board of Arbitration appointed by the Natal Supreme Court to go into the dispute between the trustees of the Hindu Temple at Clairwood and certain Indians regarding certain accounts and the possession of certain movable property of the Temple, read the award to a large gathering of Hindus at the Clairwood Temple Hall. This is the first time that a matter of such importance had been referred to arbitration.

The Board of Arbitrators, owing to the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and not desiring to burden the incoming officials with such liabilities, decided that no money was due to or by the Temple, with the exception of the credit balance at the Standard Bank; also that all the movable properties of the Temple shall for the time being, until provisions are made in the Deed of Trust to be formulated, be vested in the custody of the Stanegarr and other officials as provided for in a revised constitution.

In addition to the formulation of a Trust Deed the Board recommended the appointment of a committee for the control of all Hindu Temples so that similar disputes could be referred to them.

## Moving Scenes In Jail When Mahatmajee Broke Fast

Almost all leaders of repute were present before Mahatma Gandhi when Bombay Government announced through special communique that Mahatma Gandhi's life is within danger even if he broke his fast on Monday.

Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore started singing prayers punctually at 5 o'clock before sunset in the compound of the prison of Yeravda which has earned the reputation of being Yeravda temple while Mahatma Gandhi was made seated in his bed through the help of a board of physicians. Mahatma with cheerfulness glaring on his face broke fast by taking a small quantity of lime-juice. Leaders joined the prayers offered by India's greatest Poet and after an hour, when Mahatma Gandhi appeared a bit brighter and better, dispersed.

## Gandhi Suffers Stroke

London, Tuesday.

Gandhi's London friends announce that he had a stroke soon after he ended his recent fast in Yeravda gaol. They told the *Daily Herald*, last night that this information had been received through confidential channels, explaining that the Government of India had banned all outside visitors and had taken extraordinary precautions to prevent news from reaching the population of India.

Two months ago Gandhi suffered a slight stroke, from which he made a good recovery, but the doctors always feared a second seizure.

## Mr. Lloyd George On The Treaty Of Versailles

"The signatories of the Versailles Treaty, of whom I was one, gave a guarantee to Germany that if she disarmed in accordance with the conditions of the Treaty, we should follow her example. We have not done it," declares Mr. Lloyd George at an International Peace Society meeting.

He added, "When the Treaty was signed the majority of the signatories had no intention of carrying it out. Germany feels that she has been duped. That is Europe's danger to-day. There is no greater peril for the peace of the world than a people who are justly angry at their treatment."

"I am the last man to put in a plea for Germany. She brought upon herself the terrible disaster, and very terribly she has paid for it. But having given our word when she was prostrate, every principle of honour demands that we should carry it out faithfully, generously and objectively."

### War Danger

Mr. Lloyd George, according to Reuter, warned the large peace gathering at the Guildhall of the danger of the world unwittingly plunging into war. He said he was convinced that no ruler in Europe desired war in 1914, but the machinery once started crashed forward and overwhelmed civilisation.

He was quite prepared to defend the Treaty of Versailles if it was completely carried out, but he declared the majority of the signatories never intended that. Before the ink was dry they were arranging to create new armies.

## De Valera's Claim For £400,000,000

London, Oct. 18,

De Valera consistently maintained that the only real permanent solution of the Irish difficulties was a United Irish Republic, with some connection with the British Commonwealth," declared Mr. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Dominions, in a statement to the House of Commons on the breakdown of the Anglo-Irish negotiations. He said that unfortunately it was impossible to reach an agreement.

### Validity Denied

The Free State case was presented from an historical and technical point of view. It denied the validity of the agreement on which payments to Britain were based.

It asserted that no ultimate financial settlement was ever made and claim that a new settlement should be made covering all financial matters, including the alleged overtaxation of Ireland since 1800 and the alleged loss sustained in consequence of the departure from the Gold Standard last year.

### Impossible To Accept

The total claimed approximated to £400,000,000. The Government was obviously unable to accept the Free State's claim for the reopening of the previous settlement unless it contained some manifest injustice.

"We considered," Mr. Thomas said, "that there was neither a legal nor a moral basis for the Free State claim respecting over taxation."

"Moreover we were unable to accept the Free State's claim respecting matter arising since the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The Government was actuated by a sincere desire to end the unhappy dispute, but it was obvious that the Free State delegates had no intention either of admitting the validity or justice of the previous agreements."—Reuter.

## Sikh-Moslem Fight

Simla, Oct. 14.

Fourteen Moslems were killed and 11 injured in an affray at Budhaldia in the Nissar district of the Punjab following the theft and slaughter of a number of cows belonging to Sikhs.—Reuter.

## Indian School Sports

A school cricket club was recently organised by the teachers of the Zeerust School in order to develop sports among the country schools. The following are the members of the club:—

A. Jooma, S. Jooma, M. Bhikhan, B. Safroodin, M. Saloojee, M. Khan, M. Aboo, A. Cassim, G. M. Hoozen (Captain), A. R. Rahim, A. H. Suliman, I. Aboo, N. Jeewamia, H. Rajan (Vice Captain), A. Kader.

The club is very successful in training their players and it is likely to visit Mafeking in the near future with Mr. K. G. Moodley one of their teachers.

## An Appeal.

### For An Indian Returned Soldier

David Harry, served in the South African Indian Bearer Corps and the Cape Corps in the Great War.

His wife and five children are stranded in Vryheid. He wishes to bring them to Durban. He is partially paralysed.

With them here he is confident that between him and his wife they would eke out a living.

Will you please help?

Contributions sent to me for Ex-Private Harry will be duly acknowledged in these columns.

A CHRISTOPHER,

Ex-Sergt. Major, S.A.I.B.C.,  
Little Grey Street,  
Durban.

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