

Indian Opinion

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

VOL. 1. No. 47

GEORGETOWN, B.G. SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1945

ONE PENNY

INDIAN OPINION: Items of news interest and Literary contributions must be addressed to P.O. BOX 43, Georgetown, B.G. Features and other items appearing in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board. The editorial column reflects the policy of the British Guiana East Indian Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Copies—onepenny.

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Annual Subscription—(Posted) \$1.50

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Annual Subscription—(Posted) \$2.00

EDITORIAL —

The Coconut Industry

Government has once again used the Defence Regulations to create a definite setback and hardship on the third most important Industry in the Colony namely, the coconut Industry. As is well known our people are the principal growers of coconuts.

Government in the past has done all it possibly could to discourage this industry and now when a semi-crisis is being faced by the industry, when growers cannot afford to clear the bushes among the trees, pick their nuts and properly take care of their cultivation its ironical to find the Government using the Defence Regulation to create chaos, confusion and bankruptcy in the industry and among the growers.

We cannot understand Government's intention in this matter and we are beginning to wonder where it will all end. We are satisfied that the present regulations that have been introduced in the coconut industry, will not satisfy the growing need of the colony and is not in the best interest of the inhabitants of British Guiana.

The excuse for the new regulation has been put to the alleged shortage of coconut oil, but to those of us who are properly informed this is certainly not so. There may be isolated cases where individual retailers of this product have created such an impres-

British Expel U. S. Cleric

It appears that even American citizens, who wish to do nothing more seditious than help Indians and live like them, and persona non grata to the British Government of India. This is revealed in an A.P. dispatch from New Delhi, September 24. The dispatch follows:

"The Rev. R. P. Keithahn of Fairmont, Minn., was charged by the Indian Government today with having taken an active part in Indian politics,

and was ordered to leave the country."

"Mr. Keithahn arrived in India in 1925 and for the last five years lived with his wife and two children in the tiny village of Kengery, near Bangalore. Recently he severed his connection with the American Madura Mission, dressed in Indian clothes, ate Indian food, lived in a small native hut and became associated with the student movement of southern India. He is expected to leave before Oct. 1."

sion in order to exploit their customers but this is no reason for introducing a law which will tend to smother local initiative in the industry, retard the progress of the edible oil industry and the manufacture of soap.

Any curtailment of Soap Manufacture will definitely reintroduce large quantities of foreign soap in the B.G. Market and this certainly a very undesirable aspect in our economic structure, yet this is precisely what the new regulation is aiming at.

So far we are able to gather the growers are not asking for Imperial Aid of any kind as is being granted to the Sugar Industry, the growers require a fair price from the consumers in order to maintain existing cultivation. The question of extending cultivation does not arise. For over 20 years coconut cultivation has not been extended. Cultivation is decreasing. Is this the policy of the Government of British Guiana towards the industries that have been built by Indians? It appears so to us.

It is obvious to even the most casual observer that the only way to save the industry, meet the full demand of the edible oil market and the soap industry is to increase the present production of coconuts. We are of the opinion that this can be achieved by an increase in the price of edible oil and that this should be done by Government without delay. We have written here knowing fully well that its a waste of time to let the present Government know the true condition as they exist. We have however performed our duty and leave the Government and its advisers to face the responsibility.

In Brief

London. Lord Listowel, whip of the Labour Party in the House of Lords since 1941, has been appointed to succeed Lord Munster as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India.

In a letter to the Special Correspondent of the *Hindustan Times*, on the occasion of the Jawaharlal Nehru's fifty-fifth birthday, Lord Listowel said "I have read his book and have the greatest respect for his sincerity and strength of purpose. To repeat my conviction, he has a leading part to play in the future of India. I look forward again to the time when he will again figure in the forefront of Indian political life and hold a position of leadership that no one else is so well qualified to hold."

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T.U.C. Supports Wages Council Bill

Continued from last issue

CHANGING THE STRUCTURE

But the procedure for converting a J.I.C. into a statutory Wages Council is different. The Minister is empowered to proceed only if an application is made to him by a joint Industrial Council or similar body, or when a joint application is made to the same effect by organisations of employers and Trade Unions which habitually take part in the settlement of the remuneration and conditions of employment of the workers concerned. Any such application the Minister will refer to a commission of inquiry and upon its report and recommendations the Minister can act. How many of the existing J.I.C.s, or well organised industries, will take the initiative in this way remains to be seen. There is some conflict of opinion upon the desirability of changing the structure of the J.I.C.s in the way that would become necessary if they were converted into Wages Councils.

This conflict arises from the fact that a Joint Industrial Council is representative of the two sides of industry, but usually does not include third parties. Under the proposed legislation a Wages Council, whether replacing a Trade Board or a J.I.C. is differently constituted. Representatives of the public—three independent persons appointed by the Minister—will have a say in wage discussions together with representatives of the employers and workers concerned. The Bill provides for a tripartite constitution of this kind.

The objection so far to the intervention of "independent persons" in the fixing of wages comes from the employers' side. Whether the Unions, too, will object to this principle in the more highly organised industries where the practice of collective bargaining is of long standing, and relations between organisations of employers and the Unions have been tested and tried by long experience, is a question that can be answered later when the Unions have made known their views on the new Bill. Probably the overriding interest of the Unions will be to secure stabilisation of wages in the way the Bill proposes.

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New Arrivals From India

At the invitation of the Cultural Relations Section of the United States Department of State an Indian Scientists Delegation has just arrived in Washington from London. The delegation includes the following Indian scientists:

Dr. Nazir Ahmed, head of the Bombay Cotton Technical Institute; Sir Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, Director of the Scientific Industrial Board at New Delhi, Sir Jnan Chandra Ghosh, Director of the Bangalore Institute of Science; Professor S. K. Mitra, Professor of Physics, University of Calcutta; Professor Meghnad Saha, Professor at the University of Calcutta; Col. S. L. Bhatia, Department Director General of Indian Medical Service.

Pandit H. N. Kunzru, member of the All India Liberal Federation, and Mr. B. Shiva Rao, correspondent of the Madras "Hindu," will be coming shortly to attend the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations at Hot Springs.

Miss Rita Pandit, youngest daughter of Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, is expected to arrive early in January. Miss Rita Pandit is fifteen, and expects to go to school in this country.

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Freedom For India And Other Colonial Nations

Following is the text of a resolution passed by the United Automobile Workers' Union-CIO, the largest Union in the world, in their convention held at Grand Rapids:

WHEREAS: Our nation is engaged in a great war of liberation which is intended to bring freedom and democracy to the oppressed peoples of the world, and

WHEREAS: We and our Allies need the sympathetic support of the many millions of people who live in India, China, Malaya, Burma, Indo-China and East Indies, in order to prosecute successfully the war against Japan, which support will only be forthcoming if these people are convinced that the winning of the war will result in their own freedom, and

WHEREAS: Nehru, Azad and many thousands of leaders and active members of the Indian National Congress are now languishing in jails in India because of their insistence upon the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, and in the declarations at Teheran; and the Government of Great Britain, through its Prime Minister and Viceroy of India has repeatedly insisted that it would not negotiate with the representatives of the Indian people who demand independence, and

WHEREAS: People in other areas in Far East, particularly Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and the East Indies are as insistent as the Indians that they be granted full and complete independence now, a demand which has every law of justice and morality on its side, and

WHEREAS: As free nations these countries will join the United Nations in the war against Japan, and

WHEREAS: The UAW-CIO seeks the greatest possible extension of democracy and freedom the world over as one of the basic conditions of world peace after the war, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention of the UAW-CIO call upon the United States and other leaders of the United Nations to assure the people of India, Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and the East Indies that the cause for which our men fight and die is freedom for them as well as all mankind and that the weapons we forge shall not be used to hold in subjugation the people of any land, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED: That copies of this resolution be sent to:

- Prime Minister Winston Churchill; to the Indian Viceroy, Lord Wavell; to Mohandas K. Gandhi; to the Indian Congress; to the British Trade Union Congress;
- That copies also be sent to President Roosevelt and Premier Stalin.

Indian Leader Arrives In New York

Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's first woman Minister, and sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, arrived in New York on December 8. She is here on a private visit to see her daughters, from whom she has been separated since she was arrested in August 1942 together with other Congress leaders. Mrs. Pandit was released from prison after being held without trial for nearly a year, and then only for reasons of ill-health. She has been very actively engaged in organizing famine relief in Bengal, and during her stay here hopes to get some rest before she returns to India.

"I feel sure that thousands of American lives would be saved if the political situation in India could be cleared up," said Mrs. Pandit at a press conference held in New York on December 10. "The war against Japan promises to be long and arduous," she continued. "This is indicated by the slow and laborious campaign against the Japanese in Burma, as well as by the serious military situation in China. The British Government in India boasts of an army of nearly two million men. Why then has the campaign against the Japanese in Burma been so long in starting, and once started why is it so slow?"

Elaborating her remarks, Mrs. Pandit said that the Indian people felt that they had no part in the war so long as a definite promise of independence after the war, and present fulfillment of that promise by a responsible national Government in India was denied by the British Government. This lack of enthusiasm among Indian soldiers, which had been remarked by General

Stilwell and other American and even British officers.

"It is useless to deny that the Indian army is mercenary," Mrs. Pandit asserted. "Almost without exception men 'volunteer' because they have no other means of livelihood. I know the case of a young student who applied for an Emergency Commission as an officer. At an interview granted him by the British authorities, he was asked what he thought he would be fighting for. 'I will be fighting for 400 rupees a month,' he replied. This particular young man was rejected because he was not sufficiently diplomatic. But the sentiment he expressed is shared by thousands of young Indian army officers."

Mrs. Pandit declared that the Congress Party had opposed Fascism from the outset—in Europe as in Asia, and had been eager to fight it. "But the British Government," she said, "has never once indicated that it wished in any way to help form a responsible national government in India and use our help. Even since the beginning of the war the Indian people and the Indian National Congress in particular offered to cooperate in the war against the Axis. We have felt that India could not give of her utmost unless she were led and governed by her own people. It was because of this that we felt the Cripps offer was inadequate. It merely undertook to expand the Executive Council and include more Indians while maintaining the Viceroy's powers of veto. It denied any responsibility to the country's elected representatives.

To be continued

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British Guiana Moves Forward Bankruptcy

BY THE WATCH DOG

The recent increase in the salaries of the Education Department, the increase of pay of those in the Civil List and those in the administrative, professional and technical officers class cannot be viewed but with the greatest degree of alarm by those interested in the future welfare of the colony. When there is no such corresponding increase in the earnings of the ordinary man employed by Government, the sugar estates, and in the production of agricultural produce of the colony, the future outlook is dark.

It must be made clear that the increase to Civil Servants in the lower salary scales are very deserving in most cases and nothing can be argued against them, but it is nothing short of a shame and on those responsible, to increase the higher grade salaries. The natural tendency today is for a gradual dwelling up of the earnings of the mass of the people with those who are supposed to be in the middle or higher class.

British Guiana will be fast approaching bankruptcy at the rate of the present increase of expenditure on salaries. It is wondered whether those responsible (Government and its Advisers) are aware of the fact that revenue of the colony is bound to drop heavily as from 1945 and that a big deficit will occur.

This is a warning voice to the people of British Guiana to awake from their apathy and a more active interest in their houselands, or else it will become bankrupt and all the small crumbs of constitutional privileges granted, would be taken away under the excuse that the people of British Guiana are irresponsible, cannot think for themselves and are insolent. The future appears

black and only the voice of the majority of inhabitants can change it.

Unless the entire economic set-up of the colony is altered so that there can be an increase in the revenue, Bankruptcy is a fact in the face. This no doubt is due to mismanagement of the affairs of the colony. I only wish that those responsible to lead us into this state of insolvency would be in a position to face the responsibility when the time comes.

Letter To The Editor

The Editor:

Dear Sir,

Responding to your note, welcoming letters of general interest in your columns, I wish to deal with the police as classified from new recruits to the ranks of Sergeant Majors.

Quite recently as you are aware crimes are on the increase and the police seems to be at bay to solve them in some cases, or to prevent them. In general it cannot be said that the country is satisfactorily policed.

Well, there are very many reasons responsible for this state of affairs and most certainly the blame does not fall on the shoulders of the ordinary police-man, as we the public know it.

I wish to advance a few reasons for my arguments. Firstly, among these are the long hours of work to which the policeman has to attend, whereas the average man works 8 hours, the police works on an average 12 to 14 hours under strict discipline.

Secondly, most of these policemen live in utter poverty and misery due to their poor salaries. The salary scale of policemen is indeed so meagre that the bringing up of a family becomes a burden on them and tends to crush their originality and initiative. Those of us who have been keeping an eye on the activities of the police have viewed with alarm the frequent indictment of policemen for petty larceny etc. A recent example was afforded us at the recent Georgetown fire. The root cause, no doubt lies in the inadequacy of their salaries which does not meet their most immediate necessities. There is no doubt that if proper and efficient policing of the country is required the men entrusted to do the job must be properly paid, their hours of work not overtaxed and their general welfare taken care of in a better manner.

The third aspect lies in the proper education of our policemen once they have been placed in the force.

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