

Indian Opinion

No. 17—VOL. XVIII.

FRIDAY, APRIL 23RD, 1920.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper
Price 2/6 per annum

NOTES AND NEWS

IN the House of Assembly last week, Sir Abe Bailey asked the Prime Minister: Why in view of the undertaking given by him to the deputation headed by Mr. L. I. Phillips, chairman of the South African League, to the effect that the questions of immigration and ownership of land were definitely closed, and would not be re-opened under any circumstances, the terms of reference of the Asiatic Commission nevertheless included the question of ownership of land?

General Smuts replied as follows: The Government resolved to include the question of the ownership of land by Asiatics in the terms of reference to the Commission now sitting, after the deputation referred to met the Prime Minister, in consequence of representations made to the Government by persons in the Provinces of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal.

The writer of "Labour Topics" in the *Natal Mercury*, commenting on the resolutions of the Cape Trades Union Congress, says:—"Resolutions were passed by that Congress which would probably have been summarily rejected at an ordinary meeting of any legitimate trades union in the country. It is a curious fact that congresses convened under loose supervision are invariably marked by frothy debates, and these are frequently led by comrades whose credentials emanate from unions of the "down with everything" type. How few and how feeble these folk are was reflected in the vote polled for the International Socialist candidates at the recent elections. They have no status in the trades union movement, and they foam at the mouth on the bare mention of the South African Labour Party. When this is understood, no responsible writer will base a damning indictment of organised Labour on the holiday outbursts of a handful of extremists."

Referring to the "Mercury's" leading article, dealt with by us editorially last week, the writer says:—

The traditional policy of organised Labour has undoubtedly been the maintenance of a European standard in South Africa, and the article in question pointed out an apparent departure from that tradition. There has, however, been no faltering in Labour's devotion to the European Ideal. What has been mistaken for a change in the workers' outlook is purely a broadening of the precautions necessary to prevent the white standard being submerged by employers' ruthless exploitation of coloured labour. The non-European's entry into an industry is welcomed, in the first place, for one prime reason—he is cheap. He is cheap because he is socially and in training inferior. Conscious of that inferiority, he assumes to his master whatever degree of servility may be required of him. He is, therefore, a menace to the man who insists upon a European standard. And the latter is compelled to seek the best means to defend his livelihood. Instinctively the European worker shrinks from contact with the labour of an alien civilisation. It is not his doing that they are flung together in the melting pot of industry. Being together, the white man must fight for his standard. He has tried to eliminate and debar underpaid labour. If the industry demands the

employment of the non-European, then skill and not colour must determine payment. In self-preservation, the Unions must see that this is so.

His Highness Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, who recently arrived in Bombay from England was accorded a most enthusiastic welcome by the citizens of Bombay. In the course of an interview given by H. H. the Aga Khan to a representative of the *Bombay Chronicle* His Highness referred to Indians residing in British Overseas Dominions. His Highness said it was a question in which he took the deepest interest, and it was a question to which he attached the utmost importance. A small committee had been formed in London with Mr. Polak as Secretary, Sir Muncherjee Bhowmurry as Chairman and himself as President. Their object was, in the heart of the Empire, to bring forward the position of Indians Overseas before the Imperial Government and see as far as possible that in future no injustice was done to them. He had not been able to do much so far, in connection with this question, because all this last year he had been taken up with the Turkish question; but he earnestly urged his countrymen to keep themselves in touch with this problem and never forget that India's future was a stake therein. For otherwise Indians overseas would be reduced to the position of an inferior race, or to, what has been called in some quarters, the position of second-class citizens.

WHOSE DEMANDS?

IN urging upon the Europeans of Natal, and particularly of Durban, to prepare evidence to place before the Asiatic Commission which will shortly be sitting here, the *Natal Mercury* hopes that the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Retailers' Council and the Federation of Trades will come forward. Further it goes on to say: "The public will only have themselves to blame if they allow the opportunity of presenting their case for or against the *Indian demands* to escape them." Speaking of Indians, our contemporary goes on to say that, "if they elect to remain in South Africa, they must conform to the laws of the Union. The constant reference to India cannot be continued; *they are South African residents*, and must submit to the will of the majority, or seek new pastures. *Equality cannot be granted to them, as their standard of life is entirely different*; but they must be treated with justice and fairness." The foregoing quotations are from a leaderette, written, we imagine by a not very well informed or responsible member of the staff. We sincerely hope that the newly appointed editor is not responsible in any way. Without making any weighty pronouncement on this most difficult problem, our contemporary has, however, raised some contentions points. For instance, the writer of the *Mercury* article speaks of the "Indian demands."

What these demands are we are not told. It should be within the knowledge of everyone taking an interest in the Asiatic question that the present Commission was asked for, not by the Indian community, but by the South African League and its supporters in Parliament. A recent reply of the Prime Minister, given to Sir Abe Bailey in the House of Assembly, makes it clear that the question of the ownership of land was added "in consequence of representations made to the Government by persons in the Provinces of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal." Those persons were, of course, Europeans. It will be seen, therefore, that the "demands" emanate from Europeans and not from Indians, who are satisfied, generally speaking, with the state of the law in Natal. There are certain matters regarding licences which might be adjusted more fairly, but there is no doubt that the only "demand" existing is that of a certain section of the European population that Asiatics shall be deprived of their present rights to own land and obtain licences to trade on the same terms as others. Our contention that the Indian community is in the position of defendant is proved correct by the fact that, in the other Provinces, the Indian evidence has been taken last. And we take it that this will also be the case in this Province. We understand that this point was raised, and the Commission decided that the Indian witnesses were entitled to reply to the demands made by the anti-Asiatic party.

We note that the idea of repatriation of Asiatics is apparently considered impracticable, for the writer of the article says that, "if they (Indians) elect to remain in South Africa, they must conform to the laws of the Union." We are also told that "they are South African residents." In spite of that, however, Indians cannot be granted equality owing to their standard of life. This looks not unlike a "demand" that they shall be discriminated against the matter of rights of residence, trade and farming. They must, we are told, submit to the will of the majority or see krew pastures. Whilst denying the right of Indians to appeal to India for protection, our contemporary would, evidently, force Indians into a servile state, without the right to vote or raise a word of protest against anything which may be done against them by the majority. And yet it is admitted that they are South African residents with the right to remain here! As for the demand that Indians should no longer look to India in their troubles, we venture to say that this could be met by granting Indians the same political rights as, say, an Englishman or a naturalised foreigner. Then we should do as others do, sink or swim with the Union.

ASIATIC COMMISSION

ITS SITTINGS IN JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg, April 13.—Evidence was given by Mr. George Hay, M.P.C., P.C., to-day before the Asiatic Commission.

He said that the land always deteriorated in the neighbourhood where Indians purchased, and it became slum property very quickly. Witness spoke of the Bantia as the curse of the Indians, their Government having to legislate to protect the peasant from exactions of the Bantias, who were of a parasitic class. In this country, he filled no want; his habits were bad and his treatment of women was deplorable, and to defeat any inquiry he pleaded his religion. He was a polygamist and married women before maturity with the results that the swarms of children were of bad type.

He thought the Indians in this country should be compelled either to remove their shoes or their hats because the fact was the native of this country wanted the same privileges as the Indian.

Witness thought public opinion was reaching the stage when it would drive the Indians out of this country. He suggested it would pay the country to repatriate the Indians at any cost, and to make bazaars for those who were born in South Africa. The compensation required would be very large, but it would be worth it. "The tide is rising," said the witness, "and the Asiatic will get from the public compulsory persuasion."—*Natal Advertiser*.

Johannesburg, April 13.—Councillors representing Boksburg Municipality, before the Asiatic Commission to-day, urged that the encroachment of Asiatics on areas inhabited by white persons was becoming a very serious menace. Their standard of living was lower than that of white people, and their smaller rates of remuneration to employes rendered competition with whites undesirable in that its tendency would be to lower the standard of the latter. Values of adjoining properties were depreciated as a result of their encroachments. Asiatics had circumvented the clauses provided in the deeds of sale of townships by forming themselves into limited liability companies, and openly derided the spirit of the legislating authorities.

Witnesses recommended that a policy of segregation be the line along which the Government should proceed, with every facility for liberty, freedom, and unrestricted trading rights in such assigned areas.—*Natal Mercury*.

POSITION OF THE CHINESE

Johannesburg, April 14.—At the Asiatic Commission an attorney, on behalf of the Chinese community, handed in a petition signed by European wholesale merchants and other Europeans which stated that the Chinese were honest and straightforward in every respect and were a great benefit to the community. The disabilities under which they suffered were detrimental to the best interests of the general public, and it was considered that they should be placed in the same position as other foreigners.

The Chinese, said the attorney, had no desire to become British subjects. They were proud of their own nationality.

A prominent Chinese storekeeper said in regard to profiteering that Chinese merchants, out of the whole trading community, least deserved the odious title, being content with moderate profits, but they were able to confer the greatest benefits upon the public by offering necessities of life at most moderate prices. He employed Europeans, and paid them the standard rate of wage.—*Natal Mercury*.

DR. WM. GODFREY'S EVIDENCE

Johannesburg, April 15.—"When we see aliens of the lowest type being allowed to possess whatever land they like and to trade wherever and however they like, we can only come to one conclusion, that it is the policy to make this a white man's country," said Dr. Wm. Godfrey, Chairman of the British Indian League, in giving evidence to-day before the Asiatic Commission. "If that is the policy, we hold it is an unnatural policy. It is a black man's country; it has been so and it will prove to be so." Continuing, he said that it passed their comprehension why, as British subjects, they had to fight for privileges which were guaranteed by the Union Jack. They relied upon the London Convention of 1884, Article 14, which gave them full liberty with their families to enter and reside in any part of the South African Republic, and to possess houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops and premises. Subsequent to the passing of Act 2 of 1885, the Transvaal Government tried to construe the word "native" to mean and include Asiatics, and through the intervention of Great Britain Law No. 3 of 1885, which

was really made to outdo the convention of 1884 had not been revoked and was forced on the Republican Government for the protection and benefit of Asiatics. They found that as a result of that Article they were able to hold properties in the Transvaal, and trade at will. The late South African Government, after the London Convention of 1884 had gone through, made representations to the Imperial Government with regard to Asiatics on the subject of sanitation alone, and on that ground alone was Law No. 3 of 1885 passed. The South African Republican Government tried to put that law into force, but with the assistance of British representatives their object was defeated, and even up to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war the Act was never put into force. Sir James Rose Innes, Chief Justice, had held that Law No. 3 of 1885 was a law for sanitary reasons only. Dr. Godfrey repudiated charges of immoral and uncleanly habits, and called attention to the condition of the submerged European population, maintaining that by a long chalk the Indians were cleaner. There were exceptions, but why they should be all classed as dirty passed their comprehension. They made money in this country, but they were not given a chance to spend their earnings in this country. They were not allowed to reside where they would. They had no schools to educate their children. They maintained that the Indian's brain was as good as any man's brain.

SEGREGATION

Dr. Godfrey then spoke of the Indian's scale of living, and said it was ignorance to say that the Indian lived on the smell of an oil rag. The minimum price of a meal in an Indian restaurant was rs. 6d. The Asiatic trader had been accused of under-selling; if that meant that he did not profiteer, it was so, for the Asiatic trader was content with a fair profit. The witness compared European and Indian wages, and remarked that one Indian trader gave his manager £50 a month, including board and lodging. The Limited Liability Act of 1909 contained not any clause sustaining Act No. 3 of 1885, which had become practically a dead letter. The amended Act of 1919 was for the purpose of preventing the acquisition of land by Indian Limited Liability Companies from May, 1919. Of segregation, he said it was not within the bounds of practical politics. America's segregation was only for negroes. The Indians would never submit to any segregation. Dr. Godfrey then put in an article by Mr. Andrews, which appeared in *The Star* on April 10.

Adverting to the question of trading licences, Dr. Godfrey asked how an exempted Indian, as distinguished from the registered Indian, was to make a living if he was refused a licence after his period of professional utility was over. The one solution of the Asiatic question was the giving of full citizen rights to all civilised men in the Union; then the law of the survival of the fittest must assert itself.

Besides the British Indian League, Dr. Godfrey represented about ten similar organisations.

STATEMENT BY THE BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Johannesburg, April 16.—The case for the Indians resident in the Transvaal and their answer to the evidence given before the Asiatic Inquiry Commission was opened to-day before that body by Dr. F. E. T. Krause, who has been briefed by the Transvaal British Indian Association. A lengthy historical statement was submitted, and this opened with a recapitulation of the history of the entry of Indians into the Transvaal and a review of the various legal, administrative, political and social movements which have been connected with this entry, the review starting from the passing of the London Convention and being brought up to date. The review dealt exhaustively with the laws of the Republican Government, Crown Colony Government and Responsible Government; it touched on the

Smuts-Gandhi agreement and the passive resistance movement.

Among the points raised in the statement of their case, the Indians complained that they were persecuted under the Local Government Ordinance which deals with the granting of licences to trade by municipalities, and the statement said that the majority of Municipal Councils, being composed of white traders, were concerned in ousting their Asiatic rivals. On the point of illegal entrance to the Transvaal the statement submitted that the fear was baseless, if not almost insincere, and claimed that the Indian population was on the decrease. Prior to the Boer war the Indian population it claimed, was 17,000, but that figure had been reduced to 15,000 in 1903 and was now between 12,000 and 13,000.

SEGREGATION OPPOSED

In view of the evidence which has been advanced to support a policy of segregation the Indians stated that they were opposed to such a policy which would in effect brand them as semi-serfs and compel them to live in what would be nothing more than ghettos no matter what they were called.

Much evidence has been led before the Commission in regard to what is styled the unfair competition of the Asiatic, and on this point the British Indian Association said that its members were prepared to recommend and conform to legislation regulating the principle of minimum profit and wage and an equitable basis for all ranks of labour, but when Indian waiters had combined to secure the same wages as their European fellows a cry arose that it was beneath the dignity of the white people to tolerate a coloured man drawing a salary equal to that of a European. In regard to allegations of under-selling, the Indian, it was pointed out, did not dispose of his wares except for a reasonable profit to maintain himself and his dependents without taking an undue advantage of the consuming public in the shape of profiteering. The Indian purveyor of necessaries admittedly performed a public service, the retailer being a boon to the poorer classes particularly in country districts. "Must," asked the statement, "the unfortunate consumer pay for wasteful indulgence and luxuries?"

The spending power of the Indian, it was urged, is limited by the disabilities under which he suffers; he cannot choose a residence in a suitable and respectable quarter and all avenues of investment are closed to him. His children are denied the right to claim education except as "despised aliens," and he is precluded from enjoying life by visiting places of amusement and public entertainments on racial grounds.

THE RELIEF REQUIRED

To secure the relief that the Indian community desires the association suggested the following legislation: The repeal of Law 3 of 1885 (which deals with Asiatics holding land); the amendment of sections 130 and 131 of Act 35 of 1908 in so far as restrictions are imposed on Indians occupying land in proclaimed areas; amendment of those sections of Act 34 of 1908 which adversely affected Indians; amendment of section 90 (e) of the Local Government Ordinance of 1912 which gives a municipality the right to refuse a trading licence on the ground that the applicant is undesirable; the repeal of Act 37 of 1910; and that exempted Indians be placed on an equal footing with the Indians holding registration certificates. In regard to the Local Government Ordinance it is desired that reasons should be assigned for the refusal of licences and that the rejected applicant should have the right of appeal to the Supreme Court instead of only to the magistrate acting in an administrative and not in a judicial capacity.

Dr. Krause called certain Indian witnesses to support the statement on matters of fact, and subsequently entered on an historical review of the legal position.

LAND AND TRADING
AN M. L. A.'s SUGGESTIONS

RABIDLY ANTI-INDIAN

Mr. J. S. Marwick, M. L. A., late Head of the Durban Native Affairs Department, writes to the Press, urging the public to give evidence before Asiatic Commission, and continues:—

It behoves every public body and every Farmers' Association and kindred Society—indeed, every European in Natal—to make a firm stand against any further encroachment by Asiatics in the acquisition of land or trading rights in Natal. In regard to the acquisition of land, it has been suggested that the segregation of the Asiatics should be the aim of any new legislation. But is it either desirable or necessary for us so far to acquiesce in the united movement to become landowners (when they were brought here merely as labourers with provision for their free return to India) as to assent to separate areas being set apart for them? Natal has not fared so well under the Natives Land Act, 1913 (having had 3,840,000 acres of good farming land locked up as additional Native areas since 1917), as to encourage us to ask for Asiatic areas to be set apart to the further disadvantage of the European farmer. It seems to me that our safety—and that of our children—lies rather in our demanding, as land owners, that a condition shall be added to every title deed held to-day by a European to prevent the future sale or transfer or leasing of the property so held to any Asiatic. The prohibition should be so worded as to be effective against future ownership by Asiatics whatsoever, whether hiding their identity under limited liability companies, syndicates, or nominal registration in the name of a European. On the principle that we may do what we will with our own, it seems to me that there can be no objection to such a condition being added to our title deeds, so as to limit the possibility of Asiatics being able to extend their present land holding in this Province.

In the Transvaal any landowner who sub-divides his farm into township lots is entitled to embody in the title deeds of each lot a condition prohibiting the ownership of such lots by Asiatics, and it seems reasonable to assume that what can be done with respect to sub-divisions of the land is permissible in relation to the farm as a whole. It is to be regretted that the legislation on the Asiatic question has of recent years tended to establish and confirm the Indians in the Natal Province as persons with rights of domicile. The Indians Relief Act, 1914, not only repeals the laws formerly requiring ex-indentured Indians to pay £3 per annum as a condition of their continued residence in Natal, but practically recognises that unless an Indian signs a formal renunciation of his rights in the Union when applying for a free passage to India, he possesses a right to "enter or reside in any part of the Union, with all rights incidental to his domicile therein." A similar tendency to favour the Indian is observable in the Natal Provincial legislation, and requires to be corrected. Under Natal Act No. 18 of 1897, whenever an Asiatic whose licence has been refused appealed against the decision of the Licensing Officer, such appeal had to be made to the Licensing Board of the Magisterial Division in which the licence was sought, and in this way local knowledge of the requirements of the district was brought to bear upon the question of Asiatic trading. Under Provincial Ordinance No. 6 of 1916 the Provincial Council has seen fit to abolish appeals to the Local Licensing Board, and has substituted a Board of Appeal for the whole Province. At least, one recent decision of this Board will have the effect of opening wider the already open door which is available to the Asiatic who wishes to trade in the country districts, for it has been held by the Board that a licence may not be refused merely on the ground of no necessity.

The only communities who are to a limited extent protected against the Asiatic trader are those who live in municipalities or in villages in which a Town Board has been constituted. The position throughout the rest of the Natal Province is wholly unsatisfactory, as the granting of Asiatic trading licences is in the discretion of one licensing officer stationed in Maritzburg, and who cannot, from the nature of things, have any knowledge of local conditions and requirements. The power which is now vested in the Licensing Officer for the Province should be transferred to a Local Licensing Board for each magisterial division, to which all applications for licences should be made in the first instance, and from whom there should be no appeal, excepting to the Supreme Court, in cases of irregularity or on points of law. I believe a similar power is vested in the City Council of Capetown. I earnestly commend these considerations to all who have at heart the future well-being of this Province.

ASIATIC QUESTION

ANALYSIS OF VITAL PROBLEM

(BY C. F. ANDREWS)

I.

The following is the first of the series of articles written by Mr. C. F. Andrews and published in the *Natal Advertiser*:—

In these articles I propose to deal, in the widest manner possible, with the Asiatic problem of South Africa. I shall endeavour to treat the subject as an historian, not as a politician. At the same time I fully recognise that, for the European in this country, the issue is immediate and concrete, not academic merely. It will therefore, be my aim to be concrete also, and to keep closely to those facts which have come within my own experience in different parts of the world.

INDIANS RARELY MIGRATE

The first thing to which I would draw very careful attention is this: that Indians are a home-loving people. They have not got the migratory instinct strong in their blood, like the British or the Irish. I shall try to explain this fact more in detail later on, but, at this point, I merely wish to emphasise the fact itself. It would, perhaps be true to say that Indians have less of the migratory habit, taken as a whole, than the people of any other country in the world.

For the last thousand years, the only migration from India of any dimensions has been that brought about to supply cheap labour to the British Colonies abroad, which has been called "indentured immigration." As this form of immigration has done more than anything else to bring Indians to South Africa, and to create the Asiatic problem, I shall be obliged to refer to it very often. One of its main features was this: that it was promoted and controlled by Government, and was at no time a voluntary and spontaneous movement of the Indian population. Professional recruiters, who were paid a price for each recruit, were licensed by the Government to go in and out among the village people in order to induce them to leave their homes and be sent abroad for the purposes of labour. This kind of immigration was all too frequently accompanied by deception on a large scale, and this would seem to be the inevitable concomitant of professional recruiting. It cannot be stated too clearly that such immigration is artificial in the extreme. It must never be mistaken for the natural flow of the Indian people to foreign lands. Had it not been for the eagerness of the British Colonies to obtain cheap labour for their sugar plantations, it would never have taken place at all. Indians would have stayed at home. It was Natal, Mauritius, Fiji etc., which asked the Government of India to send Indian labour, not vice versa:

The reason for Indian domesticity is very simple. It is to be found in the religious and social ways of the people. Among the Hindus, to cross the sea has been, for centuries past, regarded as a direct breach of religion. The Scriptures were said to forbid it altogether. Anyone who transgressed this injunction and wished to remain an orthodox Hindu, was obliged to undergo a most humiliating penance on his return. The religious principle, underlying this scriptural tradition, has been, that absence in a foreign land involved a neglect of the worship of the ancestors in the Hindu family; and thus, Hindu religion was in danger of being destroyed at its very root. Even the Mahomedans of India have partially come under the sway of this Hindu antipathy to foreign travel. There is, also, in their case, the further practical difficulty of the "purdah" system, which makes it almost impossible for Mahomedan women of the higher classes to go abroad. These are some of the reasons which make the Indian people, as a whole, shrink from crossing, what is known in their vernaculars as, the "kala pani"—the black waters.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is not unusual to hear speeches delivered, in all good faith, concerning the swarms of Indians who are said to be waiting eagerly for the chance of flooding Africa by coming over in vast numbers. It is assumed, all the while, that it is only the strictness of the laws prohibiting immigration which prevents their arrival. At this point, it will be well to analyse the figures relating to South African Indian immigration.

It may be taken, as a rough calculation, that nine out of ten Indians who have come to South Africa were not free immigrants at all when they left India, but were recruited by professional recruiters for indentured labour. With respect to Natal itself I have not been able to get the figures representing the entire indentured immigration but I believe it will be well within the mark to say that, from the beginning of the indenture system to the end, not less than one hundred and fifty thousand Indian villagers were recruited. To this number must be added those who came out along with the Indian labourers, not as wholesale merchants, but as petty traders—men whose primary object was to cater for the indentured immigrants. For it has been recognised, both by the Government of India and the Colonial Governments, that whenever the indentured Indians went out in large numbers for the purposes of labour, the Indian petty trader must be allowed to follow, as a matter of course, for the purposes of trade. This rule has always been observed by all Governments which have asked the Indian Government for a supply of indentured labour. I have seen, with my own eyes, the Indian traders who have come out to Fiji along with the indentured labourers. The situation there is exactly parallel to that of Natal. I have also heard, in Fiji the very same complaint of the European traders that they were being "undersold." I would emphasise the fact, which can be proved up to the hilt by official documents that have passed between the two Governments, that Natal accepted, with its eyes wide open, the Indian traders along with the Indian indentured labourers. The Natal Government and the Natal planters knew well from the first, that, if they shut the door to the Indian trader coming over, the Indian Government would immediately put an end to the indentured labourers coming over.

A very considerable portion of those who came out under indenture, left the Colony of Natal of their own accord later, in spite of the excellent prospects which appeared on the surface, to be open to them. We shall have to go very carefully into the reasons for this drift back to India. They disclose some highly important facts.

THE PRESENT POSITION

After more than sixty years, the net Indian population remaining in Natal, including indentured and un-indentured Indians alike, amounts to about 150,000.

The overflow from Natal into the three other provinces of the South African Union amounts, roughly, to another 25,000. I am using here the figures of the last census of 1911, and allowing for a natural increase of population up to the present year. It is an interesting point to consider what would have been the Indian population, in the South African Union to-day, if the indentured system of Indian labour had never been accepted and welcomed by Natal. Strange as it may appear at first sight, yet I believe that it can be proved to be true, that, apart from indentured labour and its necessary concomitants in the way of petty traders, the Indian population for the whole South African Union to-day would have been well under 10,000. The statistics for the rest of the African Coast bear this figure out, as will be seen later. I have arrived at it after going over the whole of the facts at my disposal. This is equivalent to saying that there would have been no "Asiatic Question" at all.

Whether, however, in that case, Natal would have been "The Garden of South Africa", is another matter. Many writers of great eminence have stated that the rapid cultivation of Natal, compared with other parts of Africa, has been due to the Indian labourers—without which the sugar planters could never have made those immense sums of money that have been utilised for the development of Natal.

The situation is almost exactly parallel to that of the United States of America. In the States along the sea border to the South, a whole population was imported, under an artificial system, to develop the sugar and cotton plantations. This was one of the means by which the prosperity of those States was built up.

REPATRIATION

Now, to-day after more than a century of settlement in the case of America, and after sixty years' settlement in the case of Africa, there is wild talk, on the part of irresponsible persons, about "repatriation." But, in the Twentieth Century of the Christian Era we cannot act in the manner of Assyrian despots in the year 800 B.C. To bring over, for purely selfish reasons, a whole population, first of all; then to use this population in order to build up prosperity and wealth; and then, last of all, when wealth is established, to banish the labourers who produced the wealth—such a policy is neither sane nor just.

I hope, also, to show, in future articles, that it is entirely unnecessary.

(To be Continued.)

THE ASIATIC COMMISSION

EUROPEANS URGED TO GIVE EVIDENCE

In a very short time (says the *Natal Mercury* in a leaderette) the Asiatic Commission will hold a sitting in Durban, and it is essential that evidence should be prepared without delay. The matter is of vital moment to every European inhabitant of Durban, and there should be no supineness or apathy in providing statements to lay before the Commission. Durban is perhaps more concerned in this question than any other town in the Union, yet, so far as is known, no attempt has been made to obtain representative evidence. The Borough had a bad reputation in this respect. Several commissions have visited the town, and have left very much dissatisfied with the interest taken in the questions they were investigating. The Indian difficulty is one which should not be shirked, and it is to be hoped that the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Retailers' Council, and the Federation of Trades will all exhibit a keen desire to assist the Commission in coming to definite and just conclusions. It must be borne in mind that any legislation that may evolve from the report of the Commission will be of a more or less permanent nature, and will be intended to settle the vexed problem once and for all, so that it is essential

that the Commissioners should be in possession of the fullest and most accurate information. The public will only have themselves to blame if they allow the opportunity of presenting their case for or against the Indian demands to escape them. It is the wish of everyone that some finality should be reached in this matter. The Asiatics were brought here in large numbers, though hundreds came of their own free will, and if they elect to remain in South Africa they must conform to the laws of the Union. The constant reference to India cannot be continued; they are South African residents, and must submit to the will of the majority, or seek new pastures. Equality cannot be granted to them, as their standard of life is entirely different; but they must be treated with justice and fairness. The main point, however, is for the Durban burgesses to wake up, and place themselves in a position to tell the Commissioners what they desire, and there is no time to be lost before making a start.

MASS MEETING OF THE TRANSVAAL INDIANS

An open air mass meeting of the Transvaal Indians under the auspices of the Transvaal British Indian Association was held on the 11th inst. at Newton, on the open ground opposite Messrs. Ismail Mia and Coy. There were fully 3,000 present including a large number of delegates from the districts, and various minor bodies affiliated to the Association.

Mr. E. I. Aswat presided, and was supported on the platform by the following delegates viz:—Pretoria, N. M. Ayob, A. C. Tayob, N. M. Ebrahim, T. M. P. Mahomed, M. M. Patel, E. M. Bhoola, Osman Omar, and S. S. Manikum Pillay; Ventersdorp, Moosa Rajah, Vally Essop, Dawood Valley; Potchefstroom, Abdool Rahman, A. R. A. Gani, Carolina, M. I. Dadabhai; Sannjsof, A. Salpojee, Merico, M. Daya, Evaton, M. Ackoojee, Germiston, L. B. Singh and L. B. Maharaj; Dulstroom, I. E. Daya; Springs, M. E. Cajee, and I. A. Patel; Kliptown, I. M. Patel; Roodepoort, I. Essack, S. I. Aswat, S. A. Abramjee, M. E. Seedat, A. I. Essack, M. E. Bhabab, and I. M. Takolja; Boksburg, M. B. Naik, L. V. Dessai, and Moosa Daya; Schweizie Reneke, M. A. Patel, G. K. Desai; New Clare, R. M. Sodha, and M. Essackjee; Greylingstaal, A. Suliman; Balfour, L. J. Mahomed; Rustenburg, Ismail Jooma; Middleburg, Dawood Ismail; Bloemhof, E. E. Surti; Swart Ruggens, E. M. Patel; Alberton, E. E. Makada; Benoni, Ranchod Gopaljee, Luxman Das, and B. Chetty.

After the statement drawn up by the Committee to submit to the Asiatic Inquiry Commission was read and explained, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

This mass meeting of the Transvaal Indians held at Johannesburg on the 11th April, 1920 under the auspices of the Transvaal British Indian Association, hereby approves of the statement drawn up by the Committee of the Association, and authorises the Association to submit same to the Asiatic Inquiry Commission on their behalf subject to amendments by the Association's Advocate Dr. F. E. T. Krause, K. C., and further authorises its nominees to tender evidence in support of the statement.

Whilst taking the most charitable view of the undignified action of certain irresponsible persons or bodies at this critical juncture this mass meeting publicly affirms that the British Indian Association is the only representative body which has hitherto constitutionally voiced the feelings of the Indian Community of the Transvaal and enjoys their complete confidence.

Apart from the delegates the representatives of the various bodies spoke very strongly in support of the second resolution.

The proceedings were enthusiastic all through and terminated with a vote of confidence in the Association and its officials.

FARMERS' CONGRESS

QUESTION OF LAND AND TRADING

At the Congress of the Natal Agricultural Union held at Maritzburg, on the 15th inst., Mr. Bremner (Colenso Farmers' Association) moved: "That in the opinion of this Conference, landowners throughout Natal should be prohibited from selling or leasing to Asiatics."

This being seconded, Mr. J. W. Montgomery spoke at some length in support of the motion. He pointed out that the Asiatics' cost of living was much lower than that of European farmers and if the present system of permitting Asiatics to spread all over the country acquiring land were allowed to continue, they would eventually amass such sums of money as would give them a greater hold on the land. He moved an amendment: "That in view of the rapidly increasing dense Native population and the urgent necessity of encouraging suitable European immigration to their country, the time has arrived when Government should legislate prohibiting the sale, rent, lease, or gift of land and property to Asiatics within the Union of South Africa."

Mr. Power seconded the amendment, and Mr. H. Wilkins supported it.

Mr. L. D. Gilson said that if the Indians increase as they have increased in the past, then, with the exception of a few very large landowners, the European would be squeezed out of Natal. He said that in the Natives' Land Act the Government had laid down the principle of demarcation—allocating areas purely for Natives. He denounced this as a dangerous precedent, and said that if applied to Natives then it would have to be applied to Asiatics later on—as common justice.

Mr. Gilson then moved the following amendment: "That this Conference places on record its opinion that the present position of the Asiatic problem in Natal, is most unsatisfactory and dangerous, and calls on the Government to take the most drastic steps towards amelioration. It would point out that the following positions in this regard particularly require safeguarding: (1) No Asiatic shall be placed on the Voters' Roll under any condition whatever; (2) No Asiatic shall be allowed to purchase or lease fixed property in Natal except in such special areas as may be demarcated for them from time to time. All land fixed property at present owned by Asiatics outside of such special areas shall not be transferred unless to Europeans; (3) No new trading or storekeepers' licences shall be issued to Asiatics except in such special areas as may be demarcated for them.

Mr. Eric Felt seconded, and said that to buy out Asiatic landowners in South Africa, 200 million pounds would be the sum required.

With the permission of the Conference, Mr. Bremner thereupon withdrew his motion, in favour of Mr. Gilson's amendment.

Mr. H. E. Anderson said that these Asiatics had not done their duty to South Africa, citing their action during the war in staying in this country and making capital out of its requirements. He asked Mr. Gilson to make the provision more drastic, and to grant these Asiatics bare and scant justice.

Mr. Allison said that his self-preservation was at stake. The matter being so very serious, he proposed that a special committee be appointed to draft a fresh resolution upon the basis of the present debate. This was not seconded.

Mr. Marwick suggested that they appoint a committee to give evidence before the Asiatic Commission appointed by the Government.

Mr. John Moon added his quota. He pointed out the gravity of the situation, quoting a statement made by General Smuts in Durban: "What had India done in the war?" asked the Prime Minister, and added: "Whilst in England I met some of the keenest in-

telleets in the world—Indians. Some people foretell the day when our sons shall work for Indians." Mr. Moon spoke at considerable length upon the matter, giving his own experiences of Asiatics.

Mr. Van Rooyen said that he felt very deeply upon the matter. He said that the other Provinces of South Africa had already taken steps: "The Asiatics are those wonderful people who win a country without fighting for it. They pursue the policy of peaceful penetration." He said that Mr. Gilsob's amendment was not, in his opinion, drastic enough, and he felt that no more land or licences should be granted to Asiatics.

Mr. Steib said that unless we did something very soon the whole of the northern districts of Natal would be in the hands of the blacks. They were rapidly buying up land around Daanhuysen and the mines.

Mr. Robinson, Mr. Botha, and others also spoke.

Mr. W. W. Sykes then proposed that a special committee be appointed to draft a suitable resolution. Mr. G. A. Bridson seconded. The two other amendments were thereupon withdrawn by the movers, and upon being put the motion for a committee was carried unanimously. The committee forthwith proceeded to frame the resolution, and the matter stood down *pro tem*.

Mr. Hancock submitted the report of the sub-committee appointed to deal with the resolutions referring to the tenure of land and trading licences by Asiatics. The resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Marwick, was as follows: "This Conference would record its considered opinion that the Asiatic problem presents a serious menace to the Union, and recommends: (a) While recommending that the existing tenure of land by Asiatics should not be interfered with, no further acquisition of land by purchase, lease, or other means, by Asiatics shall be allowed; (b) No new licences shall under any circumstances be issued to Asiatics; (c) No transfer of any existing licences to any Asiatics shall be permitted, but at the expiry of any licence held by an Asiatic by death of the holder, reasonable compensation for land and trading stock shall be paid; (d) That the Government shall legislate on most drastic lines against the holding by any European or other person of a licence on behalf of any Asiatic; (e) At such future date as shall be fixed by legislation all Asiatic licences now held by companies shall expire and compensation shall be paid to such holders; (f) The urgency of this matter calls for immediate settlement by legislation."

Mr. Tranmer said the remedy was the fixing of a standard wage which would put the Asiatic trader on the same level with his European competitor.

Mr. Van Rooyen said the views of the previous speaker did not represent the views of the Krantzkop Association. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Tranmer had admitted that he voted in a minority.

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. Van Rooyen, it was resolved to forward a copy of the resolution to the secretaries of all political bodies, the Asiatic Commission to take evidence from the Conference, from a deputation consisting of Messrs. Stein, Gilson, Fleming, Van Rooyen, H. E. K. Anderson, Hancock, Sykes, and Allsopp.

Four were elected the delegates, and the remainder alternates, the report to be forwarded to all affiliated societies.—*Natal Mercury*,

The Poona District Congress Committee have passed resolutions condemning the anti-Indian agitation in South Africa and the British East Africa against the rights of Indians as equal citizens of the British Empire and urging the Government of India to take retaliatory measures in case those Governments refuse to withdraw anti-Indian Legislation.

Lieut. Col. Wylie, who presided at a meeting in support of Mr. Green's candidature of the Toll Gate Division in the Natal Provincial Council, made a reference to the Asiatic Commission, which is at present sitting in the Transvaal, and which will commence its sittings in the Law Courts, Durban, on Monday, April 26, says the *Natal Mercury*, Col. Wylie, who is a member of the Commission, intimated that he had been disappointed at the number of witnesses who had come forward, and hoped that as Natal was deeply interested in the Asiatic question, witnesses would lose no time in coming forward to give evidence on a question which was more than a burning one in the Natal Province, as well as in the whole of South Africa.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL INDIAN CONGRESS

An Emergency Meeting of the Executive of the South African National Indian Congress will be held on the 25th April 1920 at 110 Field Street, Durban, at 10 a. m. for the transaction of the following business:

1. General Statement to Commission.
2. Publication of the revised proceedings of the Congress held in Johannesburg.
3. To arrange a probable date for the Congress to be held in Durban.
4. To revise Constitution.
5. To nominate a President elect.
6. General.

P. K. NAIDOO
M. B. NAIK

Hon. Secretaries,

S. A. N. I. Congress.

FOR SALE LADYSMITH STORE

Tenders are invited for the purchase of the Shop in Albert Street, Ladysmith, occupied by Messrs. S. Amod Bros., as a General Store. Area of land about 22 perches including back yard. Frontage 55 feet, including Right of way. Good position. Shop of stone and brick under iron roof. Sale subject to Lease to present tenants, about four years to run. The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

Tenders in writing to be lodged with the undersigned by noon on Monday 10th May 1920. Fuller particulars on Application.

Ladysmith, 21st April 1920.

E. R. RAWLINSON,
Solicitor for Owners.

E. R. RAWLINSON,
Box 28,
Ladysmith.