

Indian Opinion

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THE ARREST OF MR. WEST

THE usual calm of Phoenix Settlement was, a few days ago, disturbed by occurrences which will leave a lasting impression upon the minds of those who witnessed the scenes. Hundreds of Indian strikers assembled on the grounds, seeking food and protection. They formed themselves into camps here and there about the place and at some of the houses. During the early hours of Tuesday morning a continuous stream of men, women and children could be seen coming into the grounds, carrying with them their very meagre household belongings. In many cases they carried nothing at all, and presented a pitiful sight. They sought a place of refuge, away from the harassing, if not actual ill-treatment, of the estate managers and the police. They were a peaceful and good-natured crowd and it was difficult to imagine that they would ever be otherwise, were they treated in a sympathetic and humane manner. In looking at these people one became more and more convinced that the disturbances reported in the newspapers, and which have resulted in the death of many Indians and the injury of hundreds, could only have been caused by force and violence on the part of those who professed to be their protectors.

About 4-30 p.m. the news flashed round—the police are coming! A feeling of fear and helplessness seized the people and they waited without attempting to fly away. Lieutenant Clark, accompanied by the estate managers and a force of mounted police, armed with stout sticks and revolvers, came up to the press building, where the work of turning out the paper was proceeding, and inquired for Mr. Maganlal Gandhi. He at once came forward and he was requested by the officer to ask the people to return to their barracks. Mr. Maganlal said that he would like first to speak with his friend and colleague Mr. West. He was told that he could not do that, as Mr. West had been arrested and had already left in a motor-car in charge of detectives. Lieut. Clark said that he had instructions to send the people to their respective estates. He guaranteed them full protection from harm if they remained peacefully in their barracks and he requested Mr. Maganlal to explain these instructions to the people. This Mr. Maganlal did in Hindustani. When one sturdy fellow among the crowd persisted in his charges of rough treatment in the barracks, Lieut. Clark emphatically repeated the promise of protection, through his own interpreter. The people shortly afterwards began to move away from the place and there was not the slightest disturbance. Before he went away Lieut. Clark thanked Mr. Maganlal and assured him that protection would be given to these people if they remained quietly in their barracks. He instructed one of his officers, who was in charge of a patrol camp in the adjoining wattle plantation, to see Mr. Maganlal the next day to hear

complaints, if any, and to prevent people congregating on the property.

Mr. West's arrest was accomplished in quite an easy manner. He had just gone home for a few minutes and was chatting with his wife and a friend when the motor was heard near the house. Mr. West immediately went outside and met Detectives Elton and Walker who stated that they held a warrant for his arrest. They asked their prisoner to enter the car at once as they were anxious to avoid a collision with the people. They argued that, if the people saw Mr. West arrested, it might cause them to make a serious disturbance. He therefore acceded to their request, dressed as he was in his usual attire consisting of shirt, calico trousers and sandals. He was allowed to carry with him a suit of clothes. Mr. West was taken direct to the Durban Gaol and put in a cell at 5-30 for the night; no food was given to him until six o'clock next morning when a native warder pushed in a tin of mealie pap and some dirty white bread. A taste of this wretched stuff was sufficient. Mr. West made a complaint to the Gaol Superintendent and was curtly told that no food was issued after the evening meal hour—five o'clock.

Whilst standing outside the Governor's office Mr. West noticed how insolently the native warders acted towards Indian prisoners. One native came up to some Indian prisoners standing near him and took from one of them his cap and coolly wiped his greasy hands upon it and afterwards cleaned his knob-kerry with it. In the yard was a European official giving orders in English to Indian prisoners. They were asked to line up in a certain place and because they did not understand what he said, and stood in the wrong place, he lost his temper and swore loudly at them. A large number of Indian strikers had that day completed their term of imprisonment and they were lined up in the yard, each carrying a dirty sack. They emptied the sacks on the ground and I saw that these contained their clothing. As the contents of the sacks were emptied on the ground, a cloud of white dust arose which looked like lime. Their clothing was covered with this stuff and it was impossible for them to shake it off. They had to change their dress in the open yard.

Before the Court.

Mr. West was brought before the Verulam Magistrate on Wednesday and charged with harbouring Indian immigrants. The Public Prosecutor applied for a remand for a week. Mr. E. H. Britter, who appeared for Mr. West, asked the Magistrate to fix bail. The Prosecutor objected and said that, as the accused was charged with a very serious offence, especially in face of the present critical state of affairs, the Magistrate should seriously consider whether it was advisable to allow Mr. West to be at liberty. But at any rate an undertaking should be given that the offence would not

in the meantime be repeated. Mr. Britter pointed out that, as Mr. West denied that he had committed any offence there was nothing to repeat and it was open to the authorities to again arrest him if they thought fit. The Magistrate said that he could not refuse bail nor could he ask Mr. West to give any undertaking.

On Tuesday the case came forward again when the Prosecutor once more asked for a remand for the purpose of issuing a summons.

"The Indian Menace"

Under the above heading an interview appears in the *Natal Mercury* of the 25th ultimo with a prominent Natal member of the House of Assembly.

"I think the public ought to be made acquainted with the facts of the position as regards the Indians," said Mr. J. Henderson, M.L.A., "because there is a good deal of wild writing and speaking on the matter at present."

He proceeded to give an exhaustive resume of the position since first the Indians came to the Colony. "Indians were first introduced into this Colony under the indenture system in 1860, and continued to arrive under this system until 1866, up to which date 6,443 had been introduced into this Colony. Indian immigration ceased from 1866 until June, 1874, and at that time when immigration ceased, there were in the Colony 6,205 Indians. Then it was resumed in June, 1874, and from that date up to October, 1896, there were brought into Natal 51,478 Indians—men, women, and children. At that date (October, 1896) there were in the Colony 46,001 Indians, under the indenture system. In 1895 an Act was passed under which immigrants became liable to pay a licence of £3 per annum, if they did not either re-indenture at the end of their first five years or accept the option of being returned to India.

"I understand that this arrangement was made by agreement with the Indian Government, people in Natal becoming alarmed at the large increase of the Indian population. They endeavoured to get the Indian Government to agree that the indentures of these Indians should finish in India, and that they should be returned there whenever the indenture finished. This the Indian Government refused to allow, but agreed that if the Indians insisted on staying in Natal they should be subject to a licence. I do not know whether they agreed that the licence should be £3 or any definite sum, but this was the sum fixed by the Natal Legislature in the Act 17 of 1895, and so far as I know no exception was taken at the time.

"From October, 1896, which was the first date of the introduction of the Indians under this Act, to the cessation of Indian immigration in July, 1911, there were introduced into this Colony 94,252 Indians, and on October 31 of this year the Indian population of the Colony under supervision was 115,457. Since immigration ceased in July, 1911, Indians had increased to the extent of 2,000, notwithstanding the fact that during this period 4,169 Indians had been returned to India. On December 31, 1912, there were in Natal 46,812 men and 24,829 women, a total of 69,641; and of these 49,554, over 71 per cent., came under the Act 17 of 1895. Of these 49,554, there were under first indenture 9,451 men and 3,676 women; and under re-indenture 14,888 men and 6,244 women; and free Indians, 10,206 men and 5,089 women.

"According to these figures, there were at that date 15,295 men and women liable to pay the licence of £3 a year. It is a well-known fact that a comparatively small proportion of these Indians have so far paid this licence.

"As showing the extent to which the Indian population of this Colony has increased, the following figures are significant; 1880, 19,008; 1890, 33,494; 1900, 65,925; 1910, 108,694; and I have already

mentioned that on October 31, 1913, the number was 115,457.

"In addition to the above, the last census taken shows that there were 21,329 Asiatics in the Colony not connected with the Indian Immigration Department, who came to the Colony of their own accord, or were the descendants of those who did so.

Progress of the Strike

On the 25th ultimo, at Verulam, 126 men from the estates of A. G. Harvey, J. W. Sykes and Charlie Jackson were sentenced to seven days' hard labour.

The next day 108 men from the estate of F. S. Garland, Olkins, Virginia, Tongaat Sugar Co., and Wilkinson were sentenced to seven days' hard labour. Five men from the Tongaat Sugar Co. were sentenced to pay a fine of 20s. or in default 20 days' imprisonment. One man paid the fine. Three of Wilkinson's men were sent to gaol for 14 days. The men were emphatic that unless the tax was removed and Mr. Gandhi liberated, they would not work. Six of the Tongaat men had been severely injured, their bodies being swollen and smeared with blood.

A number of women came crying to the Court and said that they had been shut up in their barracks whilst their husbands were beaten. They had managed somehow to escape.

Prominent Planter Arrested

On Wednesday, Mr. W. J. Armstrong was arrested on a warrant and brought (privately, we understand) before the Magistrate and released on bail of £100, the case being remanded to the forthcoming Circuit Court. The charges against Mr. Armstrong were those of assaulting two Mahomedan gentlemen and insulting the Magistrate.

On Thursday some women from the Verulam district complained that their huts had been broken into and their money, jewellery and other goods stolen. They accused the native police of doing this. The matter is being investigated.

The Verulam gaol being full, 300 men were transferred to Durban.

Reports came in from Mount Edgecombe of the shooting of Indians. Twenty wounded men arrived at the Court. The next day it was stated that four men were killed two wounded with assegais and 55 severely wounded. Several women were beaten. Dr. Hill attended to the wounded. A body of 250 people arrived from Mount Edgecombe to make depositions. Whilst their statements were being taken, they were seized by the police and taken to the Court. The Magistrate addressed them and they were afterwards released.

On Friday 360 men from the Umhloti Valley Sugar Co. arrived under escort. They were locked up.

From the estates of Harvey and Sykes 134 men were sent to gaol for 7 days.

A representative of the Indian Association informs us that Mr. Charlie Jackson refused to allow him to distribute rations on the estate. This was afterwards done under police protection. We are informed that the manager of Lavoipierre's estate threw away the oil, salt and chillies supplied by the Indian Association and abused the people.

Bloodshed

Wednesday's *Mercury* contains an account of a serious affair the previous day at Hawkesworth's estates, near Umhloti. The report states that the police were assaulted by the Indians and we are told in detail of a "preconceived plan" on the part of the strikers. It is said that one of the Indians struck a fearful blow at one of the trooper's horses with a stick, felling it to the ground. This is certainly remarkable, if true. Such feats of strength are not generally credited to these "emaciated, spindle-legged and weakly" people. A general hand-to-hand scuffle ensued. One of the police

had fixed his bayonet on his rifle to use against the Indians. The rifle was seized by some Indians and in the struggle the bayonet entered his thigh, inflicting a serious wound. Eventually a volley was fired at the crowd and the result was that two Indians lay dead on the ground and two were seriously wounded, while about 20 others were injured more or less seriously. Nine Indians were taken to the hospital and one of these died during the night, making the third death. It is also stated in this report that, although the Indians had cane knives in their possession, they refrained from using them. This is somewhat extraordinary in view of the "preconceived plan." The shooting incident, continues the report, has had a "sobering effect" upon the strikers. There are various contradictory statements regarding this affair. For instance, a *Mercury* special telegram states that the police stood passive "for over an hour" under a shower of stones and rail bolts, and fired the first volley over the heads of the strikers, and another one in front of their feet as a warning. The official report, however, states that when the Indians advanced in a threatening attitude, Sergt.-Major Roke considered it necessary for a shot to be fired at the leading coolie; he was shot dead. The Indians continued coming on in strength, and a volley was fired by the police. The coolies again charged the police, who then fired a second volley. The police were using rifles.

From the Editor's Chair

GENERAL BOTHA'S GUARANTEE

If we are to take General Botha at his word, the Government intend to make a careful investigation of the cases of ill-treatment reported and to which we have already referred. In his speech at Capetown, the Prime Minister made a definite promise and he may rest assured that he will be held to that promise. General Botha is "grieved" by the charges made by "irresponsible people in other parts of the world." We do not know whether the Prime Minister reads the newspapers or whether he is aware of the true state of affairs in regard to this matter. We have been told that he is not well-informed as to the position. This may account for the way in which he has described as "false" allegations which have yet to be proved untrue. "I deny *in toto*," he says, "the accusations of ill-treatment which have been made." These allegations it should be remembered, are not made by people in India. They are made by men on the spot who are prepared to stand by their statements. The press and other comments, including the sympathetic speech of Lord Hardinge at Madras, are based upon these allegations. Much has been said regarding the Viceroy's remarks on this matter, but all that Lord Hardinge has done is to express the opinion that, "if the Union Government wishes to justify itself in the eyes of India and the world, the only course open is to appoint a strong impartial committee, whereon Indian interests will be represented, to conduct the most searching inquiry" and he adds that the people of India may rest assured that the Raj will not cease to urge these considerations on the Imperial Government." We are sorry that General Botha is so sore about the matter; and almost tearfully protests against anyone doubting the good faith of his Government, but we would remind him that his Government has by its own action laid that good faith open to doubt. We need not go into details as to how the community has been tricked and defrauded of its rights. The facts are too well known for re-iteration. We do not merely doubt the good faith of the Union Government; we have absolute proof of its bad faith.

And now we come to the gallant General's guarantee of protection for the strikers. He says, in the course of his speech: "Take it from me that we shall do everything in our power to see that every man in this strike in Natal, without consideration of persons, shall not be ill-treated." If this means anything at all, it means that the people who wish to remain quietly at home, not desiring to work, shall be protected from ill-treatment. When the people were removed from Phoenix last week, Lieut. Clark gave a promise of this kind. We have good reason for believing that no precautions were taken to give effect to this promise. Reports of brutal floggings have poured in from all directions and we cannot believe they are merely concocted. We doubt very much that the police understand that passive resisters have a right to be protected from being flogged by estate managers. In a telegram sent by General Smuts to Mr. West the fear of ill-treatment was stated to be unfounded and an assurance was given that "if the people returned to their work" no harm would come to them. No guarantee was given that they should not be ill-treated if they preferred not to work. This telegram is characteristic of General Smuts' reputation for alimness. The police have been used and are being used, we have good reason to believe, for the purpose of assisting the estate managers to induce the people to return to work. The awful results which we see to-day of the work of "protecting life and property" is a terrible indictment against the Government, and we have no hesitation in placing the blame upon their shoulders.

General Botha's Speech

General Botha, speaking at the South African Party Congress in Capetown last week, said: "We have one class of people here who are now introducing a doctrine we cannot accept, and I hope you will co-operate in not allowing that doctrine to spread too far. We now find that in Natal another strike has arisen, upon which I wish to address you. I see to my regret that there is great excitement in England and India and in the press about Indians here in South Africa. This is not the right place for me to give a complete explanation of all the circumstances. I hope the Minister concerned will do so at the right time, but I cannot allow the occasion to pass without a few words. In the first place, I wish to express the sincere regret of myself and my Government as to the false allegations made by irresponsible people. I only wish to say that such allegations can do no good to anyone. On the English press in England and in India great responsibility rests, and it seems to me as if these people have lost their heads altogether. I just wish to advise these people to be careful and moderate. Especially did I not expect that a responsible statesman should go so far as he has gone when he should, for instance, doubt the good faith of this Government. If they do not wish to do incalculable harm they must leave the road they are following, because there is no doubt that sort of agitation does not do any good to anyone. It is very difficult for us in South Africa to have the same point of view as they have in regard to the matter, but if they are to doubt the *bona fides* of this Government, then I see very little hope for the future in regard to these matters. The Government so far have exercised the greatest moderation and generosity to all those people who have really declared war against the laws of South Africa. Law and good order shall be maintained here at any cost and with all power. I deny *in toto* the accusations of ill-treatment which have been made. So far as it appears to us none of these charges can bear any test. If any man has been ill-treated, or if any ill-treatment has taken place, the circumstances, if brought to the notice of the Government, will be immediately and carefully investigated. Take it from me that we shall do everything in our power to see that every man in this strike in Natal, without consideration

of persons, shall not be ill-treated. This charge made by irresponsible people in other parts of the world, grieves me, and I think those people do not promote their cause."—Reuter.

Speech by the Viceroy

A message from Madras states that the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge), in a speech in reply to Indian addresses, said the position of Indians in South Africa for some years past had received the most anxious consideration of the Raj, which was doing all in its power to ensure fair treatment.

He added: "The Union Act of which you complain has in practice the effect of putting an end to Asiatic emigration to South Africa, though it does not discriminate in so many words against Asiatics. We, however, have succeeded in securing the privilege of entry for a limited number of educated Indians annually, and have also specially endeavoured to secure as favourable terms as possible for the Indians already resident in the Union. Our efforts have resulted in the inclusion of provisions for the right of appeal to the Court on points of law and definition of domicile in accordance with which the position of un-indentured Indians is satisfactorily laid down.

"We are at present in communication with Lord Crewe regarding other restrictions in the Act to which you take exception and we trust our representations will not be resultless. You urged retaliatory measures by the Raj, but it is not stated what particular measures are adoptable. We forbade the emigration of indentured Indians to Natal in 1911, and the Natal planters sent a delegate to India to beg for a reconsideration of that decision. That shows how hardly the planters were hit by the stoppage of that emigration, but I am afraid that it had little effect on South Africa as a whole, and unfortunately it is not easy to find means whereby India can make its indignation felt by those holding the reins of Government in South Africa.

"Recently your compatriots in South Africa have taken matters into their own hands, organising passive resistance to laws which they consider invidious and unjust, an opinion which we, who are watching their struggles from afar, cannot but share. They violated those laws with a full knowledge of the penalties involved, and are ready with all courage and patience to endure the penalties. In all this they have the deep and burning sympathy of India and also of those who, like myself, without being Indians, sympathise with the people of this country, but the most recent developments have taken a most serious turn. We have seen the widest publicity given to allegations that passive resistance is dealt with by measures which would not be tolerated for a moment in any country claiming to be civilised. These allegations were met by a categorical denial by the responsible Government of South Africa, though even the denial contains admissions which do not seem to me to indicate that the Government exercised a very wise discretion in some of the steps it adopted. That is the position for the moment. I feel that if the South African Government desires to justify itself in the eyes of India and the world, the only course open is to appoint a strong impartial committee, whereon Indian interests will be represented, to conduct the most searching inquiry, and you may rest assured that the Raj will not cease to urge these considerations on the Imperial Government."

Between 30 and 40 Indians at Ladysmith applied recently to the Licensing Officer for licences to sell colonial produce. These were all refused. We now see that the recent legislation was passed with the deliberate intention of depriving Indians of a means of livelihood.

The Legality of the £3 Tax

Mr. F. A. Laughton, K.C., has given the following opinion in regard to the legality of the £3 licence:—

I have been requested to advise on the troublous position in which the Indian community is placed in connection with the claim of the Government to the payment of a sum of £3 from Indians who have refused to re-indenture themselves. I have carefully investigated the position between the Government and the Indians, and I have come to an opinion which I shall endeavour to explain. The scheme adopted for obtaining Indian workers was that Indians should bind themselves on their arrival in Natal to any person to whom they might be allotted by the Protector of Immigrants. To carry out this scheme, the law 25 of 1891 was passed, and it provided that every Indian immigrant should in India sign the contract (in terms of the form set out in the law), with the Protector of Indian Immigrants to serve any employer to whom he might be allotted on his arrival in Natal, and that such contract should, inter alia, bind him to a service of five years.

Section 2 of Act 17, 1895, provided an amendment to the above law to the effect that from the time of such Act coming into force the said contract, in India should contain a covenant as follows: "And we further agree that after the expiration or other determination of this contract we shall either return to India or remain in Natal under indenture to be from time to time entered into."

The form of contract which these two enactments stipulated should be entered into in India. It will be seen from the enactments and the said form of contract that each Indian was to come here bound to the Protector to indenture for five years to the person to whom he might be allotted by the Protector, and bound to the Protector, to either return to India at the end of his term of service or re-indenture himself.

Question of Covenant

It is also provided in Section 6 of the same Act (Act 17, 1896) that "an indentured Indian who shall have entered into the covenant set out in Section 2 of this Act, and who shall fail, neglect or refuse to return to India or to become re-indentured in Natal, shall take out year by year a pass or licence to remain in the Colony, to be issued by the Magistrate of his district, and shall pay for such pass or licence a yearly sum of £3."

Now, under the foregoing enactments, what is it that raises an obligation either to return to India or to take out an annual licence? It is the covenant, if executed in India, to return to India on the termination of the indentures. If there was no such covenant entered into in India with the Protector, there is no obligation under the said law to return to India or to take out the said licence.

In the form of contract provided by law it provides:

- (1) For an agreement to serve the employer to whom the Indian might be allotted.
- (2) For an agreement to re-indenture on the termination of five years; otherwise to return to India.
- (3) For the signature of the immigrant.
- (4) For a certificate of the Natal agent in India that the document had been explained to the Indian; and
- (5) For the signature of such agent.

Thus the enactments both protected the Indians and bound them, and until the requirements of the Act were met, and especially until the contract had been explained and certified, Indians placed themselves under no obligation to return to India or to take out an annual licence to remain here.

Not a Legal Contract

This being so, I applied to the Protector of Indian Immigrants for a copy of the document alleged to have been signed in India. It is not a contract as provided by the law. It is not a contract at all, because, for

some reason which has to be explained, the immigrant came here bound to nobody. He merely put his thumb-mark to a printed form headed "Particulars of emigrant executing a contract for service in the Colony of Natal," and on the reverse side is printed "conditions of service," which presumably they might thereupon be called upon to adopt in the event of their indenturing themselves. There was lacking every essential provided by the law, in that; (1) there was no engagement in this country; (2) no agreement to return to India; (3) no signature of the Indian, nothing but a smudge, which I presume is a thumb-mark; (4) no certificate that the document has been explained by the agent; and (5) no signature of the agent. At the foot of each document there is but the following in print: "Robert W. S. Mitchell, C.M.G., I.S.O., Government Immigration Agent for Natal."

I annex and mark C.T. form of indenture entered into in Natal on the arrival of the Indians, but its terms do not affect the point at issue.

I have carefully perused the Indian Immigration Law No. 25 of 1891. In it wages are provided far below what could be obtained in the market, and freedom is restricted in a manner difficult to understand in a British community. This, in my opinion, necessitates a strict fulfilment of the requirements of the law. In my opinion, Indians introduced into Natal in the foregoing circumstances are under no obligation either to leave Natal after the expiration of their indentures, or to take out a licence if they remain. I go further, and say that the money collected for such licences should be refunded. I advise that no licence be taken out in the future, and that, if any suit is brought for recovery of the annual payment of £3, it be defended and taken to appeal, if necessary.

If, as I anticipate, a judgment of the Court will remedy all grievance, there is no necessity for further disturbance in the lives of the Indians, and I certainly advise them calmly to await the result. I trust they will, if possible, go to their homes before the sun goes down.

Latest Information

The following cablegram has been received from Mrs. Sakai, who presided at a public meeting of Gujarati ladies in Bombay:

"Bombay Gujarati Hindu Stri Mandal appreciates Indian ladies' part passive resistance, sympathises, urges vigorous continuance. Whole India with resisters."

"On the 27th the Natal Indian Association received the following cable from Agra: "Demonstration Agra with you heart and soul. Raising funds. Rev. Davies President."

The following telegram was addressed to the Minister of Justice, Pretoria: "You have failed reply Natal Indian Association's several repeated requests to instruct authority here permit our members under supervision investigate allegations assaults etcetera and originating causes of friction between police and Indians. We desire point out that trouble only arises where police appear and attempt to forcibly drive strikers to work resulting in atrocious cruelty and deaths. We respectfully submit that Government's supineness impels us to accept as truth the incessant reports we receive and from now reliance will be placed on same for purposes of transmission India and England." To this the following reply was received on the 28th ultimo: In absence of any specific allegations of assaults on persons in prisons, nothing more can be done than is being done at present by the officer who is inquiring into the allegations made of ill-treatment of Indians sent to gaol in connection with present troubles. General Smuts and the Director of Prisons arrive in Durban this evening and will no doubt afford your Association an opportunity of being heard on this subject."

Early on Saturday afternoon the Natal Indian Association telephoned to General Smuts' Private Secretary,

asking for an interview. The reply was that General Smuts was leaving that night and that time was too pressing and no interview could be accorded.

The following cable was sent to Mr. Gokhale on the 27th ultimo by the Natal Indian Association. "Position very precarious. Military police using arms object forcing strikers work. Paper reports Blackburn Estate four killed four dangerous twelve seriously wounded. Fifty minor, understand casualties more. Impossible ascertain facts. Facilities not granted though repeatedly requested Government. Such occurrences daily. Rank and file compelled surrender brute force. Employers demand free Indians liable tax and others work. Upon refusal victimisation. Government through Magistrates acting with employers, refusing interviews admission estates. Trust Imperial and Indian Governments will immediately intervene. Forced labour, terrible situation and loss of lives. Thirteen leaders already reported arrested case adjourned fortnight."

Messrs. P. K. Naidoo, N. B. Naik and Dukhi were arrested at Maritzburg, on Sunday, bail being fixed at £500 in each case, unless they would give an undertaking to refrain from taking part in the movement while out, when bail would be fixed at £50. The bail has since been reduced to £300.

Mass meetings were held on Sunday, at Durban, Johannesburg, Maritzburg, Newcastle and other towns. Resolutions were adopted demanding the redress of the grievances, expressing loyalty to the leaders and supporting the demand of Mr. Gokhale for an impartial inquiry into the allegations of ill-treatment.

Interviewed by our representative regarding the death of an Indian at Avoca hospital, Dr. Hill, District Surgeon, stated that the body which he examined was that of an Indian who had died at the barracks at Mount Edgecombe and he found that this man was not injured in the disturbance on the 16th ulto., and that he died from natural causes. This information was given to the *Leader* reporter and reproduced in our last issue. Dr. Hill afterwards found out that another Indian had died at Avoca hospital and he was one of the men injured by the police.

The hearty thanks of the community are due to Dr. Briscoe of Charlestown, who, throughout the stay of the Passive Resisters there, showed them innumerable kindnesses attending the patients free of charge and also donating a case of medicine for emergencies on the great march.

Mr. Gokhale, speaking at Delhi on the 28th ulto., said that the position of his countrymen in South Africa was growing desperate, but that they must not lose heart.

Lord Crewe, replying to a deputation of Indians in London, said that the statements regarding flogging demanded an inquiry which would be not merely official.

Mrs. Dinshaw Petit, as President of a meeting of Indian ladies at Bombay, sends the following cablegram: "Public meeting women Bombay, held Saturday, expressed sympathy for sufferings of Indians and admiration for self-sacrifice, courage, patience Indian women have shown in struggle. Meeting also entered protest against harsh laws, particularly marriage clause, urged for inquiry into alleged barbarities and intervention by Imperial Government and thanked Viceroy for his firm and sympathetic stand."

The Shri Hindi Jagyasa Sabha and its members individually have subscribed £2 10s. to the Passive Resistance Fund, and they hope to donate a similar amount monthly during the continuance of the struggle.

On his return from Verulam yesterday afternoon Mr. West was insulted and threatened with violence by Mr. Todd, the manager of the Phoenix Wattle Plantation, in the presence of the station-master. Mr. West communicated with the Natal Estates, Mount Edgecombe, both by telephone and messenger, but his request for police protection was ignored. By chance Rifleman Berry arrived by train and he kindly escorted Mr. West who was accompanied by Mrs. West, Mrs. Pywell and his two children, to the Settlement.

Dr. Abdurahman and Passive Resistance

In his presidential address to the annual Conference of the African Political Organisation Dr. Abdurahman said:—

If a handful of Indians, in a matter of conscience, can so firmly resist what they consider injustice, what could the coloured races not do if they were to adopt this practice of passive resistance? We must all admire what these British Indians have shown, and are showing, in their determination to maintain what they deem to be their rights. The inhumanity of the Free State has driven our women to resist the law. Thirty-four of them went to gaol rather than carry passes. [Dr. Abdurahman has since corrected this figure to 180.—Ed. I. O.] The coloured races applaud the noble actions of those brave daughters of Africa. I am convinced that if our people as a whole were prepared to suffer likewise, we could gain redress of our most serious grievances while General Botha is still alive. Are we to be driven to that course? Europeans should ask themselves that question, and ask it promptly. For example, if the 200,000 natives on the mines were, in the language of the White Labour Party, to "down" tools, and prefer to bask in the sun than to go down the mines; if the farm labourer at harvesting time refused to work for 1s. 6d. a day the economic foundation of South Africa would suddenly shake and tremble with such violence that the beautiful white South Africa super-structure which has been built on it would come down with a crash, entailing financial ruin such as the world has never witnessed before.

News in Brief

In the Durban and District Police Court on Wednesday 94 strikers from Platt's sugar estates at Isipingo were charged with refusing to work. They were sent to gaol for seven days.

On Wednesday the *Advertiser* reported that practically the whole of the Indians were "out" along the sugar line of Natal and Zululand.

It was stated that, at Mount Edgecombe, on Wednesday, about 700 strikers, including those who were brought back from Phoenix, had returned to work, and there was some talk of starting the mill.

According to a report in the *Advertiser*, a representative [unnamed] of the sugar Association regretted that more Indians were not injured in the affray at Esperanza, and he expressed the opinion that the feeling at home would be as acute over the shooting of the "one" as it would have been over the shooting of a dozen, whilst the salutary lesson in the event of the more casualties would have been most advantageous in settling the trouble.

Mixed up among a lot of remarks, mostly hostile, the *Advertiser* is gracious enough to say: "We, ourselves, hold that as importations of indentured labour have now ceased, the tax might well be repealed."

A pressman was informed at the Protector of Immigrants' office that the statement that men, women and children were compelled to pay the £3 tax is only partially correct. It is true that it is on the Statute Book, but for some considerable time no efforts have been made to collect the tax from women, and they have not been asked to pay, the Government having given orders to this effect. Through an oversight, two or three women in Newcastle were asked to pay the tax, quite contrary to instructions, but the mistake was remedied as soon as it was pointed out to the officials. The East London Hindu Society has contributed £20 10s. 3d. to the Passive Resistance Fund.

The Nobel Prize for literature has been conferred on the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

We are surprised to find the following piece of nonsense on the front page of the *Cape Times* weekly:—Opinion in England has been biased by the reported death of the Indian Nardu under flogging, but the evidence of Dr. Cooper, who examined the body, shows Nardu did not die from flogging but from heart failure, death actually occurring after he had obtained medicine. The collision at Ladysmith between the native police who were maintaining order, and the coolies on strike, is more serious. There have been from time to time serious quarrels in Natal between the coolies and the Zulus, who are more than a match for the Asiatics, and the collision at Ladysmith, where the Zulu police preserved order after the unarmed white police were helpless, will not make matters easier. Natal is responsible for the invasion of the Asiatics, but she did not manage her troubles better.

In the first place the fact is that had not the native police been ordered back by the Europeans, there would have probably been bloodshed. Secondly, there has never been quarrels in Natal between the Indians and the Zulus. And what the last sentence is meant to convey is simply beyond our understanding.

Miss L. Loat, Secretary of the National Anti-Vaccination League, London, writes under date the 3rd ultimo as follows:—"In to-day's papers there are reports of the refusal of two Indians to be vaccinated, in the Transvaal. It is very surprising to residents in this country that prisoners in the Transvaal are ordered to be vaccinated. It does not happen so here, no matter what the colour of the prisoner. England, with her enormous trade intercourse with all nations, runs far more risk of smallpox than her colonies, and if she does not compel vaccination, surely her daughter-countries need not do so. Vaccination is a medical operation; compulsory vaccination is an assault on the body. Every man has a right to keep his body free from everything which in his opinion may harm it, and it is an outrage for any Government to endeavour to force on its subjects a medical operation of any kind."

The Kimberley Indians held a public meeting on the 8th ultimo, at which Mr. Polak was present by invitation, and passed resolutions supporting the demands of the community, warmly appreciating the sacrifices of the passive resisters in gaol and urging the Government to reconsider their decision and grant the reasonable requests of the community. These resolutions were sent to the Minister of the Interior and Lord Gladstone with a request to the latter to transmit copies to the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and India and the meeting further authorised the Chairman to communicate the same by cable to Lord Ampthill and to the Hon. Mr. Gokhale."

Two Indians, a hawker and a laundryman, appealed to the Vryheid Town Council against the decision of the Borough Licensing Officer who had refused to issue licences to them. The Council upheld his decision. No reasons were given in the newspaper report.

A small, dark man with luminous eyes set in an intellectual face, says the *Daily News*, has arrived in England on a mission which, if all he hopes of it comes true, will be the prelude to a peaceful revolution. Throughout Italy he is known as Umano—writer, philanthropist, enthusiast. His real name he wishes never to hear again, as it belongs to a part of his life which he wants to forget. Twelve years ago Umano was a judge in the Italian High Court of Criminal Jurisdiction, and in the usual course of events he would be at the present time a member of the Court of Appeal. But his conscience became troublesome. As he told a *Daily News* interviewer, he "found it impossible to blame those who broke the law; they were simply the victims of evil Government." Throwing up his position, he dedicated the remainder of his life to propagating what he regards as the gospel of a "positive" religion and a "positive" science of Government; and it is with the object of calling an international conference to discuss the latter side of the campaign that he has now come to England.