

# Indian Opinion

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## — EDITORIAL —

### Repatriation Of Indians

In our last week's issue we reproduced the balance of the report by Mr. M. B. Laing, O. B. E., Commissioner of Local Government and Social Welfare Officer and the Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K. C., on the 'Right to a Return Passage under the Immigration Ordinance, Chapter 208.'

The reporters have stated clearly that:—

'The immigrant cannot, in our view, postpone the right acquired and await a favourable opportunity, when the steamship fares have been increased to demand his equivalent in land value, or money payment based upon the cost of passage at that time.'

We are disappointed to think that Mr J. A. Luckhoo should have signed a report so worded. Mr Luckhoo was appointed a member of a Land Settlement Committee in February, 1943 which reported in August, 1943. Up to the present time no land has been offered to a single individual. What is peculiar to us is the fact that for some mysterious reason the Government has been resolutely declining to inaugurate practical schemes of Land Settlement. A previous Land Settlement Committee, which was appointed in 1938 and reported at the end of that year made definite recommendations for certain areas to be laid out as Settlements, but the British Guiana Government, true to form, did

nothing, and in order to fool the people, appointed another Committee in 1943, referred to above. As a member of the Governor's Executive Council Mr. Luckhoo is well aware of these circumstances. We wish to be somewhat generous to Mr Luckhoo, and repeat that we are disappointed to note that he should have associated himself with Mr M. B. Laing who is also Immigration Agent General, a somewhat nominal position at the present time.

Mr. Laing has been an Immigration Agent in this Colony for a number of years and he is also Social Welfare Officer. He thinks it proper to advise the Government that an immigrant cannot postpone his right to return to India, and when steamship fares have increased, demand the equivalent in land value or money payment.

Let us examine the facts. Immigration started in 1838, when 406 persons were introduced. Varying numbers were introduced yearly to 1877 except during 1839-1844, when a total of 105-291 arrived in the Colony during that period of 40 years. The highest number introduced in any one year was 7,514 and the lowest 406. After 40 years, that is, from 1838 to 1877 only 11,614 persons were repatriated. Repatriation went on at a slow rate resulting in a total of 74,645 persons being repatriated to 1938 as against 238,979 introduced to the end of 1917. But the position became worse,—the Government slowing down repatriation to such an extent that between 1908 to 1914 only 5,606 persons were repatriated,—about 700 per annum. From 1919 to 1938 only 9,107 were repatriated,—about 405 per annum, after leaving out the period of the Great War.

Is Mr. Laing unaware of the fact that thousands of Indians stormed the Immigration Department over a period of years before the present war demanding repatriation to India? We are sure he will not have the temerity to deny this. What then is the meaning of the quotation given above? We wish to request this Government to advise its officers and representatives to be very careful in future when writing reports and reviewing the chaotic conditions of this Crown Colony. We are not prepared to hide facts nor connive with anyone to the detriment of our Nationalist.

## EAD-UL-FITR

### MUSLIM HOLIDAY FESTIVAL.

Ead-ul-Fitr, A Muslim Day of Festival, will be celebrated either on Monday, 18th or Tuesday, 19th inst., dependent on the showing of the new moon. This day marks the end of the period of the thirty-day fasting, which is an annual feature in the Muslim religion.

All Muslims employed in the Government Service, in whatever branch, are entitled to leave on this day, Government having made this ruling, in February, 1943, in response to a request by the Islamic Association of B. G.

### Universal Adult Suffrage

In reply to representations by cable dated 6th July from the Hons. C. R. Jacob, Dr. J. B. Singh, Theo. Lee, and Mr. H. B. Gajraj, and Air Mail letter dated 28th July, 1944, the Secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau of 11 Dartmouth Street, London S W 1, has written to the Hon. C. R. Jacob as follows:—

We are in a particularly strong position for urging universal suffrage for British Guiana as this principle has just been accepted by the Secretary of State for Trinidad on the basis of the Trinidad Commission's majority recommendation. In fact, the Secretary of State has gone even further than they did, and recommended the elimination of a language qualification which the Trinidad people had inserted. This being the case in Trinidad, and also in Jamaica you can rest assured that we will not allow anything else to be adopted in British Guiana without considerable opposition from this end. We are entirely on your side in this matter, and you can rely on us to do everything we can."

The reports of the Cost of Living Survey Committee, Labour Commissioner and others give interesting facts regarding wages and other conditions of life of the 145000 Indians now in the Colony. These facts will be dealt with in subsequent issues.

(To be continued)

## Dire Necessities of British Guiana

### Mechanization of Agriculture and Agricultural Bank

Indian Opinion fully endorses the views expressed in the editorial of the Daily Argosy of August 9th with respect to the mechanization of British Guiana's Agriculture and the establishment of an agricultural Bank to provide a proper system of agricultural credit facilities to the agricultural producers.

Undoubtedly the post war years will find British Guiana in a very serious situation if she does not change her present system of agricultural practices. Pretty nearly the entire agricultural pursuits of the colony depend on manual labour which in turn sends up the cost of production enormously. In competitive markets naturally the producer who offers his goods at a low price would always outsell the others. It is limited in some quarters that there is going to be no tariff walls and references after the war, exactly what would be the position of a producer, such as us, who depend entirely on expensive hand labour and primitive methods. Our Director of Agriculture seem have no policy in this direction. Can it be that he is vacillating time and awaiting his time to retire?

But frankly while the Director of Agriculture marks time British Guiana is suffering and perishing. It is time men of such types should be removed from our midst and sent elsewhere. It is an imposition of the

Government on the people of British Guiana to retain the services of the present Director of Agriculture. It is felt that he is definitely a stumbling block in the path of progress in British Guiana's Agricultural development.

In 1941 the British Guiana East Indian Association passed resolution throughout the colony requesting Government to establish an Agricultural Bank with a capital of from one to ten million dollars. The matter was taken up with Government, and the Colonial development and welfare Chairman. It died at that stage. Reading history we find every now and again public spirited citizens making efforts to influence Government to establish an Agricultural Bank. All appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

It is an understood fact however that the main reason has been that sugar, which rules the destinies of British Guiana, is against it and does all within its power to see that the means necessary for the development of British Guiana is not there. All industries except sugar must be smothered and kept down for want of capital or credit facilities. This is a definite subtle policy of sugar. The people of British Guiana have faith in God and they pray and await their deliverance from the tentacles of sugar. God will give them strength.

## "Not Chattels"

### But Worse Than Chattels

THAT'S THE POSITION OF THE PEOPLE OF BRITISH GUIANA

BY THE WATCH DOG

The Sugar paper's editorial "Not Chattels" has done its level best to twist the fact that public opinion is not in favour of the U.S.A. acquiring the West Indies. This is not a statement of fact as no public opinion has been assessed.

A plebiscite on this question conducted without prejudice would reveal the true feeling of the population. It is also untrue for the sugar paper to state that politicians were "using the increased United States Influence of the West Indies as a fulcrum upon which to lever concessions from London." If this was true then it would only prove that the people of the West Indies are "chattels" as they really have no self determination and are acting as chattels looking for some point of

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## The B. G. Rice Marketing Board

BY LIBERTY

Last week a note was written on the deplorable composition of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board. It is proposed this week to ask the administration a few open questions:—

- 1 What are the post war aims of Government towards the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Industry?
- 2 What proper credit facilities the Government is going to place at the disposal of the rice producers other than the useless cooperative credit Bank?
- 3 What will happen to the rice expansion scheme in Mahaicony, and what are the general system of its operation?
- 4 Is the Government contemplating organizing a cooperative Rice Marketing organization run by the producers, and for the benefit of the producers?
- 5 What Government contemplates doing with the accumulated profits of the B. G. Rice Marketing Board, and its equipment?
- 6 What Government intends to do with the present unsented composition of the board.

escape. The point nevertheless is that the people of the West Indies live in conditions worse than that provided for chattels.—Everywhere misery, starvation and nakedness is apparent; all due to the exploitation of the sweat and blood of the inhabitants of the colonies by the almighty Sugar. These are the conditions that the Sugar paper is trying to preserve.

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# West Indians Demand World Charter for Post-War Aims in Colonies

Exploitation and Subjugation by Dominions and Sovereign Powers deplored.

## Appeals Presented to Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill

The following is a statement acknowledged by the Colonial Secretary in Trinidad.

This public meeting of oilfields, sugar and general workers held under the auspices of the Oilfields Workers Trade Union, assembled at Harris Promenade, San Fernando on Sunday 18th June, 1944, rejoices in the invasion of France by the combined forces of Great Britain and her Allies.

The meeting is confident that with the glorious might and power of the Russian comrades, driving Hitler's legions from their stronghold in Europe and the growing offensive of the combined Allies forces in the West, the annihilation of Fascism in Europe and all it stands for is inevitable.

The workers of Trinidad declare that the past four years of global warfare against the evils of Nazism and Fascism have been the bloodiest yet attested by history, as millions of their working classing comrades from all parts of the globe have sunk deep in misery and suffering and have willingly sacrificed their precious blood and lives in the Allies' cause.

### INDOMITABLE COURAGE

Workers of Trinidad salute the indomitable courage and bravery of their working class comrades who have perished in the struggle and to those who fight on, promise that their

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comrades on the home front will not betray their sacrifice.

The workers, once again, reiterate loudly their denunciation of the Fascist and Imperialist philosophies and declare the end for which the Allies fight can only be attained under Socialism, which alone can end the barriers of class inequalities provide food, shelter and full employment for all and build a higher standard of life and culture among the masses.

Workers of the industrial areas in Trinidad in meeting assembled renew their pledges of loyalty and support to the armed forces of the United Nations, notably among them are Great Britain, the United States of America and Russia in this bloody war against Fascism.

### POLITICAL SUBJUGATION

In so doing, the workers call upon the leaders of the United Nations for consideration of the demands of the Colonial Peoples. The subjected Africans, East Indians and West Indians as well as other colonials are alarmed and possess great doubt with regard to their present and future status. The Atlantic Charter and subsequent statements thereupon by statesmen of the United Nations have not allayed the fear of the colonial peoples, but have on the contrary aggravated it, being told that the Charter did not apply to the people of the Colonies.

This meeting is hesitant to believe that in the post-war world the colonies would still be maintained as a hunting ground for economic exploitation and political subjugation by self-governing dominions and other sovereign powers.

The workers in these parts are convinced the profound interest shown, and supreme sacrifices both of wealth and lives given by the Colonial Peoples since the war are magnificent efforts indeed which should not go unrecognized.

### EARLY VICTORY

This meeting believes that the Leaders of the United Nations would triumph once again in statesmanship and diplomacy were they to fornu-

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## Youth Council Of British Guiana

Time and again it has been stressed in these columns that the administration have not placed a single Indian on the Youth Council of British Guiana.

The situation remains the same and Indians are anxiously awaiting the decision of the administration in this matter.

It is matters such as these which definitely make the Indians feel that the advisers to Government in the majority are biased and dislike the progress of Indians side by side with the other races. It is asked openly if this is the policy of a square deal to the Indians in British Guiana? It is considered by the advisers of Government, that Indian Youths are only suited to the creole gangs of the Sugar Estate?

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late and release to the world a Charter embodying their post war aims in the Colonies. That, it is believed, will strengthen the confidence of the Colonials and make them, even more frantic in their effort and fight for an early victory for the United Nations.

That copies of this statement be directed to His Excellency, the Acting Governor for transmission to the Right Honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies with direction that copies be forwarded to:-

- (a) The Prime Minister of Great Britain,
- (b) The Ambassador of the United States of America in London for transmission to President Franklin Roosevelt of America, and
- (c) The Ambassador of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in London for transmission to Marshal Josef Stalin, Premier of Russia.

# Letters to the Editor

## THE FUTURE OF THE WEST INDIES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH AMERICA

The Editor Indian Opinion,  
Dear Sir,

Nearly everybody I know seem to agree with the letter by "wretched and miserable" published in your 2nd September issue on the question of Welcoming the transfer of certain of the West Indian Colonies to America. I must congratulate the writer on his courage for bringing the question to the forefront and denying the Daily Argosy's Editorial squarely. The Plain facts are that conditions among the Masses of the entire West Indies present a spectacle of extreme poverty and misery.

I would like to point out that this poverty is not due to a deficiency of natural resources of these Colonies; everyone of these Colonies can boast individually of enormous natural potential wealth and resources. They possess vast fertile areas for proper organised agricultural exploitation of the land, capable of producing enough for home consumption and exportation. This is also true with regards to raw materials for highly developed industrial productions such as Aluminum, magnesium, oil, gold, and other unexplored mineral ores etc, along with enormous water power.

Yet we find amidst these vast undevelopment natural resources and possibilities, a sparsely distributed population living under conditions of extreme poverty, misery and semi-starvation. Nearly all of the population of the West Indies are engaged in producing sugar-cane. The owners of the plantations live in Great Britain. The entire economic structure of most of these colonies is bound up with sugar. The entire development of these Colonies depend on sugar. The policy of development

of the colonies and the fate of the inhabitants of West Indians are decided in Great Britain where the Proprietors pull the strings to keep the population on the sugar estates, under miserable conditions of semi-slavery, in order to declare large profits. A policy of keeping a large number of landless and unemployed people in these colonies emanates from them. This is done so as to draw on surplus cheap labour at any given time.

Mr. Editor, I would be extremely grateful if you can give this letter publication, as I feel that if the Americans were to take this land of my birth the people of my land would live, prosper and be happy. God bless America.

Yours,  
Ex-Employed at the Army, U.S. Base.

## Problems For Our Annual Conference Problems For All

Another of the British Guiana East Indian Association's Annual Conference is scheduled to take place on Sunday the 24th instant.

Every-one knows that year after year leaders of the Indian Community and Advocates of Indian rights and privileges meet to discuss important issues, and problems with far-reaching effects on the general welfare of the Indian masses.

Year after year our conferences have passed resolutions after resolutions touching the vital points on matters Indian, and year after year these resolutions have been forwarded to Government.

We must emphasise that in the past the Administration failed to give our problems the consideration they reasonably deserved. On a few occasions the Organisation was denied the elementary courtesy of even an acknowledgement of the receipt of these resolutions.

We must now state that a community who have been and still is the very back-bone of the industrial progress of this colony is not prepared to sit and be slapped by hostile hands while they employ constitutional means of asking for what is their lawful rights.

The problems affecting the community in general are many and great, but the issues facing Indians in particular are more and greater.

The educational set-backs created in Indian residential areas. The obstacles in the way of Indian teachers. The right of Indians to sit on public Boards. The right to Indian employment in Indian supported firms. The right to more Indian selection for Civil Service Posts. Land settlement. Housing accommodation.

These are but a few of the very many problems affecting our community.

They are of interest to the entire Community. Many of them will be discussed at our Annual Conference.

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