

Indian Opinion

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NATAL MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE

THE General Purposes Committee of the Durban Town Council made the following recommendation on the draft Local Ordinance:—

(The draft Ordinance as submitted to the Natal Municipal Association is intended to consolidate and amend the laws relating to Municipal Corporations and townships, and to establish Village Management Boards in the Province of Natal. It contains 540 clauses, it proposes to totally repeal 32 laws, and partially to repeal 13 others. It also includes 17 schedules for general guidance.)

(d).—Section 29 of the draft Ordinance disqualifies the following from enrolment as a burgess:—(a) An alien who has not been naturalised, and (b) any person disqualified from the Parliamentary franchise by Act 8 of 1896, viz., those who, not being of European origin, are natives or descendants in the male line of natives of countries who have not hitherto possessed elected representative institutions founded on the parliamentary franchise. We approve of these restrictions.

Committee recommends:—That the principles contained in Section 29 of the draft Ordinance be approved.—*Natal Mercury*.

Press Comment

The *Natal Mercury*, commenting upon the draft Ordinance says:—

More contentious ground is entered upon when we come to consider the question whether the municipal franchise should be confined only to British subjects of European origin. The draft ordinance disqualifies all aliens who have not been naturalised, and those who, not being of European origin, are natives or descendant in the male line of natives of countries who have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions founded on a parliamentary franchise. Though the General Purposes Committee approves of these restrictions, we feel bound to say that it is difficult to justify them, in the wide form in which they are laid down, upon any conception of equity. In the framing of these restrictions, it seems to us that the distinction between the municipal franchise and the Parliamentary franchise has been blurred over. First, as to non-naturalised aliens. Is it to be understood that any citizen, say, of the United States or of France, who settled in Durban, and acquires rateable property here, shall be debarred from the municipal franchise unless he takes out letters of British naturalisation? It is quite right to deny the political or Parliamentary vote to aliens who do not renounce foreign citizenship and do not pledge allegiance to the land of their adoption: but having imposed this disability upon the non-naturalised alien, we do not see why he should be refused the privileges which ownership or occupancy of property within a municipality confers. The promoters of this Bill themselves describe property-holding as the criterion of qualification for the municipal vote, and declare that it stands on a basis different from the

Parliamentary vote. The same argument constrains us in fairness to question the wisdom of ostracising in regard to the municipal franchise those persons holding property who are of European origin. The description of the persons so marked out for ostracism is taken over from the Act of 1896, which applies to the Parliamentary suffrage. If it be granted that there may appear good reasons for denying the Parliamentary vote to non-Europeans who would in their land of origin be devoid of experience in representative political institutions, does it follow that the disability should be extended to the municipal vote? Take the case of the British Indians. In all the large towns of India, and in many of the smaller towns, there are municipalities on which sit members elected by native ratepayers, and in some cases all the members are of their own race. Our local Indians may reasonably ask why, as ratepayers in a Natal borough, they should be thought incapable of exercising a municipal vote which they would be qualified to exercise as ratepayers in an Indian town. We do not know on what logical grounds a negative answer can be given to such a question, seeing that the ownership or occupancy of property is expressly laid down as conferring qualification. The analogy of Parliamentary disqualification is brought in, although it is declared that the principles regulating the Parliamentary suffrage and the municipal suffrage are dissimilar. We have no desire to see a larger infusion of non-Europeans on the Borough Voters' Roll, but so long as non-Europeans are permitted to hold property and become ratepayers, and the Corporation derives revenue from licences granted to them, how can they consistently be excluded from a right which the obligation to pay rates is declared to carry with it? The letter from an Indian which we publish to-day may serve to show how unfortunate it is that our municipal authorities should have gratuitously raised a question of this nature at the present juncture:

A Protest

Writing to the *Natal Mercury*, Mr. Abdool Rahman, of Potchefstroom, says:—

"Now sir, what does the approval of the above recommendations amount to? Does it not mean to prevent all the Indians from exercising the municipal franchise, on the same terms as the Parliamentary franchise has been taken away from them? At one stroke of the pen, or, so to speak, hit below the belt, our City Fathers would proceed to deprive the Indians and all the other coloured population from participation in electing representatives to watch over their interests, where they pay taxes and own property that runs into thousands. Can any more injustice be suggested towards the Indians who are thoroughly loyal to the British Crown?"

"Sir, we are bearing the ordeal of fighting the Germans this very day to preserve British liberty, but here in South Africa, in the land of the democrat of demo-

crats, the heads of municipal government are keeping alive the fire of prejudice against their own friends because they happen to be coloured. By hook or by crook the City Fathers are devising every means to keep the coloured man down. The Indians have given their all; even their precious blood is being shed on the battlefields of Europe to decide between liberty and barbarism.

"Durban is helping to undo what is being done in Europe. I well remember the upheaval that took place during the year 1896, when the Parliamentary franchise was being debated clause by clause, and heated debates they were, the Indians moving earth and heaven by petitions, and petitions were sent everywhere. But, to all intents and purposes, their cry for justice went to the wall. The Act 8 of 1896 was passed. The Indians have been debarred from exercising the Parliamentary franchise, and it is now being copied by local government.

"The above warning, I believe, is sufficient to my countrymen of Natal to urge that a move on their part is imperative at this juncture, and they should most decidedly offer their strenuous opposition to any such Act being put on the Statute Book, or they may awake to find that they have been cast amongst the savages of the world. It is most difficult to express one's feelings of what is taking place against the coloured man of South Africa, and Indians are especially being singled out and treated with contempt. Nevertheless, we cannot but take courage that hands of sympathy from Englishmen are always forthcoming from many quarters, especially at this time. In conclusion, sir, I trust that our City Fathers will withdraw their recommendation to the above contentious clause and leave it over until a more convenient time, so as to give the people affected a better opportunity to protest against the deprivation of their rights as British subjects and children of the British Empire."

Registration Test Case

The review of *N. M. Moosa vs. the Minister of Justice and Registrar of Asiatics*, was heard in the Supreme Court, Transvaal Provincial Division, on the 31st ult., before the Judge President and Judges Curlewis and Gregorowski.

In this matter applicant sought an order restraining the Minister of Justice from carrying into effect an order of deportation, and compelling the Registrar of Asiatics to issue certificate of registration.

Application was made to the Registrar last year for a certificate. The Registrar refused to consider the application. Applicant thereupon obtained an order on the Registrar from a Judge in Chambers. The Registrar, on hearing the application, in compliance with the order of Court, refused to grant the certificate. Applicant then appealed to the Magistrate, and the Magistrate dismissed the appeal.

Proceedings were now taken in consequence of the deportation order subsequently granted. Mr. B. A. Tindall appeared for applicant; Mr. J. Ferris for respondent.

In giving judgment, the Judge President said applicant claimed to be entitled to a certificate of registration under section 4 (3) (b) of Act 36 of 1908, in that on May 31, 1902, he was resident in the Transvaal. No doubt if he had been able to establish that he would have been entitled to a certificate of registration. Under the same section he applied to the Registrar of Asiatics, who came to the conclusion that he had failed to establish residence within the terms of the sub-section, and accordingly refused his application. Section 6 (2) provided for appeal to the Magistrate specially assigned by the Government to hear such appeals, and that such Magistrate should be deemed when hearing such appeal to be an inferior Court within the meaning

of section 19 of the Administration of Justice Proclamation, 1902. The Magistrate dismissed the application, finding as a fact that applicant was actually in the Transvaal on May 31, 1902, but that he was not resident therein on that date.

It had been decided that no appeal lay from the decision of the Magistrate, and the Magistrate, in dismissing the application, made an order for applicant's removal. Applicant comes by way of application and asks for an order restraining the Minister from carrying into effect the order of deportation and declaring the order null and void, and also for an order compelling the Registrar to issue to him a certificate of registration. The application was very vague as to the grounds upon which the Court should interfere and would have occasioned no difficulty if it were not for the case of *Chotabhai*, which went to the Appellate Division, where the late Chief Justice approved of the remarks of Wessels, J., to the effect that the Court had an inherent right to prevent the Government or any official from interfering with the liberty of a citizen, and the person who claimed the right to interfere must show that he has been given that right by the Legislature.

In general no fault could be found with those words, but, with deference, his lordship could not agree if they were intended to enunciate a principle of law universally approved, because, when the matter was regulated by statute, as in this case, the Court was bound by the statute and had to see upon whom the onus lay. In this case it was clear that the onus was upon the applicant to show that the official had not done his duty or that there was some irregularity. In the absence of irregularity the Court would not interfere, and it would discountenance any attempt to bring proceedings before the Court which were nothing else but a disguised appeal.

In this particular case there were no grounds for interference. It was argued it must be held the Magistrate acted improperly in not holding the applicant's presence amounted to residence, but that was a conclusion that was not at all warranted. It was not for the Court to say that because the Magistrate did not say he did not believe the witnesses, that the evidence must be taken to have been believed by him.

On those grounds his lordship came to the conclusion that there was no ground for the Court to interfere with the decision arrived at.

Mr. Justice Curlewis and Mr. Justice Gregorowski delivered concurring judgments.

Father Maingot at the Front

His numerous friends in Durban, especially amongst the Indian community, will be pleased to bear the good news just to hand regarding the Rev. Father Maingot, O.M.I., priest-in-charge of St. Anthony's Indian Mission, and now at the front in France.

In a notification made to his Lordship Bishop De Lalle, it is stated that the rev. father has had the distinction of being mentioned in dispatches for devotion to duty, and untiring care of the sick at one of the base hospitals, which mention entitles him to the honour of the "Croix de guerre." Furthermore, he received the special privilege of presentation to M. Leon Bourgeois, formerly Prime Minister of France, who warmly congratulated Father Maingot on the excellence of his services to the sick and dying under his charge.

It may be mentioned also that Father Maingot shortly after his arrival on active service fell a victim to typhoid fever, and after six weeks' illness, refused to take convalescent leave or visit his own family or particular friends in Paris. He went to serve his country, and when that was finished then his friends and relations may see him.—*Natal Mercury*.

From the Editor's Chair

DURBAN AND THE MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE

We most emphatically protest against the action of the General Purposes Committee of the Durban Town Council in recommending to the Council the adoption of that portion of the draft Local Government (consolidation) Ordinance, which purports to exclude from the Municipal franchise persons who are disqualified from the Parliamentary franchise by Act No. 8 of 1896, namely, British Indians. In 1905 an attempt was made by the late Natal Parliament to deprive Indians of the franchise in exactly the same way, and the attempt was unsuccessful because of the veto of the then Secretary of State for the Colonies. What the Natal Parliament was prevented from doing by the Imperial Government, the Provincial Council will certainly not now be permitted to do by the Indian community. There is no comparison whatever between the Parliamentary franchise and the Municipal franchise. The bases of the two franchises differ essentially, as has been pointed out by our contemporary, the *Natal Mercury*, whose protest against this recommendation deserves recognition. When Indians were deprived unflinchingly of the political franchise, it was definitely laid down and promised by the Prime Minister of the day that the Municipal franchise stood by itself and that Indians would not be deprived of this right. We are not so foolish as to suppose that in South African politics a promise solemnly given is very highly esteemed by those by whom it is made, when it is inconvenient to keep it, but there must still be a sense of shame amongst decent-minded persons that the policy of the "scrap of paper" should be adopted, at the present time, by true-blooded Britishers (as they would certainly call themselves), who have protested against it when adopted by Germany. Of course the matter cannot remain where it is, and the Natal Indian Association will have to move in the matter at once, first with the Town Council, and later on, if necessary, with the Provincial Council and the Union Government. Racial legislation of this kind cannot possibly be tolerated by the Indian community, and we are sure that every effort will be made to prevent such a catastrophe.

JOHANNESBURG CIVIC PATRIOTISM

ON Wednesday last, His Excellency Lord Buxton, the Governor-General, officially declared the Johannesburg Town Hall open, and complimented the Johannesburg public upon its civic patriotism and enterprise. We mean, of course, that His Excellency complimented the European section of the public, for naturally the non-European citizens of Johannesburg are not recognised as possessing civic patriotism and enterprise. It cannot be wondered at either, for they do not possess the Municipal franchise, and, until quite recently, have unlawfully been excluded from the use of one of the most important of the public services, for the maintenance of which the money that they have contributed in rates has been used by the Town Council. Non-Europeans were not represented at these celebrations nor was their absence in any way commented upon, though it is a fact that Johannesburg depends for the bulk of its wealth upon the labour of non-whites. The Johannesburg public, or, at least, such portion of it as has been brought up in the British political tradition of no taxation without representation, in no way appears to recognise the incogruity of demanding (on their own behalf) privileges based upon that political axiom whilst in practice denying

them to citizens not endowed at birth or afterwards with a white skin. Municipal privileges in Johannesburg are confined to certain select classes of the community, even though alien enemies, whilst coloured British subjects, solely on account of colour, are deprived thereof. We do not know, and perhaps it would be improper to suggest it, whether His Excellency, as he spoke, laughed in his sleeve; we suppose that, gifted with a sense of humour, that is what he must have done. Anyhow, the non-white citizens of Johannesburg, whatever else they may be deprived of, have the privilege of gazing upon the new Town Hall in all its glory, consoling themselves with the reflection that though they may be deprived of Municipal privileges, at least others are deriving advantage from the labours of these outcasts.

UNDIGNIFIED

THE spectacle which we have witnessed, through the columns of the daily press, of Indians presenting illuminated addresses to retiring magistrates is a humiliating one. Even supposing that each of these magistrates had been model administrators of justice, it is only what we expect from them. To praise a magistrate for being just is certainly very extraordinary. There could only be two reasons for such praise. One would be that he was fair and just, and approachable by the humblest. The other would be that he specially favoured Indians. For the first reason, as we have said, a magistrate is not entitled to praise. And if he specially favoured Indians, he would be less than just to others. A section of the Indian community, in pressing themselves forward in this matter, have taken a very undignified step. We do not find, with the exception of the German residents of the new Hanover district, that the European or Native communities have considered it their duty to applaud the conduct of these magistrates. We could understand the members of the legal profession presenting addresses in consideration for the special and considerate treatment they had received at the hands of the magistrates, but in no case, so far as we are aware, have they done so. These gentlemen have thought it sufficient to express their feelings in a few words at the "horse-shoe." And, be it remembered, a lawyer, whilst conducting a case in Court, is helped or hindered very much by the attitude of the magistrate, and it would not be unreasonable for him to desire to express appreciation of help. If the Indian community felt that a magistrate had done anything beyond his clear duty as a magistrate, it was competent for them to invite him to a public function at which all could attend and there, on behalf of the community, give honour to whom it was due, but not for a few persons to rush to the Court on the day of retirement. At one place, we are informed, an illuminated address, beautifully embellished, and enclosed in a gold frame, was presented a few minutes after the Magistrate had opened the letter confirming his retirement! We have felt it our duty to call attention to this matter because we do not wish to see the worship of officials growing in our midst. This is not India and we do not want to introduce the old servility into the fresher atmosphere of South Africa. In thus somewhat severely condemning the action of certain Indians in the Province we do not say that they acted in any way dishonourably, but what we do say is that they could only represent themselves, and our advice to others is that they should refrain from similar action.

A joint deputation of the African Political Organisation and the British Indian Association waited on the Administrator for the Transvaal on Monday last at Pretoria with reference to the matter of the Johannesburg draft Tramways Regulations. The deputation consisted of the Rev. Chas. Phillips, Mr. A. M. Cachalia, Messrs. J. W. Ontong, P. Mulder, Thambi Naidoo and Hy. S. L. Polak.

After the War

We have great pleasure in reproducing the following "Manifesto on the European War," issued by the Council of the Union of Ethical Societies on behalf of the British Ethical Movement:—

The horror of the war is with us all the time. We cannot rid ourselves of the thought of it if we would. There is not one of us, probably, but has some relative or dear friend whose life is being offered for his and our country; and it is the fine young men who go, those with the vigour of life at full flood in their veins, and with the promise of life still unfulfilled.

To us, in the Ethical Movement, it seems that the note that should be sounded now is one of protest against war as being wicked and senseless. It is senseless because it solves no argument. The two things are on different planes and cannot be equated. The physical thing, war, has no rational relationship to the spiritual thing, equity, and, therefore, the right or wrong of an international dispute can never be determined by the process of war. The wickedness of its waste of life, the desolation and heartaches it causes, need no statement.

We do not think that it is the time for us to discuss the issues that led up to this war, nor the political questions involved. We honestly believe that our country is in the right, and we will make any sacrifices that we may be called upon to render in its support.

We think that our whole energy should be brought to bear upon the reconstruction that is to follow the war; and in the first place we should endeavour to build up a public opinion that will strengthen the hands of the Allied Governments to secure such peace terms as may reasonably be expected to prevent for all time a recurrence of war. To this end we advocate that the Peace Treaty that will close the war shall secure, as an essential condition:—

- (a) The establishment of an *International Court of Law* to which, by agreement of all the nations concerned, every dispute that cannot be solved by diplomacy shall be referred and whose judgments shall be final. In connection with this—
- (b) The *reduction of armaments* to a scale to be agreed on, and the establishment of an *International Police*, and
- (c) The suppression or control, by State purchase or otherwise, of every private armaments factory in all countries.

We believe that a Treaty that contained those three provisions would satisfy the honour of all the nations and would secure the establishment of a permanent peace. It was considered until quite recent times that in cases of private dispute honour could be satisfied only by the duel, yet duelling has died out in England and in most other countries, and points of dispute are settled by third-party arbitration, or by trial in Courts of Law, and personal honour is satisfied. It will be the same with nations. After two or three generations have settled their disputes, without loss of honour, at an International Court, all thought of reversion to the stupid and antiquated method of war will have died out.

The Peace should also provide that there shall be no crushing of any nation, great or small, and no attempt to hand over a people against its consent to another nation. The spirit of nationality is unquenchable and must be respected. To violate it is to pave the way for future wars. The path of progress is invariably along the road of the development of the individual nationality. Without this provision the prospect of a lasting peace is jeopardised, and, though war may be averted, there will be a continuance of secret agitation and unrest.

It might not be advisable, for the present, to call public meetings to advocate these proposals, but much can be done by word of mouth, by articles and correspondence in the newspapers, and by individual and

collective petitions to the Government; and we urge you, on behalf of humanity and in the cause of civilisation, to do all in your power to promulgate these views.

It is now, while the war is in progress, that this action must be taken. Every lover of peace should at once write to his Member of Parliament asking him to urge on the Government the inclusion of these terms in the Peace Treaty. To delay till the conclusion of the war may be to defeat the prospect of a World peace for another hundred years. Militarism must be ended with this present war, or it will be at once succeeded by a fresh competition in armaments, bringing still greater burdens on the people. When at last they can bear them no longer, another and still greater war will follow. There can be no finality to this process of war and preparation for war. It is insane and idiotic and must be ended now.

We could not prevent the war, but we can endeavour to provide that out of the ruins it has caused there shall raise a nobler structure of humanity than the world has yet seen.

J. M. MCGREGOR, Chairman,
H. SNELL, Secretary,

of the Council of the Union of Ethical Societies.

The Tramway Fight

Asiatics and coloured people are still taking advantage of their right to use the Municipal tram-cars (says the *Transvaal Leader*). There is daily some little friction between them and Europeans. A member of the Tramway and Lighting Committee, however, informs a *Leader* representative that in the main there is nothing to disturb of a character that cannot be adjusted by time and good temper. He further expressed the opinion that it was rather a pity that a recent Town Council meeting took place just at the time it did, for attention was focussed at it upon a phase of our social life that he believed was promising to work well. He thinks that but for this focussing the opposition would have been smothered in the larger daily interests of the people. How far this view of the question is shared by the general public it is, of course, difficult to say at present.

At the present moment, it is a fact that Asiatics, coloured people, and aboriginal natives have a legal right to sit either inside or outside a tram-car, and in any seats they may select. The by-laws that are awaiting the approval or otherwise of the Provincial Council will limit Asiatics and coloured people to five top back seats, and will altogether eliminate the aboriginal native. Speaking of the objection to aboriginals on tram-cars, the *Leader's* informant expressed the opinion that the very people who were loudest against the presence of aboriginals were the first to kick up a fuss if their houseboys and native girls were not allowed to travel. As to the Asiatics or Indians, he considered that these people had a strong moral and legal claim to use the cars. Many hot-headed Indians had wanted to rush the trams immediately the Supreme Court's decision in their favour was given, but wiser counsels prevailed. The Chairman of the British Indian Association had urged the moral and legal claim on the Tramway Committee. In support of the moral aspect, he asked: "Did you have to commandeer our men for active service in this war? No; we offered 50,000 troops, and will offer as many more."

As to trailers, our informant held that they would be useless, as there could be no compulsion on Indians and coloured people to use them. He added that ten new cars were being put on the service, and all the old ones were being overhauled at a cost of about £300 each. Some of the new cars were already running, and the results of the vote of over £10,000 for the improvement of the service would soon be apparent.

Undoubtedly there is a great divergence of opinion on the subject throughout the town and the problem promises to excite a large amount of interest.

Mr. Gokhale's last Moments

The Mahrathi daily newspaper *Dnyan Prakash*, which may be regarded as the organ of the Servants of India Society, mentions some pathetic details of the last moments of the late Mr. Gokhale. On the 13th January while attending the fruitarian party organized by him in honour of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Gokhale was suffering from an acute attack of cardiac asthma, and could hardly remain there for five minutes. Asthma and weakness of the heart were increasing. Yet, Mr. Gokhale kept himself quite busy writing and receiving letters up to the morning of the 19th instant. On Friday evening, the (19th) his life seemed to be trembling in the balance, and he himself realized that the end was near. He then began to bid farewell to his numerous friends and expressed great sorrow at not having been able to finish his work on the Public Services Commission. He felt very much dejected at the idea that he could not personally deliver his last message to all the members of the Servants of India Society since they were not all at the time in Poona. His own words were that his 'atma' would be hovering round the Servants of India Society and would be immensely delighted to see the work he started for "Mother India" was being carried on ably by the members of the Society. He hoped very strongly that his patriotic countrymen would help the Society in every possible way. During the last few moments when life seemed to be departing he was encouraging his daughter and his friends who had surrounded him. At last when the tongue failed him he showed he was even then fully conscious. At 10-25 p.m. he breathed his last peacefully while seated in his chair. Up to 1-30 p.m. the next day thousands of men came to have a last *Darshana*.

The Response of India

Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P., Under Secretary of State for India, visited Sheffield on Thursday evening (February 25th) and gave an address at the Victoria Hall on "The Response of India." Mr. H. A. L. FISHER, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, presided, and was supported by the Lord Mayor (Councillor O. C. Wilson) and other leading citizens.

Mr. ROBERTS said that India's loyalty during the past six months had left an indelible impression upon Englishmen, and that generous outpouring of hers would not easily be forgotten. The Viceroy had told us that no fewer than 200,000 men had been, or were being, withdrawn from India for service in the various theatres of war. That was no small contribution of effective fighting force to our cause, and it was accompanied by a handsome money contribution.

There were two points, he thought, which had their influence on the attitude of the ruling chiefs. The pledged word that Britain gave to Belgium had also been given to guarantee their States; and they felt in a special sense their tie of personal allegiance to their Emperor. India's politicians had been as outspoken and unswerving in their support as the fighting races. At the Indian National Congress, held last December in Madras, there was a fine scene of patriotic enthusiasm when the resolution of loyal support was unanimously carried. He would like to add a word of recognition and thanks to those Indian students in England who formed themselves into an ambulance corps and accepted the rough and tumble of war in order to render service to their wounded fellow-countrymen.

A Share in the Empire

The real innerness of the striking manifestation of loyalty was, he believed, to be found in the desire of the Indian peoples that Indian soldiers should take part in the war side by side with their British comrades. The great withdrawal of troops from India was proof of the general trust and confidence which could safely

be reposed in the loyalty of the Indian people, and nothing that had occurred during the past seven months had in any degree betrayed that confidence. Had Britain, as in the Boer War, regarded the struggle as a sahib's war in which India took no part, that way danger lay; for it would have denied India's share in the Empire of which she forms part.

He was constantly asked how had the Indian troops acquitted themselves. The answer was that they had acquitted themselves as those who knew them best expected of them. (Applause.) They had fought in a far-flung line of battle; and as to the spirit in which they had fought, two Indians, as was known, had, for the first time, won the coveted distinction of the V.C.

There were two further reflections he wished to make. The outburst of loyalty was no cause of surprise, although it was a source of gratification, to those who knew India best. But it must have been a real blow to the pessimists who in recent years had exaggerated what they called the spirit of Indian unrest. It was an elementary blunder to confuse a small criminal revolutionary group, whose crimes had sternly to be repressed, with the constitutional agitation that pursued the changes it advocated by an appeal to reason and justice, and loyally desired to work out those changes within the framework of the British Empire. The war had shown these things in their right perspective.

Certainly it did nothing to dissuade Englishmen from their policy of associating Indians with the work of Government. This wise policy had borne good fruit in the critical testing time. Everyone must see that it had not reached its final stage. He would not suggest anything so absurd as to say that India, with its ancient civilisation and its deep attachment to immemorial customs, could be treated as though it was a brand-new Western State of the American Union. But he trusted to the good sense of Britons and Indians alike gradually to work out a system of Government as an outgrowth of Indian traditions and adapted to Indian needs which would in due time meet the legitimate aspirations of India.

Secondly, he would ask them specially to recognise the admirable loyalty that had been shown by the Moslems of India. They plainly saw that this was not a religious war, but a political war against the ambitions of Germany for world-domination. Our Government had given the pledge that the holy places of the Moslem faith should be immune from attack by ourselves, and had obtained the assent of our Allies to a similar promise, while ruling Princes, like the Nizam of Hyderabad, and leaders of Mahomedan thought like the Aga Khan, had been unswerving in the sagacious advice which they had given to their co-religionists. Islam was not only a religion. It was a civilisation with a great past, a distinctive character, and a tradition that made its appeal to millions of men, and, whatever might be the political consequences to Turkey of its deplorable blunder, Islam would remain a world-force.

Reforms After the War

It was being asked in some quarters, why were not immediate steps being taken to meet Indian claims? Why were not practical grievances being settled out of hand, such as those connected with the Arms Act, the Volunteers, or the question of commissions in the Indian Army? He had no wish to put in a mere dilatory plea for delay. But the immediate task was to concentrate all endeavours for victory in the war. The minds of statesmen and administrators were too pre-occupied for controversial discussion. Measures, even if accepted in principle, often required prolonged consideration before the details could be properly adjusted. It was not fair to friendly critics, who might be entitled to a hearing, to stifle discussion by an appeal to patriotism, but an appearance of discord and disunion should encourage the enemy. In India the idea of a truce for the time being had been readily accepted. It was not really a question, as it were, of rewarding

Indians for good behaviour. Indians themselves had repudiated the suggestion. Something much more fundamental was at stake, and that was the consolidation of right feeling between Britain and India. That right feeling should not come as a mere wave of passing emotion. It should crystallise into a permanent attitude of mind. If that could be won as the lasting outcome of the war, public opinion in this country would be ready to adjust itself to such modifications as might prove to be necessary in the Government of India, and the solution of the practical problems would follow accordingly. There were obstacles enough in the way. Let not mere unregenerate colour prejudice and racial feeling be added to them. Such persons as were afflicted with that malady should, since the world was wide, turn to work that would bring them in contact with none but their own kith and kin. Once let Englishmen concede the reciprocal superiorities of different races and the free scope for outstanding ability, whatever the caste or colour or creed of its predecessor might be, and he did not think Indians would need to quarrel with them.

Would they allow him in passing to suggest that it would be well if the Press and people generally would give up talking about "natives" or "natives of India"? These expressions were now felt in India to be discourteous, though he was sure they were often used merely to describe those whose birthplace was India, without any knowledge that the phrase was disliked.

Indians and the Empire

It was wide of the mark to suggest that Indians were not a grateful people, or that the benefits of the British connexion were not recognised by them.

There was, however, one point in the relations of India to the Empire which could not be regarded with satisfaction. Last year, under the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, we established for the first time a uniform citizenship for the whole British Empire. But those Empire-wide rights did not include the free admission to all parts of the Empire. The control of immigration was vested in the self-governing Dominions, and Canada and Australia practically made it impossible for Indians to enter their territories, which the Dominions wished to reserve as white man's country. Recently there was serious friction between the South African Government and the Indian settlers in South Africa, though that particular difficulty had been happily arranged by a practically complete agreement. Let them hope that the settlement of one controversy might form a precedent of good augury in other cases. And here again the war might be trusted to pave the way to a better state of feeling, a greater spirit of generosity, a larger sense of the claims of the Empire as a whole.

The Hopes of the Future

In a speech delivered the other day in India, the complaint was made that the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy pointed out "no land of promise" to the people of India. Perhaps it was rather the tendency of administrators to get on with the job in hand. Yet from the very nature of the case he thought that the future of India offered full scope for the aspirations of its sons. It was, as it seemed to him, a land where a growing measure of self-government in accordance with the special conditions of India was being progressively worked out as the fitness for self-government was proved, and the whole great experiment was like nothing that had ever existed before in the world. Then, as if that were not enough, the war had opened out new vistas. India no longer was to live as she did in past ages, apart in her own world. Now, and in the future, her life would blend with the main current of the world-movement, opening out into the central stream of history; and her sons before our eyes would consciously claim their part in the common heritage of the great Empire which, as we believed, stood for freedom and international right, and which had been

truly said to be the greatest secular agency for good now existing in the world. Was the land of promise not visible there? (Loud applause.)

On the motion of the LORD MAYOR, seconded by Colonel H. HUGHES, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Roberts.—*India.*

Indenture System Unpopular

In the course of his annual review, the President of the Umhlatuzi Planters' Association said that it was noticed that native labour was fairly plentiful last season which made up for the falling off in Indian labour. As regards the latter, quite a change had taken place. It would be noticed that very few indeed would accept re-indenture, even although an advance was offered them to do so, but preferred to offer themselves as free labourers. With this growing dislike to the indenture system the Indian would, as a field labourer, be no better than the average native, as he would be free to work as irregularly, roaming about from one place and employer to another, which they were doing at the present time. The cause of this was directly traceable to the abolition of the £3 tax, and to the action of the immigration authorities in permitting Indians to obtain free passages to India whenever they chose to go.

Commenting on the above, the *Natal Mercury* says: Natal labour on the Zululand plantations is said to be fairly plentiful, thereby making up for the shortage in Indian labour. With regard to the latter, it is quite possible that the situation has scarcely adjusted itself. One reason for this is that the Indians who are passing out of indenture do not fully realise the effect upon themselves of the Indian Relief Act. There is an evident tendency, however, for time-expired Indians to take an increasing advantage of the free return passage facilities allowed them by the Government, and rather less so, but still a considerable tendency, to re-indenture at higher wages, in view of a similar privilege at the end of their contracts. The situation seems to sum itself up as being one in which the coast planting industries might more closely apply themselves to the economics of the fund of indigenous labour at their command.

News in Brief

The Indians of New Hanover presented an address to Mr. Boast, the Resident Magistrate, on his retirement.

On the retirement of Mr. Clark, a Court official at Stanger, the Indian clerks presented him with a walking-stick and a pipe, and to Mrs. Clark a basket and umbrella.

In the course of the preliminary examination of Wessels Wessels and other rebels, a Basuto chief stated that a letter was addressed to him, signed by Wessels, the first part of which reads as follows:—"I beg to inform you herewith we shall place no guards on the Basuto border, provided we are assured you and your people will remain quiet. We wish to wage a war of white against white and only in case the British should arm coolies would we count upon your then very welcome aid."

The cool insolence of the above document and the studied insult to Indians appear to be characteristic of a certain section of the Dutch population of South Africa.