

Indian Opinion

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— EDITORIAL —

The Coconut Industry

We are somewhat perturbed at the general outlook which faces the coconut industry at the present moment and further we are somewhat alarmed at some recent suggestions that Government Control the industry to a greater extent than at the present time.

We have expressed the view in the past that Government's negligence and mismanagement in respect to this industry has led to a very unsatisfactory state of affairs and it is wondered whether it is government's intention to kill the industry altogether as they have done to the coffee industry of the Colony.

We are of the definite opinion that any further control of the industry without very careful examination would lead to the ruin of the industry and instead of the colony being an exporter of edible oil and copra as it has been in the past it will then have to be an importer.

We know that there are forces operating to smash local industries in order that there can be further confusion in the colony unemployed and a large unemployed body, so that sugar may be better placed to handle labour.

The Local Government has used the Defence Regulations to do whatever it has wanted in the Colony since the outbreak of war, several of these measures of course have been outside the boundary of the Defence Regulations but have been allowed to go unobserved and unchanged, but the time is fast

approaching when such a step will have to be taken.

We are not prepared to allow government and its advisers to control the coconut industry in such a way as would destroy its very existence in the colony. It is highly immoral for government to even think of such an act much less to put it into operation.

The main reason why there is a shortage of edible oil made from coconuts is that the prices fixed by government does not adequately cover the cost of production and manufacture at the present time when the producers of coconut cannot meet the cost of producing, and handling their crop then there cannot be any incentive to produce to maximum capacity; as a matter of fact there sets in deterioration and falling off of production, just the exact thing which has happened in recent years.

We want to emphasize that government has not adequately provided in the prices fixed for copra, crude oil and refined coconut oil.

We are of the opinion that a revision of the fixed prices have been long overdue and that the trouble lies in the inadequate prices fixed and not the method of Control.

We are prepared to substantiate and back the opinion expressed here by figures.

We wish to warn government as to its negligence and indifference with respect to the coconut industry, the responsibility will be on their shoulders if the industry collapses as has been the case.

Education—2

The debate in the Legislative Council on Education generally was interesting from many points of view. We say interesting, because it showed how the wind is blowing.

We were shocked by members such as The Hon. J. I. D'Aguiar who wants to have religious influence in the schools carried to a higher level. Mr. D'Aguiar gives us the impression that the mass of the adults who are unlettered through the negligence and indifference of the Government should remain illiterate and that it is not the duty of the Government to see that from now on all the children of school going age get accommodation

in the schools.

It is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that the religious denominations are unable to provide proper and additional schools or to extend and enlarge existing schools and therefore the whole system as is being worked at the present time will have to be changed; now when men like Mr. D'Aguiar advocates an extension and intensification of the religious system we become worried as to where it will lead the education of the Community.

We would have expected the member of Central Demerara to support the members who advocated that the Government should take practical steps to provide adequate accommodation in the existing schools and to build Government schools at places that are in urgent need of schools.

The time has come when Government must make up its mind with respect to Mr. Hammond's recommendations and put it into effect.

We would like to know whether Mr. D'Aguiar is prepared to support the policy whereby Government should see that the compulsory Education Ordinance is respected by government itself. We know that it suits the business of some of the Legislators and their general outlook in life to advocate in the Highest Council in the colony to keep the mass of the people ignorant and unfettered. We wish to give Mr. D'Aguiar a gentle hint that his general attitude is being closely watched by the people who he is supposed to represent and to suggest to him that the day is drawing near when he shall have to face them.

So far as religious training is concerned our people are known to be the most religious people in the world but it cannot be said that in these Colonies they have been given the opportunity to carry on their religious training and culture in the same way as it was done in India. It would be interesting to learn how many Hindu and Muslim Teachers are employed and how many, if any, Hindu and Muslim Head teachers are employed by Government or the denominational schools throughout the Colony. We would be surprised to learn that there is a single head teacher in the 250 Colonial and fully aided schools.

Internal Censorship

A Press communique issued by General Head-quarters, on April 13, stated:

Military security is vital to any nation at war. Its importance is increased when the enemy is within reach of a country's land and sea frontiers. It becomes even more important when the enemy is thrown on the defensive but is still in contact and expects an attack for he will then redouble his efforts to obtain information from within the base, from which the attack on him can be launched. India has now reached this stage as it has become a major base for offensive operations against the Japanese, and in view of its increasing operational importance, the whole problem of security has been reviewed.

Despite widespread propaganda to stop careless talk and careless correspondence, there is still a considerable element, both in official and in official circles, which fails to understand what extensive harm can result from gossip especially in correspondence, about matters of military importance.

Not only the lives of Indian and Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen but also the security of Indian civilian lives and property are endangered by the leakage of military information.

The majority of the public and the Press in particular, fully appreciate the need for military security, but it is clear that, owing to the thoughtlessness and carelessness of a small minority, the essential degree of military security has not yet been achieved. Solely in the interest of military security, the Government of India, therefore, find it imperative to exercise their powers of censorship in respect of non-official internal postal and telegraphic correspondence, and to issue a warning that anyone, found guilty of serious breach of security in the course of correspondence, will be severely dealt with.

U. K. PRECEDENT

The effect of this decision is to bring India into line with the practice already existing in other countries involved in major military activities, such as the United Kingdom itself. Every endeavour will be made to avoid delay to correspondence and inconvenience to the public and it is stressed that the censorship will only be exercised in respect of matters which would be detrimental to the conduct of operations if leakage to the enemy occurred. All correspondence opened in this censorship will be clearly marked "Opened by Examiner," but no notice will be given of the areas in which the censorship will operate from time to time.

Attention is drawn to some of the most important matters which must

not be conveyed in private postal and telegraphic correspondence, for example:

(i) location, numbers, or movements—past, present or future—of convoys, or any naval, military or Air Force units detachments or ships, and the arrival or non-arrival of reinforcements;

(ii) Armaments or equipment of any kind;

(iii) distinguishing signs for the identification of formations, units and their transport;

(iv) communications, such as the construction, use, condition or probable extension of ports, roads, aerodromes, railways, or other transportation facilities;

(v) details of damage or casualties caused by enemy action in military installation and major public utility concerns.

Pandit Sukhdeo Ojha Passes On.

The Indian Opinion records today, with profound regret, the almost sudden demise of Pandit Sukhdeo Ojha, a member of the Committee of the B. & E.L.A., a Vice President of the Man Power Citizens' Association, a member of the Indian Publicity Committee, and Editor of the Bharat Weekly Newspaper.

The deceased was also chairman of the Propaganda Committee of the B.G. Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha and on two occasions he visited India in his capacity of ministering to the religious needs of the hundreds of immigrants who were repatriated to their fatherland at that time.

The Pandit also gave very valuable advice and assistance at the several Press Conferences held at Government House and elsewhere in the colony, and in which respect, his presence thereat will be greatly missed.

He leaves to mourn their loss an only son (Mr. R. Persaud) an elder brother, 3 grandchildren and other relatives.

His funeral took place on Friday afternoon last at Rose Hall Burial where the interment took place.

V. Lam

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Law and Order Outlawed

Berbice
19th Dec. 1944

Sir,

The S.P.A. is always crying out for shortage of labour. I can't say about any other sugar estate, but, frankly on this estate there are so many labourers that only 1/3 of them are employed.

The management has a new way to chase away workers from this estate; that is, that if a worker ask for the price of the work that he is going to do, the driver or the overseer will at once put him off the fields and, if the worker refuse, the driver will at once handle him or abuse him and call for assistance to take him to the manager.

The manager's direction is always just one thing: "take them to the police station and let the police charge them all if they can't behave themselves."

Now, these foolish half-starved workers then beg the manager even though they are not wrong. The manager then tells them: "after the case is finished you will have to leave the estate."

Now, sir what must the people of this estate do? The manager is only employing villagers and paying more money to them simply because he had a misunderstanding with a few of the estate people. Since then, over 30 people had been put off the estate.

About a fortnight ago, 2 workers were again put off the estate, and a few days ago another shovelman was put off the fields for inquiring about payment for his work. The result is that the magistrate always fines them heavily. The police on the other hand is usually discreet in handling such

matters and much to the detriment of the workers.

On this estate, all the police do is hear what the manager or driver or a constable says; how to shield a shop keeper and so on.

I will give an instance of what I mean. On the 16th inst, some overseers behaved disorderly and, up to now, the police can't make a case. The reason for it is obvious.

Why can't British justice be meted out to one and all by members of a Department of Law and Order.

"WATCHDOG."

Apathy in Politics And Economics

BY LIBERTY

We have been accustomed during the past century for the Imperial and Local Government to make statement concerning the steps to be taken to develop and organize British Guiana. Politically and economically, but to the great disappointment of the inhabitants the greater portion of the statements were shams and hot air as they never materialized.

Politically British Guiana is one of the most backward in the whole of the West Indies and South America when its continental position and area is taken fully into consideration. Then there is a one hundred per cent political apathy among the inhabitants of the colony because of the ingenious methods employed by the Government to carry out its plans in this respect and maintaining its age old policy of curbing the political rights of the people in order that a handful of British Capitalists who have heavy investments in sugar plantations may continue unperturbed to exploit the blood and sweat of a people who are thus compelled to live under conditions approximately semi-slavery.

Economically British Guiana's existence depends on the Sugar Magnates in England, who directly influences the Imperial Government's policy with regard to the Customs duties and trade arrangements. These exercise a direct effect on wages paid to labourers and the civil service. They advise on the prices to be paid for other local crops, they advise on the financial backing of any other industries which will in any way interfere with their finances and economic structure. They keep all other industries and economic development in the colony subservient to sugar economy.

The Wakenaan Mackay Memorial School Scholarship

The Naiya Roshini Industrial Institute with the governing body of the above named School has offered a scholarship to the children of the upper division of the school with the object providing an incentive towards better education.

The examination was held on the 16th December and around twenty students participated. There was keen interest displayed and most of the students gained high marks at the examinations.

Student A. Hatim was the winner of the 1944 Scholarship and is entitled to two years at any of the secondary schools in Georgetown, with fees and books provided him through the scholarship.

There was a concert given on the 22nd December with a very large attendance and opportunity was taken to announce the winner of the scholarship the same night.

Veda Yajna At Pln. Ogle

A Veda Yajna will be held at Plantation Ogle Hindu Temple commencing on Sunday, 7th January and will continue until Sunday, 14th January, 1945.

Brahmins, Sadhoos, Ramayan Goles, Lacksmi Sabhas, Yuvak Sabhas and all Sanatanist Brethren are cordially invited to attend.

Pandit Oudit Narayan Sharma will officiate.

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AGENTS.

Delays and Indecisions

The Corentyne Drainage Scheme

Finalizing of Decision Expected on Frank Stockdale's Visit Next Month

BY THE WATCH DOG

The Corentyne drainage and irrigation schemes are now in the discussion and making of plan stage for roughly two years. No definite decision has been made one way or the other. When the Governor went to England in August, we were made to understand that he was going with the object of being consulted in respect to this scheme, but much to our surprise on his return the decision of go ahead with the scheme was still in the melting pot stage; the same place it stood two years ago. We are now being told that Sir Frank Stockdale is about to visit the colony in January next year when he shall finalize the decision.

Sir Frank Stockdale's capabilities are well known to all but it is wondered where it will all end, and whether his decision would really and truly be final or he will have to consult the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the matter, or may be, the C. Chairman of the Anglo American Caribbean Commission, before finalizing and crystallizing his decision.

The most important decision for Sir Frank Stockdale to make would be the decision to put to the interest of the inhabitants of the Colony before the interest of the British vested capitalist in the Colony.

Generally it has been the Sugar Interests before the inhabitants of the colony; much to the discredit of the British Nation and their method of rule.

In conclusion, the one important matter that keeps operating in our minds is the excuses offered by the Local and Imperial Governments with respect to the prosecution of the scheme. It is hoped Sir Frank would

not say, yes the schemes are all well and good but we must wait for machinery and equipment after the end of the war. British Guiana is tired and weary of these delays and indecisions. She can only go along if plans are made and executed with promptness and efficiency. When such a state would be reached only God knows.

Indian Awarded V C.

Heroic Gurkha Rifleman

LONDON, Dec. 28. (BOP)—

"His name will live in the history of his regiment as a very gallant soldier," says the citation describing the deeds by which a Gurkha rifleman won the Victoria Cross. He died in winning it.

In Italy on the night of September 18th this year a battalion of the ninth Gurkha Rifles was fighting its way forward into San Marino state against bitter opposition from prepared positions dominating the river valley and held in considerable strength in depth.

The fireman, Sher Bahadur Thapa was a number one Bren gunner in a rifle company which just before dawn came under heavy fire. He and the section commander charged an enemy post killing a machine-gunner and putting the rest to flight.

Almost immediately another party of Germans attacked the two men, and the section commander was badly wounded by a grenade, but without hesitation, this rifleman in spite of intense fire, rushed at the attackers, and reaching the crest of the ridge brought his Bren gun into action against the main body of the enemy who were counter-attacking.

Disregarding suggestions that he should withdraw to a slit trench the rifleman lay in open under a hail of bullets firing the Bren which he knew he could only bring to bear on German emplacements from his exposed position on the crest of the hill. By the intensity and accuracy of his fire this isolated gunner silenced several machine-guns and checked a number

of Germans who were trying to infiltrate onto the ridge.

After two hours both forward companies had exhausted their ammunition and were ordered to withdraw. Sher Bahadur Thapa covered their withdrawal as they crossed the open ground and remains alone at his post until his ammunition ran out.

He then dashed forward under accurate small arms and mortar fire and rescued two wounded men lying between him and the advancing Germans.

While returning a second time he fell riddled by machine-gun bullets, fired at pointblank range. "The great bravery of this Gurkha soldier," the citation adds, "was instrumental in saving the lives of many of his companions, and his outstanding devotion to duty contributed largely to the severe reverse the enemy eventually suffered when our troops counter-attacked."

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Race! Race! Race!

A Grand Horse Race would be held on Christmas-day, at the Bush Lot Race Ground, Corentyne Berbice.

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R. C. Sookho

Secretary