

Indian Opinion

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NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Committee's Report and Statement

THE following is the full text of the report submitted by the Secretaries of the Natal Indian Congress at its general meeting held in Rawat's Bio Hall, Durban, last Sunday the 6th instant:—

We beg to submit herewith our report of the working of your Congress since the last Annual General Meeting which was held on the 2nd of March 1924. The period under review is a very interesting one as many important matters were dealt with by your Congress. Among others we may mention the following which are of special interest to you and the general Indian public:—

MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU'S VISIT

Our illustrious visitor, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was invited by the Transvaal British Indian Association to come to South Africa while she was in British East Africa attending the East African Indian Congress in Conference. This invitation was accepted by her. The arrangements for her tour in the districts of Natal were in the hands of your Congress. Mrs. Naidu first entered the Province of Natal on the 9th day of March 1924 and from that day onwards, your Committee were incessantly organising meetings throughout Natal all of which were well attended. There were 7 meetings held in the Durban Town Hall at which Mrs. Naidu delivered lectures on such subjects as "Ideals of Indian Life," "The Brotherhood of Islam" etc. She also spoke on the Class Areas Bill, the ultimate fate of which, you all know. During her stay in Natal, your Congress organised an Indian Agricultural and Industrial Show which was opened by Mrs. Naidu. This matter will be fully dealt with at a later stage. A farewell banquet in her honour was held in the Drill Hall on the 24th day of May 1924 where eloquent speeches were made by prominent Indians expressing heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all that this good lady had done in the interest of the Indian community. She sailed by the *s.s. Karagola* on the following day amid scenes of enthusiasm which will ever remain fresh in the memory of those who witnessed it.

We also beg to record that Mr. Jivanjee of Mombassa and Nairobi accompanied Mrs. Naidu to South Africa. This gentleman returned to East Africa before Mrs. Naidu and your Committee accorded him a fitting reception in the M. K. Gandhi Hall before he left.

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS

An emergency Conference of the South African Indian Congress (fourth session) was held on the 21st of April 1924 and the three following days. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was elected President. Your Congress acted as Reception Committee, and we are pleased to say that the Conference was a huge success. Delegates from all parts of South Africa attended the Conference and were well cared for by your Committee. Many matters vitally affecting

the Indians in Natal came under the review of the Conference such as railway disabilities, educational disabilities, immigration disabilities, scale of salaries fixed for Indian Interpreters by the Government, witness fees payable to Indians and such other matters affecting the Indian community. The members of your Congress who were delegates to the Conference took a very active interest in all the deliberations and added largely to its undoubted success. A very pronounced brotherly feeling was evinced by all the delegates who were present from various parts of South Africa. The Conference decided that the headquarters for the South African Indian Congress for the then ensuing year should be in Cape Town.

INDIAN AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL SHOW

As already referred to, the South African Indian Congress resolved that an Indian Agricultural and Industrial Show be held in Durban and be opened by its President, Mrs. Naidu, and that the Natal Indian Congress act as the local committee for the purpose of making all the necessary arrangements for the holding of the said Show. In terms of the Resolution, your Congress organised the first Indian Show held in South Africa. The Mitchell Crescent School grounds were kindly lent for the purpose. The Show was something novel and attractive to the Indian community and as it was held on Empire Day and also the following day (24th and 25th May 1924), a record crowd was registered. The admission was free and Indians from all parts of the country assembled. By far the most successful section of the Show was that devoted to home industries. The ladies entered some beautiful specimens of handiwork for competition, and local manufacturers supported this section very loyally. There were stalls for essentially Indian sweets, e.g., halwa, cakes of every description, a large array of pickles, a marvellous bride's cake of three tiers, oil paintings and water colours, a sample of bricks made at Sydenham, locally made tooth powder, wonderfully pretty handwork shawls and bed-spreads and a variety of other articles all of which were of excellent workmanship. Another room was devoted to school industries where it was evident that Indian children are taught to use their fingers deftly as an aid to mental learning particularly in regard to Geography there being many examples of maps and relief. In fact, modelling in many forms was to be seen from schools as far afield as Chaka's Kraal, Malvern, Estcourt and Verulam. Among the produce and vegetables, ripe mangoes, pawpaws and betel-leaves of a size difficult to obtain, Natal grown tobacco and flowers. Some of the vegetables were grown in the various school gardens and were a credit to the children. The display of dogs, poultry and live stock was also promising. On the whole, the Show was a credit to the Indian community. Some of the judges were Europeans

accustomed to such work expressed the opinion that the exhibits equalled those usually exhibited at the local European Shows. The prizes purchased and subscribed for this Show were not enough for all the winners and it has become a difficult matter to allocate. But, however, a sub-Committee is appointed to do the best under the circumstances, and no doubt, the prizes now on hand will be distributed very soon.

REVISION OF RULES

A Special General Meeting was held on the 18th day of May 1924 for the revision of the Rules of the Congress which included the reduction of the subscription to two shillings and six pence per annum and the provision for women auxiliaries to your Congress.

CLASS AREAS BILL

In conjunction with the South African Indian Congress, your Committee took a very active part in the agitation against this Bill. Delegates from your Congress were included in the Deputation of the South African Indian Congress which met the Minister of the Interior at Capetown. Your Congress subsequently assisted Mrs. Naidu in carrying on a vigorous campaign in Natal and further contributed a sum of £100 sterling to the Cape British Indian Council as its share of the expenses incurred by that body for propaganda work carried on by Mrs. Naidu against this Bill in the Cape Province. The Bill, as you know, fell through on the resignation of the Smuts Government.

MR. CHRISTOPHER'S DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND

The Committee regrets indeed to record the community's loss, though for a time, of the invaluable and able services of Mr. Albert Christopher, D.C.M., who so nobly worked in the interest of our community for a good many years and as your honorary secretary since the resuscitation of the Congress. Your Committee however feels consoled in the thought that Mr. Christopher's departure for England was for the purpose of bettering himself in life and hopes that he will return within the next year or so as a full fledged barrister and resume his public duties for the betterment of our community.

NATAL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The Durban Town Council offered a sum of £200 to your Congress to enable the Indian community to celebrate the Centenary and your Committee informed the Durban Corporation in no unmistakable terms that in all matters of a public nature as were the proposed celebrations, the Indian community could only participate, if at all, on equal terms with all other sections of the community and where such recognition is in any manner denied, your Committee would absolutely refrain from identifying itself with all such functions. The Durban Corporation not agreeing to treat the Indian community with reasonable fairness, your Committee felt it proper to adopt the only honourable course by strictly adhering to its decision of non-participation.

BOROUGHS ORDINANCE

Immediately the Municipal Consolidation Ordinance was published in the *Provincial Gazette*, your Committee forwarded its protest against certain provisions of the Bill which aimed at the deprivation of the Municipal Franchise, restriction of licences etc. and evidence was tendered by members of your Committee before the Select Committee of the Provincial Council. Notwithstanding our protest, the Bill was rushed through post-haste in all its stages at one sitting of the Provincial Council. Your Committee immediately wired its protest against this arbitrary action of the Provincial Council to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior and a request that a depu-

tation of your Congress be received before assenting to this measure. Your Committee in answer to the request of the Minister of the Interior submitted a statement on the 16th of August 1924 pointing out the sections of the Ordinance that would adversely affect the Indian community. Upon receipt of this statement, the Minister intimated that the whole Cabinet was prepared to meet a Deputation of your Congress to discuss the Indian question. An influential Deputation consisting of prominent members of your Congress waited upon the Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Defence and Labour, Minister of Finance, Minister of Mines, Minister of Railways and the Minister of Lands, in the Union Buildings, Pretoria, on the 9th of December 1924. A very able and exhaustive statement was presented to the Government at this interview. Mr. Joseph Royeppen, B.A., acted as the spokesman and was assisted by Messrs. V. Lawrence, Beethasee Maharaj and Roknoodeen. The Ministers gave the Deputation a sympathetic hearing but it would appear that they had evidently made up their minds beforehand to advise the Governor-General to assent to the Bill because only two days after the interview, a notification was received from the Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior that the Cabinet had decided to recommend to the Governor-General-in-Council to assent to the Ordinance. Your Committee immediately on hearing this despatched a number of cables to India urging upon the Government and the leaders to strenuously protest and take action. Further, a copy of the statement submitted to the Cabinet Ministers was posted to each and every prominent leader in India. Your Committee took legal opinion as to the validity of this law with a view to testing the same in the South African Courts and if necessary to carry the matter to the Privy Council. Mr. Advocate Janion was retained for this purpose and his opinion was in our favour. The Ordinance came into force on the 1st day of August this year and your Committee approached the Electoral Officer for the Borough of Durban with a view to bringing about a Test Case but as new names were admitted to the Burgess Roll, a case could not be brought this year. Mr. Janion was instructed to interview Mr. Mackeurtan, the Counsel for the Durban Corporation and arranged for a Test Case to be brought by consent but Mr. Mackeurtan having had to leave for England on a prolonged holiday, the matter of the Test Case had to be left over for next year when most probably the three hundred new names added to the Roll this year will automatically drop off and will then give us grounds for a Test Case.

BOROUGHS EXTENDED POWERS ORDINANCE

This Ordinance was simply an extension of the Durban Land Alienation Ordinance to the other boroughs of the Province of Natal. Notwithstanding protests from your Congress by way of petition to the Provincial Council and to the Minister of the Interior, the Ordinance has received the assent of the Governor-General.

TOWNSHIPS FRANCHISE ORDINANCE

This Ordinance which seeks to disfranchise Indians in Townships was also passed by the Provincial Council and received the assent of the Governor-General notwithstanding protests from your Congress. But as the principle involved is exactly as that contained in the Boroughs Ordinance, this Ordinance would be subject to the same decision of the Courts as will apply to the Boroughs Ordinance.

PUBLIC HEALTH ORDINANCE

Your committee although welcoming the objects of this Ordinance protested against certain provisions thereof which gave the Indians no representa-

tion on the Health Committees nor were they entitled to vote for the election of members on the Health Boards. Members of your committee appeared before a Select Committee and gave evidence but as is customary no notice whatever was taken of our protest. The Bill has now become law and Indians have been called upon by the various Health Boards constituted under the Ordinance to pay assessment rates which are based not on the valuation of the properties but in some cases on the number of rooms and in other cases on the number of buildings erected on the properties. Your committee obtained the opinion of Mr. Advocate Van Hoytema (now deceased) of Johannesburg which opinion stated the Ordinance to be *intra vires*. Before further action could be taken on the regulations framed by these Health Boards, the Indians in the districts affected have taken over the matter in their own hands and are now testing the legality of same.

OBITUARY

THE LATE MR. PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

It is indeed painful to record the death of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, our "Kakaji" who was a pillar of strength to our Congress. From the time of the resuscitation of your congress he had taken a very great interest in its working and was very generous with his purse when the need came for it. The irreparable loss to our congress by his death will be greatly felt by all for a long time to come.

THE LATE MR. P. K. NAIDOO

Another stalwart patriot and passive resister has gone never to return. Mr. "P. K." as we all knew him, was the one who brought about the resuscitation of your Congress some five years ago and from that time up to his death he was a keen supporter of your congress. It was indeed through his initiative as secretary of the Transvaal British Indian Association that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was invited to South Africa. He took a very active part in the deliberations of the Conference held last year. The South African Indian community in general, and the Transvaal Indians in particular, have lost a true friend and an energetic and fearless worker in their cause.

CONDOLENCES

Messages of condolence to the relatives of the late Deshbandhu Das and the late Sir Surendranath Bannerjee were sent through Mahatma Gandhi. Both these leaders were a source of great strength to our Motherland.

MR. THOMAS' VISIT

Your committee took the opportunity of the visit to South Africa of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, P.C., Secretary of State for the Colonies under the Ramsay Macdonald Government of seeking an interview with him while he was in Durban, in the hope of laying the grievances of the Indian community before him. Unfortunately, owing to the very little time that he had at his disposal, he was not able to meet us. Your committee therefore submitted a written statement in which, *inter alia*, the Boroughs Ordinance was fully dealt with. No reply was received but Mr. Thomas expressed the opinion before he left that a Round Table Conference of those concerned would be the only means of solving the Indian problem in South Africa.

SEPARATE COUNTER : TOWN TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT, DURBAN

Your committee lodged its objection against the discrimination shown by the Durban Corporation in the setting aside of a separate counter at the Town Treasurer's Department for Indians and Natives. Correspondence with the Municipality has failed to effect the elimination of this racial segregation and

your committee has decided to obtain legal opinion on the matter.

IMMIGRATION

We were approached by Mr. Amod Abdurahim of Greytown to obtain temporary permission for his sister Karimabibi to land which was already refused by the Immigration officer. Representations were made to the Minister through the Secretary of the South African Indian Congress but owing to the misunderstanding on the part of the Secretary to the Interior, the instructions to the Immigration Officer were not correctly given and the lady had to return. Other minor matters were dealt with from time to time with the Immigration Officer, at the Point, who extended to us his usual courtesy on all matters brought to his notice.

VISIT OF H.R.H. PRINCE OF WALES

As in the case of the centenary celebrations, the Municipality of the Borough of Durban offered your congress, a sum of £200 for the Indian community's celebration of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Durban. Your committee refused to acquiesce in the principle of the Durban Corporation in requesting the Indian community to organise a separate celebration quite apart from the general celebrations of the burgesses. A mass meeting was held and a Deputation waited upon the Mayor of Durban with the result that he agreed to consider the proposal of your congress to include the Indian community in the general celebrations with the exception of the participation in the Civic Banquet and the Ball. Your committee on a matter of principle refused to have a separate celebration as offered by the Corporation and insisted that Indians should be invited to the Banquet as it was not a social function. The Town Council not agreeing to your request your committee decided to refrain from the official celebrations of the Durban Corporation but arranged for the Prince of Wales to be received and welcomed at 110, Field Street, Durban, the head-quarters of the congress. The celebrations of your congress on this occasion were very grand as apart from the fitting reception given at congress head-quarters, large streamers were hung up in Field and West Streets with the words "welcome to our Prince from the Natal Indian Congress." A silk turban and a jeri shawl were presented in the name of the congress to His Royal Highness who expressed pleasure at the loyalty shewn. Your congress also obtained the loyal co-operation of its members in Maritzburg, Estcourt, Ladysmith and Newcastle who turned out and paid their respects to the royal visitor. Our decorations surpassed expectations. No expense was spared to prove that although we were not treated with equality yet our loyalty and enthusiasm could not be questioned.

ASIATIC BILL

As notified by the Minister of the Interior in reply to questions in the House of Assembly the Areas Reservation and Immigration Restriction (further) provisions Bill was introduced by him in the last session of the Union Parliament. The Bill not having been gazetted in the usual way, your committee immediately got in touch with Cape Town but to its surprise was informed that it would be about a month or so before copies of the Bill could be obtained. There was a great demand locally for copies of the Bill and your committee were supplied by the International Printing Press with some two hundred copies out of the two thousand that they printed for their own use. These were sent to India and England to the prominent leaders with a note that full comment on the Bill would follow. In the following mail your committee despatched to each of those to whom a copy of the Bill was sent, a fair comment thereon together with such material information and Press cuttings that may be useful to the readers.

Your committee has further printed three thousand copies of the said comment and it is proposed to broadcast same throughout the world.

A Mass Meeting of protest of Natal Indians against the Bill was organised by your committee and was held in the Durban Town Hall on the 31st of August 1925. The attendance was a record one the Hall itself containing something like 4000 people and an overflow meeting of some two thousand was simultaneously held at the Church Street entrance of the Town Hall. Great enthusiasm prevailed throughout the proceedings of the meeting. Cables describing fully the nature of the Bill and how it adversely affects the Indian Community of South Africa were despatched to the prominent leaders in India and to the Government of India and it is expected that a very strong support will be forthcoming from our Motherland. Mr. Motilal Nehru, the President of the Swaraj Party has already replied stating that necessary action would be taken to protect the rights of Indians here and with a request to carry on the agitation relying on India's full support. It rests with the incoming committee to organise protest meetings throughout the Province and thereby show the Government and the electors of South Africa that the Indians are prepared to fight this Bill to the fullest extent.

MASS MEETINGS

Mass meetings of the Indian community were held on the following matters:—

Protest against the Boroughs Ordinance, To express sympathy at the deaths of "Kakaji" (Mr. Parsee Rustomjee) and C. R. Das, Visit of the Prince of Wales and Protest against the Asiatic Bill.

MISCELLANEOUS

RETRENCHMENT OF CORPORATION EMPLOYEES

During last year, the heads of various departments recommended to the Town Council the retrenchment of the majority of Indian employees in their departments. Your committee took up the matter by correspondence and as a result no further action was taken by the Corporation.

SMALL POX CONTACT

As a result of complaints made by your committee to the Minister of Health in regard to the quarantine of Indian passengers who arrived at the Port of Natal from time to time, the Chief Magistrate of Durban desired a Deputation of your congress to wait upon him and discuss matters. Accordingly a Deputation met the Chief Magistrate who was assisted by Dr. Fernandez, the Port Health Officer. It was suggested to the Deputation that guarantee should be given by your congress in respect of persons who wished to land immediately, for their attendance each day at the office of the Medical Health Department but this assurance your congress was not in a position to give owing to impracticable and unreasonable conditions imposed and the matter remained as it were.

DRAMA IN AID OF CONGRESS

The Arya Woonathee Natak Mandal staged a play in aid of the funds of your congress. A record crowd attended and a sum of £71 19s. 10d. after deducting expenses was realised. Your committee appreciated the generous spirit of the members of this Mandal for the timely assistance.

PRESENTATION

Presentations of attache cases were made to Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali Brothers at the farewell meeting at the Durban Town Hall to Mrs. Naidu who was kindly asked to hand the presents to the presents concerned.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Your congress sent by cable birthday greetings to Mahatma Gandhi.

ANTI-ASIATIC MEETING

A meeting of European burgesses organised by the anti-Asiatics was held in the Durban Town Hall under the chairmanship of the Mayor, the object of the meeting being to request the Government to bring forth an Asiatic Bill. Mr. Kemp, Gen. Wylie and Dr. Campbell were the prominent speakers. A few of the members of your congress attended this meeting and spoke placing the Indian side of the question before the audience. There was a very poor gathering and the result was that it had very little effect.

BURGESS ROLL

It is a pleasure to record that your committee enrolled three hundred and six Indian voters on the Burgess Roll for the year 1925-26 which is very encouraging.

INDIAN EDUCATION

The Provincial Council nominated a commission to inquire as to whether Indian children should be taught the English language through the medium of the Indian vernaculars. Your congress desired to tender evidence and show to the commission that it would be detrimental to the Indian community to introduce such a system but owing to want of time, the commission adjourned its deliberations to hear the views of your congress during the next session of the Provincial Council.

CONGRESS PROPERTIES

Your committee wishes to bring to the notice of the meeting the desirability of taking immediate steps to vest in the name of the Trustees to be appointed in terms of the Rules, the immovable property and other assets of the congress now in the hands of the official receiver and that the incoming committee will, as its first work, move in this direction.

FINANCE

At the last Annual General Meeting, your committee took over a debt balance of £115. 12s. 4d. and owing to the lack of support by the Indian community, funds have not been forthcoming to efficiently carry out the work of the congress and to wipe off its debt. You will see from the Financial Statement by the Treasurers that a debit balance of £775. 14s. 2d. stands against the congress. This amount was advanced by your Secretaries and had it not been for their assistance in coming forward and financing the congress, it would have been well nigh impossible to carry out the enormous amount of work above enumerated.

THANKS

The thanks of the committee are due to the Indian Press and to those who loyally assisted it to carry out the objects of the congress. With greater help and greater service much can be done to strengthen the congress and to better its position among our community. Thanks are also due to the Maritzburg Branch of the congress for the energetic work within its area and keeping an eye on the doing of the Provincial Council in regard to Indian matters. Our thanks are due to the members of the Arya Yuvak Sabha who acted as volunteers at Mass Meetings, the Superintendent of Education for kindly lending the Mitchell Crescent School grounds for the show, the judges, the members of the Indian community more especially the ladies and those who contributed the prizes in connection with the show and to Mr. A. Dookan who so kindly placed his motor car at the disposal of Mrs. Naidu during her stay in Durban. To friends and societies wherever they may have been helpful to the congress, its thanks are due.

The committee desires to place on record the invaluable services rendered by the following:

energetically rendered by your Honorary Secretaries, Messrs. Sorabjee Rustomjee and V. S. C. Pather. The period under review was a very trying one and it is pleasing to record that both the Secretaries rendered their secretarial duties efficiently. Your committee always found them willing and obliging and it feels that it will be failing in its duty if it did not express its sincerest thanks for their services.

Notes and News

IT should hardly be necessary for us to impress upon our countrymen the evergrowing seriousness of our position in South Africa. With the introduction of the Asiatic Bill a crisis has been reached. We shall have to consider seriously whether we are prepared to suffer this compulsory ruination that is facing us in the near future as a result of this Bill or whether we should not be prepared to suffer voluntary ruination by fighting for a right and just cause. By doing the latter there are possibilities of avoiding our compulsory ruination as contemplated by the Government and thus also of avoiding our moral degradation. But if on the other hand we are not prepared to suffer voluntary ruination our compulsory ruination both moral and material is inevitable. Let us therefore make up our mind and be up and doing for the coming struggle.

We note the following from Mahatma Gandhi's note on "The Pariahs of the Empire" appearing in *Young India* arrived by last mail:—

"Our countrymen in South Africa must do the very best they can without flinching. If they have the old spirit of resistance and cohesion in them, and if they think that the moment has arrived, they must take up the cross of suffering. They must be sole judges of their fitness and of the psychological moment for taking their plunge. They must know that public opinion of India is with them. But they will also realize that it is an opinion which is powerless to help them. They must therefore rely upon their own strength and capacity for enduring hardships and in the innate justice of their cause."

The following new officials were elected for the ensuing year at last Sunday's Annual General Meeting of the Natal Indian Congress held in Rawat's Bio Hall:—PRESIDENT—MR. A. M. Bayat, VICE-PRESIDENTS—Messrs. A. H. Kazi, Advocate J. W. Godfrey, V. Lawrence, Bhawani Dayal, S. Emammally, M. H. Desai, S. Dorasamy, I. M. Haffeejee, A. Dookhan, Charlie Nulliah; JOINT HON. SECRETARIES—V. S. C. Pather and Sorabjee Rustomjee; JOINT HON. TREASURERS.—Messrs. P. R. Pather and O. H. A. Jhaveri; COMMITTEE—A. I. Kaje, D. S. Chetty, R. K. Naidoo, J. M. Francis, M. B. Maharaj, R. K. Kapitan, B. M. Patel, M. M. Lokhat, G. M. C. Patel, M. B. Naik, E. M. Ally (of Messrs. E. A. Tayob & Co.), T. M. Naiker, S. L. Singh, B. A. Maghraj, I. A. Essack, S. A. Pillay, A. Sookhdoo, A. M. Omar, M. M. Gandhi, M. D. Barmania, L. Panday, V. D. Mehta, S. L. Richards, J. Royppen, M. Sooboo Naidoo, G. B. Chetty, M. B. Lazarus, Advocate B. Gabriel.

We are glad to note that the new election is satisfactory. The members have been wise in re-electing Mr. Amod Bayat as President. During the three years of his office Mr. Bayat has proved without doubt his fitness for the honourable position. As for the Joint hon. Secretaries to change them would have practically meant the scuttling of the death-knell of the Congress. They are the life of the Congress and their services are indispensable. The treasurers have gained the confidence of the Con-

gress was also amply proved by their re-election. There are some changes in the list of vice-presidents and we think it is a very welcome change and the Committee practically remains the same. The workers are representative of every section of the community and it is satisfactory to note that the number of influential merchants has also increased. If the past year was strenuous it is hardly necessary to say that the ensuing year will be far more strenuous, perhaps more than it has ever been. While congratulating the new officials we hope and pray that Heaven may rightly guide them in the performance of their duty to the community.

BISHOP FISHER

WE welcome the arrival in South Africa of Bishop and Mrs. Fisher of Calcutta. Their object in visiting this country is to gain first-hand knowledge of the Indian question. They have just completed a tour of Australia where they have investigated the much-talked of "White-Australia policy." Bishop Fisher belongs to the Methodist Episcopal Church of America and has spent several years as a Missionary and in scholastic work in the United Province and latterly in Calcutta. Bishop Fisher is deputed by the Council of the Y. M. C. A. to personally investigate the Indian question here with the object of ascertaining whether it is possible for the Y. M. C. A. and the Christian Churches in India to co-operate with similar bodies in South Africa for the purpose of bringing about some honourable settlement by unitedly bringing pressure to bear upon the Indian, Union and British Governments. Both the Bishop and Mrs. Fisher are keenly interested and have lost no time in meeting with the leaders of the Indian community in Durban as well as prominent Europeans.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee invited a number of representative Indians to meet Bishop and Mrs. Fisher when a couple of hours were spent in a friendly discussion. The Bishop expressed a desire to hear the views of those present. Mr. J. W. Godfrey occupied the position of the Chairman and those who took part in the discussion included Messrs. Beethasee Mahara, Bhawani Dayal, A. I. Kaje, Rooknoodeen, S. M. Moodley, B. M. Patel and the Rev. R. Chetty. Bishop Fisher expressed pleasure at meeting them and said that he would like the opportunity of seeing every phase of Indian life so far as he could during his short stay in Durban. He intends travelling to Capetown and Johannesburg where he would see the European and Indian leaders of public opinion and study on the spot the various problems affecting the Indian community. The Chairman presented a bouquet to Mrs. Fisher who in acknowledging the gift, said what an enjoyable time she had had, and that she had been taking careful notes of all that had been said. We are sure that Bishop and Mrs. Fisher will meet with a hearty welcome at the various towns they visit. We welcome the fullest investigation. The question of the Christian Churches' attitude on the Indian question is one that is not often mentioned. We feel that there is something wrong with the churches when we find an absolute silence on such an important matter as the flinging a ray of the common right to live as free men of voiceless fellow citizens. May the visit of Bishop Fisher be the means of awakening the conscience of the Christian people of this land, thus driving away the ignorance and race prejudice which is at the root of the present anti-Indian legislation proposed by the Union Government.

A GLOOMY PICTURE

THE report of the work of the Natal Indian Congress submitted by the hon. Secretaries at the Annual General Meeting last Sunday should serve as an eye-opener to the Indian community. The Congress Committee has shown a very good record of its activities, no doubt, and for that the members of the Committee in general and the hon. Secretaries (Messrs. V. S. C. Pather and Sorabjee Rustomjee) in particular are to be congratulated, the latter having had to bear the brunt practically wholly of financing the Congress.

The disappointing thing, however, is that most of the activities recorded have been fruitless. While there is not much gain to be shown the loss appears to be excessively heavy.

Let us first examine the gains.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's visit was undoubtedly a blessing to the community and the undoubted success of her visit was due very greatly to the strenuous work of the Congress Committee and that certainly stands to its credit. The success of the Emergency Conference of the South African Indian Congress held under the presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is well-known and also stands to the credit of the Congress who was in charge of organising it. The Indian Agricultural and Industrial Show held in Durban during the period under review was the first of its kind known in the history of Indians in South Africa and was undoubtedly a grand success. The work of organising the Show was in the hands of the Congress and that too stands to its credit. It is a matter of regret that this Show has not been continued. If an Agricultural and Industrial Committee were to be formed under the guidance of the Congress and a Show of that description were to be opened annually it would no doubt be greatly helpful to the moral and material upliftment of the community.

While these are some of the outstanding successes of the Congress and hence stand to its credit we will now examine what the Congress has actually lost.

Notwithstanding the very strong protest of the Congress the Boroughs and the Townships Ordinances have been passed and Indians barring those that are already on the Roll have lost the Municipal and Township Franchise. This is a very great loss. The passing of the Durban Land Alienation and the Boroughs Extended Powers Ordinances have deprived Indians of the right to purchase and own landed property wherever they may choose to and they stand as a loss to the community. The passing of the Public Health Ordinance is also a distinct loss to the community. It authorises the formation of Boards and the administration of the districts to which the Health Ordinance is applicable is in the hands of these Boards, members of which are elected by the Europeans in the districts concerned without any voice to the Indians concerned. The intention of this Ordinance is evil, as would appear from its operation, in that it seeks to tax the Indians so heavily that they may be compelled by force of circumstances to leave those districts; and go where, heaven only knows. There are instances of racial segregation in certain administrative departments such as the Durban

Town Treasurer's Department where a separate counter has been set aside for Natives and Indians. The protest of the Congress has been in vain and it thus stands to its debit. In immigration matters too the efforts of the Congress have not been very successful. The case of Mr. Amod Abdurahim's sister who sought temporary permission to enter to visit her brother, quoted in the annual report, is a case in point. In the matter of education the Provincial Council has decided not to incur on Indian education any further expense to that already incurred and which is insufficient in comparison with the money derived from Indians through rates and taxes. That too is therefore a loss to the community. And now to add to all these losses we have the Asiatic Bill which deprives us of practically all the rights and privileges we are entitled to not only as British subjects but as human beings.

The reader will be able to see from the above that the Committee has shown comparatively very little to the credit while the debit balance is very heavy and rendered all the heavier by its financial statement which shows a debit balance of £776 19s. 2d.

The above is indeed a gloomy picture of the present position; and who is blame for it? Undoubtedly not the Congress workers. They have done what was possible for them to do with considerable sacrifice to themselves not only in time but in money as well. It is the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the community that is to blame for this state of affairs. The most important thing the community has lacked is in its financial support to the Congress. If it is realised, as it should be even by a blind man, from the annual report, that the Congress Committee has been doing very useful and important work in the interests of the community, it is the duty of all those of our countrymen who can afford it to wipe out the financial debt with the least possible delay and place the Congress on a sound footing so as to enable it to fight the matters mentioned in the report and thus also save the community from moral and material bankruptcy.

EUROPEAN SYMPATHY

MESSAGE FROM MR. L. W. RITCH

We have received the following letter from Mr. L. W. Ritch, Johannesburg, which we have no doubt will be read with interest and appreciation by our readers:—

The Editor, INDIAN OPINION,

Sir,—While I regret having been unable to attend the mass meeting of the 31st August, I have read the report of the proceedings with deep interest.

It affords me great satisfaction to observe that my old friend Mr. F. A. Laughton tore himself from the privacy of his retirement for the purpose of recording his protest of the proposed measure. It is good, too, to find the Reverend Mr. Dube in a camp that, but for common trouble, must have been alien to him. Pain as our philosophy teaches is a great Guru. Like the blessings that are most valuable, pain comes most frequently as a blessing in disguise. Probably few of us can perceive even dimly the hidden forces at work behind the present movement of the West at one pole at the East at the other. Of this, however, we may be sure, that all is being ordered for the best. It may sound hard, but those units who are being sacrificed for the reaching of the objective are, however unconsciously and unwillingly, subserving a greater purpose than they know.

I wonder whether the true significance of Mr. Gandhi's message is appreciated. It reads "If people prepared suffer they must win." Do those who read the words "prepared to suffer" realise what is involved therein? What measure of stature? What nobility of character? What selflessness, dispassion and detachment are implied in those words? Mr. Gandhi's message simple as it reads, is one upon which every claimant for "liberty and justice" would do well to meditate. With an understanding of them will come a solution of the problem India faces to-day and Indians in South Africa likewise.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

L. W. RITCH.

**M. K. GANDHI LIBRARY AND PARSEE
RUSTOMJEE HALL
FOURTH ANNIVERSARY**

A very pleasant function took place last Wednesday evening at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, Queen Street, Durban, when the fourth anniversary of the opening of the Hall and the M. K. Gandhi Library was celebrated. The Hall was tastefully decorated for the occasion and there was a large gathering among whom were many prominent Indians and a number of ladies present.

On the platform the chairman Mr. Omar H. A. Jhaveri was supported by our distinguished visitors Bishop and Mrs. Fisher, and Messrs. Wm. Doull, and A. H. West and there were also present Miss E. Kundsén, Miss Warner, Mrs. A. H. West and several other European ladies.

The meeting commenced with a prayer recited by the chairman in Persian after which the chairman spoke in eulogistic terms of the munificent services of the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, the donor of that useful institution, whose absence was felt very keenly that evening.

The Secretary (Mr. B. M. Patel) read the annual report of the M. K. Gandhi Library and Parsee Rustomjee Hall Committee which showed that there were twenty-six executive meetings held during the year. The attendance at the Library for the year was 37690 being an increase of 5402 over the previous year.

Distinguished visitors from Transvaal, Capetown, England and India had frequently visited the Library during the year.

The Hall was also put to use during the year for instructive lectures and other important occasions and was also lent freely to other sections. The Natal Native Teachers Union held their Conference in the Hall.

There were in the Library 3247 books in different languages of which 1699 were lent out to the public during the year.

Mr. Advocate J. W. Godfrey in moving the adoption of the report congratulated the Committee on the excellence of the work performed during the year. The attendance of the Committee men was remarkably regular and reflected genuine realisation of the confidence and trust reposed in them. They had inaugurated meetings, lectures for the benefit of the community and the record shows that the community highly appreciated the Committee's efforts. The attendance of over 37000 persons during the past year was very creditable and the issuing of three thousand books also exhibited a degree of interest which showed that the Indian community somewhat appreciated the existence of the Library. He however deplored the fact that the English speaking Colonial-born Indian was not there that night as he felt the library was the best means of their becoming acquainted with Indian history and Indian things in general. He pointed out that the Library is useless unless used in the proper way and

that readers should read with the object of absorbing information. He advised those present to exercise self-help, to come to the library, read, mark and learn and inwardly digest all they could to the betterment of themselves and to those round about them. In doing this only did he think that the spirit of the donor would rest in peace.

Mr. A. I. Kajee seconded Mr. Godfrey's motion.

Mr. A. H. West recited briefly the trusts of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee and deplored that sufficient interest was not being taken in the library as he wished. He hoped that better attendance, greater interest and more enthusiasm would be shown in the coming year by the people in the use of the library which he said was like an oasis in the desert in so far as Indians were concerned.

The Chairman then eulogised the services of Mr. Wm. Doull to the trust and presented him on behalf of the committee with a beautiful bouquet.

Mr. Doull thanked the Chairman and in the course of his speech confirmed Mr. Godfrey's remarks and said it was not so much the number of attendance in the library that counted but it was what benefit had been derived from it that really counted. The speaker hoped that the Library would be better used in the coming year.

BISHOP FISHER

Bishop Fisher then rose to speak and was received with loud applause. Bishop Fisher in a powerful and eloquent speech said he had been in India for 21 years and become so indianised that his heart responded to the heart of India. When stripped of all superficialities the Indian and European hearts would show no deference but that heart would meet heart and spirit meet spirit. They all had a different standard of living and dressing but these were only superficial. He believed in the brotherhood of man. They must adopt a system making it possible for all nationalities to live together in peace and amity. Only two years ago said the Bishop "we Americans debarred the Japanese from America and in doing this we have given a negation to our own declaration of the brotherhood of man. We have to investigate and find away out of our difficulties. My study shows that we must have mutual respect, love and toleration one for the other. We must not deny all the principles of Mahomedanism or that of Christ but rather find a way out which will incorporate the best that is in each other." Bishop Fisher speaking with emotion said a deep hush overcame him as he heard the names of the late Parsee Rustomjee and Mahatma Gandhi being coupled together. Two great souls as these must necessarily have had an affinity which results in world good. His own inspiration to understanding the true meaning of a Christian life came from his association with Mahatma Gandhi. He said that Mahatma Gandhi's honest judgment sincere and righteous ambitions unsullied with worldly motives had done more to spread the the missionary's gospel in India than the combined efforts of the missionaries of India.

Bishop Fisher was asked in London if there was any powerful European personality in India of outstanding ability and he answered the inquiry by mentioning the name of Mr. C. F. Andrew (applause). The speaker went to say that he had lost all faith in force and that he no longer believed that anything could be gained by force. That was a European idea but undoubtedly it was a mistaken one. India had for ages given messages to the world but they have gone by unheeded, because the rest of the world was not prepared to hear or understand. The great world war carried away the manhood of most nations and those left behind have come to the irresistible conclusion that war is wrong, the use of force is wrong and therefore some other way must exist ready, eager and anxious to receive peace and it comes from

India through Mahatma Gandhi and the world is prepared to hear and, the speaker trusted, to receive. Continuing the Bishop said he had the inestimable pleasure of personally meeting Mahatma Gandhi after his long fast and found him to be full of joyous spirit with a brilliant intellect and a most hopeful disposition. The soul force which characterises his principles can be said to be almost visibly emanating from his personality. Every section of the Empire should be grateful to the silent and peaceful revolution which is in operation in India.

Without so great a leader powerful in his soul force there would have been great bloodshed in India. The Bishop had addressed over 53,000 Indian University students in English and these men today believe that success and victory was obtainable, both economic and moral, by soul force rather than brute force. India is ready to deliver its message to the world and the world is ready to receive it.

The Bishop exclaimed that he was an Indian except by birth and colour. He was an Indian in mind thought and ambition. He had a message to give to the Indians here and after offering them greetings as from himself a bleached Indian he recited the following which is from the Whittier's English setting of quotations from Institutes of Manu :—

“Heed how thou livest. Do no act by day
Which in the night will drive thy peace away.
In months of sun so live that months of rain
Shall still be happy.
Evermore restrain evil, and cherish good
So shall there be another
And a happier life for thee.”

“Say not, in evil doing, no one sees,
And so offend the conscious one within,
Whose eyes can see the secret motives of iniquity.
Nor in thy folly say, I am alone,
For seated in thy heart, as on a throne,
The Ancient Judge and Witness liveth still,
To note thy thought and act,
And as thy good or ill flows from thee
Far beyond thy reach
The solemn dooms-man's seal is set on each.”

MRS. FISHER

Mrs. Fisher who was received with loud applause said that the salvation of mankind depended upon the activities of women. The Indian ladies present would have to arouse themselves from their lethargy and take an active interest in the welfare of their children. She believed that the mind of women was potent and capable of great things more especially when it was remembered that it was only 80 years ago that women came into university life and what did they find to-day? Women were occupying most important position in every branch of life. Nor was this peculiar to European countries only but in India women had excelled themselves. To-day in Calcutta the leading barrister was a lady and in Delhi the director of education department was a lady. The speaker exhorted the Indian ladies present to endeavour to see that their children came to the library and imbibed the tremendous law of Indian history contained in the books on the shelves. She was of the opinion that all racial trouble and misunderstanding would cease if only mothers would try and learn something of the mothers and children of other races. They would become acquainted with the good that existed in others and thus learn to respect and appreciate them. Ignorance was at the bottom of most often present day misunderstanding.

Speeches were also made by Messrs V. S. C. Pather, Rooknoodeen and Pandit Bhawani Dayal.

The Chairman presented the Bishop and Mrs. Fisher with bouquets and thanked them for gracing the meeting with their presence and their sympathetic remarks.

A portrait of the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee was unveiled by Mrs. Fisher and the enthusiastic meeting terminated at 9.30 p.m.

OUR LONDON LETTER

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

6th August, 1925.

Summer time is at last a permanent institution, permanent until Parliament is moved in the years to come, to repeal, or in some way to alter the law on the subject. It has been made permanent as a result of the compromise with the farmers. It will in future commence on the 3rd Sunday in April instead of on the 1st Sunday as originally proposed and conclude on the first Sunday in October. This year summer time will end on the 4th October.

New York University has introduced an innovation in its methods of teaching. It has chartered a liner, for the purpose of giving some 450 of its students, an academical year afloat. The ship will sail at the end of September, and in eight months will visit about fifty ports in thirty-five countries and five continents. The students when not sight-seeing will be lectured on History, Economics, Comparative Government, Philosophy, Geology, Anthropology, Oceanography, Astronomy and Commercial Geography.

The discovery of an Arab fisherman, who, peering over the side of his boat, saw a city at the bottom of the sea, is of the greatest interest. The Arab was engaged in catching little rock fishes off the Coast of Tunis in the local fashion, by diving for them, with a sharp hook, when he saw a lost Phœnician town. The Phœnicians were the merchant seamen of the ancient world, and their great colony of Carthage was in the neighbourhood of Tunis, and of the submerged city.

Prince Ranji was the victim of a despicable robbery in Mail week. He had been to the Haymarket Theatre to see “The Man with the load of Mischief.” After the play he had to make his way through a small crowd, outside the Theatre, to his car, and this took him a little more than a minute. Feeling for his cigarette case he noticed that his wallet was missing from the breast pocket of his dress coat. It contained five hundred pounds in notes, in addition to confidential documents and two photographs of his father and mother, which he prizes highly from a sentimental point of view, as they are the only ones he possesses. He is very anxious to recover the documents and photographs.

This is the second robbery from an Indian Prince in London for the season. The Gaekwar of Baroda recently lost from his Watford House a valuable tie-pin.

There are two Maharanees in London, the veiled and the unveiled. The Maharanee of Jodpur with her sister attended the entertainment given by her husband at “Belmont” Wimbledon, at which the chief performer was Mr. Jasper Maskelyne the illusionist. The performance took place in a marquee, which was filled with members of the Household and guests. But within the marquee was erected a tent. The Maharanee with her sister, were carried in palanquins to the tent and from within it witnessed the entertainment, in the brilliantly lighted marquee, without being observed by the audience, as their tent was in darkness, and the front of it was covered by a black gauze veil.

On the other hand the Maharanee of Patiala unveiled, paid a visit to the Coliseum, one of London's leading vaudeville theatres.

The Maharajah of Patiala with his Maharanee and retinue is at the Savoy Hotel, occupying the suites which were used earlier this year, by the Maharajah of Rajpipla, and the Maharajah of Kapurthala. But, the suites have been since converted into a veritable little palace, for the Maharajah of Patiala.

The present Maharajah of Patiala succeeded his late father in 1900, when he was only eight years old. He has a massive figure and a fine black beard. He wears European dress of very smart cut, but with a magnificent jewelled apricot yellow turban with purple edges, and his pearl earrings are set in a cluster of diamonds, needless to say the resources of his estate, was at the disposal of the British during the War. He has the reputation of a great game hunter, much of which he does from his motor car. He will in a few weeks time be at Geneva, as India's representative on the League of Nations. In the interval he is said to be fully occupied in the study of questions concerning the League and its objects.

A miracle did happen, the evil day, in the coal world has been put off at the last moment by the intervention of the Government. But the truce is for a fortnight, and to-day the momentous discussion on the question takes place in the House of Commons. A White Paper was issued yesterday, in regard to the subsidy promised by the Government to the mine owners which made the truce possible, ten millions is the sum referred to in the White Paper, but more may be asked of Parliament if this sum be insufficient to meet the losses of the mine owners in keeping the mines working and paying the miners the wages hitherto paid to them. It is admitted on all hands, that the mines are not being worked at a profit and that the men too, are not receiving the wages they ought to get. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald claims that the only solution of the mining trouble is the nationalisation of all mines. Others have other remedies, which will no doubt find expression in the discussions on the question in the House of Commons. This industry is a matter of vital importance to the British Isles.

In charing cross amidst its book shops, the writer met the Rev. H. D. Mullet, who at one time, was in charge of Christ Church, Sydenham, outside Durban. He is now in London.

BOOKS FOR SALE

To be obtained from the *Indian Opinion Press*, Phoenix, Natal. Postal Orders to be made payable at Durban.

The Hon. Mr. Gokhale and the Indenture System	2 0
Indian Home Rule, by M. K. Gandhi	1 6
A Book—and its Misnomer	1 0
Bagavad Gita. Mrs. Besant's Translation	2 6
Asiatics Registration Amendment Act (1908) in English and Gujarati	
Hindu Social Ideals, by P. J. Mehta	2 6
Rise and Growth of Bombay Municipal Govt.	4 6
Agricultural Industries in India	2 6
The Story of the Ramayana, the Epic of Rama	2 6
A Study in Indian Economics, by P. Bannerji	4 6
The Indians of South Africa, by H. S. L. Polak	2 0
Life of M. K. Gandhi (in Tamil)	2 6
The Golden Number of "Indian Opinion"	
Paper covers	2 6
Bound in Cloth	3 6
Speeches on Indian Affairs, by John Morley	3 6
The Hon. Mr. Gokhale's Tour in South Africa:	
Special INDIAN OPINION Souvenir.	2 6
The Ethics of Passive Resistance	2 6

Essay on Indian Economics, by Mahadev Govind Kanade	3 3
Hindu Psalms and Hymns	1 6
Vaishavite Reformers of India	2 6
M. K. Gandhi and the South African Indian Problem	1 0
Aspects of the Vedanta	1 6
Essays on Indian Art, Industry and Education	2 6
Sri Madhwacharya	1 6
Hinduism, by Dr. Barnett	2 6
Position of the Women in the Vedas	6
Vernaculars as Media of Instruction in Indian Schools and Colleges	4
Essentials of Hinduism	1 9
Dadabhai Naoroji's Speeches and Writings	6 0
Indian National Congress	8 0
The Madras Congress and Conferences	1 6
Allahabad and Nagpur Congresses	2 6
The Surat Congress and Conferences	2 0
The Improvement of Indian Agriculture	2 6
The Congress Conferences and Conventions	2 0
India's Untouchable Saints	2 0
The Governance of India, by Govind Das	7 6
For India's Uplift, by Anne Besant	3 6
Sri Ramanujacharya	2 6
Sri Sankaracharya	2 6
Mr. Gandhi's Speeches and Writings—1896 to 1917	
The Indian Demands, by G. A. Natesan	2 6
Indian Industrial and Economic Problems by Prof. Kale	3
Essays on National Idealism, by Dr. Coomaraswamy	2

Natal Indian Congress.

An interesting lecture on **MODERN RACIAL PROBLEM** will be delivered by **Bishop Fisher of Calcutta** who is now touring South Africa, at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, Queen Street, Durban, on Saturday, 12th, September 1925, at 3 p.m.

All are kindly invited to attend.

AMOD BAYAT,

President.

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE,

V. S. C. PATHER,

Joint Hon. Secretaries.

Natal Indian Congress.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S BIRTHDAY.

A meeting of the Indian Community will be held at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, Durban, on Monday, 14th. September 1925, at 7 p.m. to celebrate Mahatma Gandhi's fifty-sixth birthday.

All are kindly invited to attend.

AMOD BAYAT,

President.

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE,

V. S. C. PATHER,

Joint Hon. Secretaries.

Note:—The Kathiawar Arya Mandal will also join in the above celebrations.

