

# Indian Opinion

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## THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN QUESTION

BY MR. C. F. ANDREWS IN 'YOUNG INDIA'

**T**O-DAY, the people of India are faced with a crisis in South Africa which is far more serious than anything that has happened since the year 1913, when Mahatma Gandhi led the passive resistance campaign in Natal in order to obtain justice for the Indian cause. The end of that passive resistance campaign was a settlement which was called the "Gandhi-Smuts Agreement."

This settlement was agreed upon on June 30th, 1914, just before the European war began. During the European war when the goodwill of India was most earnestly desired by every part of the British Empire the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement was faithfully observed by Europeans in South Africa. The Indian community did all that it possibly could to show its sympathy with the British cause throughout the war, and no charge at all was brought against it of any disloyalty or slackening of endeavour. Many of those Indians, who served in the war, were publicly thanked when the war was over.

But from the year 1919 onwards, all this has been forgotten and in South Africa the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement has been torn as it were to pieces and thrown aside as waste paper by each party when in office in the South African Union Assembly. In 1919, Mahatma Gandhi had asked me to go out to South Africa because of a serious breach of treaty, and some months I lived in South Africa seeking if possible to heal the breach. On the whole, the rupture then made was not very serious; but every year since then new breaches have been made of a much more serious character and during the last three years we have been faced every year with a policy which aims at nothing less than the extinction of the Indian community in South Africa.

First of all, General Smuts brought in his "Class Areas Bill" which was a direct breach of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement. Only by an accident of politics this Bill remained unpassed, because General Smuts himself suffered defeat and General Hertzog came into power. He was the head of Nationalist Party and entered into a compact with Colonel Creswell of the Labour Party. This gave the two parties an overwhelming majority. Since that time Bill after Bill has been put forward which would, if passed, completely destroy the "Smuts-Gandhi Agreement" and entirely do away with all the existing rights of Indians in South Africa. It would be difficult to describe in strong enough terms the iniquity of the two measures which are now before South Africa. The one is called the "Colour Bar Bill" and the other is called the "New Asiatic Bill." The Colour Bar Bill refused to allow Indians

who are skilled in a trade to take part in that trade beyond a certain point where the whole trade is reserved for the white workmen. This Bill, if passed finally, will take away from educated Indians a number of important technical appointments. But a far more serious measure is the "New Asiatic Bill." This Bill, if carried into law, will segregate Indians first in the towns and then in the country, and will destroy not only their shop interests in Durban and elsewhere, but also will evict many land-holders from the land in the Upland Districts of Natal. It will also take away from them very many other important rights.

But in addition to all these things, it aims through its immigration clauses at repatriating under forcible measures a very large part of the Indian community resident in Natal. It will work havoc in that community; and by the pressure of both these Bills together it is hoped by the South African Europeans that the Indians may be induced, or more truly speaking forced, to leave the country. Dr. Malan, the author of this new measure frankly declares that this is his own intention, and that he wishes to get out of the country as many Indians as possible.

The only answer to this policy of extermination is for Indians in India to refuse to have any negotiations at all with South Africa until these two Bills are withdrawn. Both of them are utterly wrong in principle. They are breaches of the "Gandhi-Smuts Agreement" of the most violent character. There should, therefore, be no compromise at all in these matters. If the Government of India wishes to enter into any bargain, or any negotiation, with the South African Government, it should be laid down beforehand that the repatriation question itself is not an open question any longer, but finally closed as far as the Government of India is concerned. It should be declared emphatically also that the only basis of repatriation open is that which is agreed upon in the "Gandhi-Smuts Agreement," and that the Government of India and the people of India will not go one step beyond that position. They will faithfully carry out what Mahatma Gandhi there agreed upon, but they will not go beyond that in any further direction.

What remains for the future? First of all, we read that an Indian Deputation is coming over from South Africa to India in order to discuss the whole situation here on the spot. This is a very wise step and it may lead to important results.

Secondly, the Reciprocity Agreement, which the South African Ministers have signed, should be fully explored, in order to find whether any sanction or pressure can be brought on South Africa by the em-

ployment of the terms of this Agreement upon white South Africa itself.

Thirdly, public opinion must be vocal in every province on the subject. There must be no compromise and no weakness. The Government of India, which has to act at the present juncture, must be assured in any action it takes by the certainty that public opinion in India is quite undivided on the issue.

### Notes and News

**A**T the Synod of the Anglican Church in the Cathedral, Pretoria, Deacon Amos Mphahlele is reported to have moved that the Synod respectfully urge upon the Government the necessity of framing legislation which should uphold the racial purity of the white and Bantu peoples, by prescribing that the cohabitation of a white man and native woman be a criminal offence, as was that of a native man and a white woman. The resolution was unanimously adopted. "It was a tragic fact," the speaker urged, "that native girls were proud of white husbands. I appeal to you as the superior race to protect the weaker people," he added. Mr. E. J. Kerswill said it was the duty of the superior race to set an example to the weaker in fair dealing. Punishment for assault in the case of the white offender was comparatively light. The native offender was hanged in most cases. Marriage between black and white was an offence against the law of God, said Bishop Carey, of Bloemfontein. The Bishop of Pretoria announced the resolution would be forwarded to the Prime Minister.

The above resolution is a very important one but what effect it will have is a question. To believe that the evils that existed under Smuts Government will be removed by the present Government in so far as Natives and Indians are concerned is, we think, hopeless. There is adequate provision in the law for white men to be dealt with for crimes committed against black women and we know that they have been severely dealt with when they have managed to reach the Supreme Court by judges like Mr. Justice Krauze. But the fact is that a very few such cases do manage to reach the Supreme Court. The average white man in this country trades on his skin and the word of the white man against the black almost in every instance succeeds whereas the black man's word against the white man invariably fails and what ghost of a chance can there be for it to succeed when a white woman is concerned? In the circumstances the vast coloured population we see in this country is the result of the union between the white man and black woman and a very few instances do we see where the result has been through the union of a black man and a white woman. This fact goes to prove that the crimes of the white men against the black women are not considered as crimes but as their inherent right to satisfy their passion.

At a meeting of the Transvaal Chamber of Commerce held recently in Johannesburg the following resolutions were adopted in connection with the recently passed General Dealers Control Ordinance.—

(1) This meeting protests against Clause 3 of the General Dealers' (Control) Ordinance which imposes on general dealers in municipalities the obligation of applying to a Town Council to make provision for the constitution of a special board for this purpose on the same lines as for rural areas.

(2) This meeting is also of opinion that Clause 13 may operate harshly and should be deleted.

(3) this Chamber urges that amending legislation to give effect to the above, should be passed by the

Provincial Council at the special session convened for next week.

The following appears in the *Rand Daily Mail*.— At a meeting of Johannesburg Indians held on the premises of Mr. M. S. Coovadia on Tuesday night, under the chairmanship of Mr. Essop Ismail Mia, it was resolved by a majority to establish a new Indian political organisation under the name of the Transvaal Indian Congress. After the resolution was passed, the following officers were elected:— Mr. Essop Ismail Mia, president; Mr. Jussab Ebrahim, vice-president; Mr. M. S. Coovadia, treasurer, Mr. N. A. Camay, secretary; and at the termination of the election, Mr. Essop Ismail Mia gave the sum of £50, which was received with cheers.

[NOTE.—We deal with the above in our leading article.—Ed. I.O.]

The following are some questions drawn up by a sub-committee appointed by the Johannesburg Southern Suburbs European Association at a meeting last week which will be circulated among the candidates for the forthcoming municipal elections:

1. Do you realise the evil arising from the invasion of the Asiatic trader in white residential areas?
2. Are you in favour of the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill as drafted by the Minister of the Interior?
3. If so, would you support any application made to the Town Council to bring it into operation?
4. Will you deal with this question from your election platform so that the electors in your ward will know your views?
5. If returned will you urge the Town Council the necessity of supporting the Government in this matter?

The Union Parliament has been prorogued to January 22.

Mr. V. S. Pather (Jt. hon. Secretary of the South African Indian Congress) has left for the Cape by the Union Express last Wednesday to make the preliminary arrangements for the forthcoming Congress.

## South African Indian Congress

The Fifth Session of the South African Indian Congress (in Conference) will be held in Capetown on the 10th November, 1925 and the following days.

Business:—

1. Report and Financial Statement.
2. Deputation to Union Government re Asiatic Bill.
3. Deputation to India.
4. Election of Officials.
5. General.

A. H. GOOL,  
Deputy President.  
A. ISMAIL,  
Hon. General Secretary.  
S. A. I. C.

Head Office:  
28 Ayre Street,  
Cape Town.

## A WORD TO OUR COUNTRYMEN

THERE should hardly be a single Indian in the Union who is not aware of or concerned about the danger we are faced with as a consequence of the anti-Indian legislation already passed and proposed to be passed by the Union Government. Under the circumstances every Indian should also know that to save ourselves from the impending ruination the only remedy is to act unitedly with one voice. We are grieved to find, instead, that some of our countrymen are trying to bring about divisions in the community the purpose of which must be known best to themselves. Their line of action is not different. They are out to fight against the same laws and on the same grounds as the existing representative bodies. At least that is what they profess to do. But to do this instead of joining with the already existing constitutional body they have chosen to have their own bodies to conduct the work on their own. Such a body exists in Durban known as the Natal Indian Association. It is not a constitutional body nor do we know that it represents any more than its own officials and perhaps a few others. Molvi Abdul Careem and Mr. E. M. Paruk are, we understand, fathering this little body. We have respect for both these gentlemen in their individual capacity but we cannot congratulate them for their latest action. The only grievance that has prompted them to form this body, in so far as we have been able to judge, is that they are not able to command the confidence of the people. If that be so they are rendering their position in that regard all the worse. If anything is more disappointing about the so-called Natal Indian Association it is only the connection with it of Mr. E. M. Paruk. Mr. Paruk holds a high position among the commercial class in Durban and we should have thought he would know better his responsibilities to his people. In so far as others connected with that body are concerned, most of them are irresponsible. For pecuniary motives or what we do not know but they have—even during the time when Mr. M. K. Gandhi led the passive resistance campaign—rendered but little service in the cause of their brethren. They only indulged in hindering the cause, and nothing more can be expected of them now. They will have to be faced and put up with by the community but not led by them. The community can be led only by the Natal Indian Congress whose services are well-known to be reiterated here.

We had thought up till now that Durban was the only unfortunate town where there was a body existing with the express motive of hindering the good work done in the interest of the community. We now find, however, that such a body has been formed in the Transvaal too. The name of this body is "Transvaal Indian Congress." With the exception of Mr. N. A. Camay who is appointed the secretary the rest of the officials have been tested in communal affairs and found wanting. The president Mr. Mia who is a very fine gentleman in his individual capacity has demonstrated but little patriotism during the passive resistance campaign in the Transvaal in 1908 and all the other gentlemen were tested when they held for a short time the

reins of the British Indian Association, the only official representative body in the Transvaal. They were found wanting and the community had apparently lost confidence in them because they were soon replaced by others. This is probably the grievance that has prompted them to form another political body. The action of none amazes us so much as does Mr. Camay's in this new body. Mr. Camay's sacrifice for his country's cause has been great. During the passive resistance campaign under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi Mr. Camay was holding the position of a postmaster in the Non-European Post Office in Johannesburg and was nearing the completion of his period of service which would have entitled him to a pension. In the interest of the community, however, Mr. Camay sacrificed that post and suffered imprisonment together with his brethren who were fighting against the injustices of the Government. He, of all, we feel, should have known better. We cannot congratulate the organisers of this new body in the Transvaal. If they retrace their step even now it will be an act of wisdom on their part. If not, such bodies will have to die their natural death. It is indeed a pity that when Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is stirring the whole of India to fight for us we are proving, by our misdeeds unworthy of any assistance from our Mother-country. The duty of the community is, however, quite clear. We wish we had a smooth path to fight against the Government, but if our path is rendered thorny by unwise actions of a few of our misguided brethren we cannot afford to fret for that reason. We must face even that thorny path; we must put up with our misguided brethren but not be misguided by them we must have faith in ourselves and in the one body that has served us well in the past, that is serving us in the present and that will serve us in the future, and be faithful to that body.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS

THE Fifth Session of the South African Indian Congress will be held in Capetown within a few days. The Natal Indian Congress has been busy appointing the delegates for the Natal Province to attend the Congress. The number of delegates to be appointed by each Province is thirty and Natal, we have no doubt, will send her thirty. We hope that the Transvaal will do likewise. That this is a most important occasion needs hardly be explained. This Congress will have to decide once and for all the line of action to be adopted by the community of the Union. We are late as it is and the only way to prevent any further delay is to do everything possible to make this Session fully representative. The deputations to go before the Union Government and to India should be fully representative and they can be representative only if the Congress

that will appoint them is representative. Let us not forget that our actions are being watched very carefully by our enemies and the slightest faltering on our part may impair our cause. Petty prejudices if their be any should for once be put aside so that we may be able to show to the Union Government, to India and to the world that we are in earnest and that we are not going to allow our legitimate rights in this land of our birth and domicile to be trampled under foot without a murmur. May the Almighty guide the deliberations of our Congress and make it a success and may He guide us all in doing the right thing.

### Mrs. Sarojini Naidu Interviewed

By Associated Press Of India

#### S. A. Indian Congress The Only Representative Body

In view of the widespread interest and agitation in India in regard to the anti-Asiatic legislation and in view of the possibility of various deputations from South Africa going to India to place their grievances before the Government and the public, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, interviewed by the Associated Press in her official capacity as President of the South African Indian Congress stated as requested by the Indians of South Africa that she wished to make it very clear that the only organisation competent to represent the Indian community in South Africa was the South African Indian Congress to which are affiliated the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal British Indian Association and the Cape British Indian Council as representing the respective provinces and which are recognised by the South African Union Government as authorised to speak in the name of the Indian community. Other associations like the Natal Indian Association, for instance, are not affiliated to the South African Indian Congress and represent mainly only small groups of trading interests unconnected with the general welfare of a larger community.

Referring to the anti-Asiatic legislation, Mrs. Naidu remarked, it is one of the iniquitous and barbarous acts of legislation which surely the civilised world can never tolerate. India will never countenance the repatriation of the Indian community under any pretext or disguise. Indian settlers are colonials with as much right to live on the soil of South Africa as the English, the Boer, the Huguenot and the Jewish colon-

ials. Especially in Natal the Indians have built up the prosperity of the country by their very life blood and neither the arrogance or colour prejudice nor the brutality of sheer physical strength can entitle one set of colonials to disinherit and exile another set of colonials from the land that has been to them not only a foster-mother but the mother itself. As she (Mrs. Naidu) had reminded the Minister of the Union Government while she was in South Africa, India is no longer the India of the folded hands and appealing eyes and now the whole strength of India will be mobilised in support and defence of the children overseas whose very existence will be menaced and whose human rights are down-trodden by the dual forces of unreasoning colour hatred and the bitter jealousy of economic competition. The campaign of protest against the anti-Asiatic legislation will be formally inaugurated on the 11th of October when from every village and town of the great continent of India prayers will be offered for the stricken and disfranchised Indian citizens of South Africa.

### The Sense of Proportion

(By L. W. R.)

That the Greater includes the Less, and consequently the important is too obvious for argument. Yet in practice precedence is all too frequently given to the latter—the birth-right sold for a mess of pottage. Man's mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects, and reflections are not the truer and clearer for the presence of the dust. Small minds, like small mirrors, are by reason of their limitations, prone to mislead the observer, and to leave him without a true sense of proportion, and when to this are perhaps added prejudice, intolerance, bias or others of the sombre emotions which cloud truth and clarity of vision, the delusion is complete, and factions, schisms, internecine strife, and like forms of discord and disruption make their unlovely appearance.

The stature of men is largely the measure of their vision; of their ability to distinguish between essentials and incidentals and to give to each of these the place or preference it deserves; and it is one of the marks whereby true leaders may be known that they possess the vision and the power to subordinate the minor to the major even at the ruthless sacrifice of their own predilections. Leaders lose their qualifications for leadership so soon as they suffer personal prejudices to influence an impartial outlook upon a situation, since their vision and judgment become thereby clouded and uncertain. Obviously danger to the cause on hand lies in treating as primary considerations that truer judgment must determine to be merely secondary.

The measure of success already achieved in India along the difficult and arduous path towards Nationhood—the co-ordination and harmonising of erstwhile conflicting forces and interests—was possible only by reason of the selflessness and the wide range of outlook possessed by her great leaders and employed by them.

Only by recognising and compelling recognition of the principle that sectional interests, however important in their place, must be subordinated to

the interests of the greater whole, and by so shaping policy and conduct, could the progress made have been achieved. And the measure of advance on the road is the extent to which the conviction has spread the power of its light from leaders to people. This, too, was the lesson taught and exemplified in his own life and conduct by Mahatma Gandhi during the many years of his leadership in South Africa. How far it has been learned and assimilated by the people he laboured so hard and so long to instruct, for whose salvation he toiled and sacrificed, can only be judged by the measure of co-operation and harmony existing in the community. To the extent that the larger vision is seen and the larger outlook dominates attitude and conduct, will success mark our efforts here. From the narrower vision can only flow effort that is partial and half-hearted; failure instead of success.

## Church And The Colour Bar Bill

### Interesting Debate In The Synod

"If Christ appeared in South Africa in the body He occupied 2,000 years ago, He would not be allowed to land, he would first be compelled to have his finger-prints taken, as he was distinctly an Asiatic," said the Rev. R. F. Betteridge, Pietersburg, in speaking at the Pretoria Diocesan Synod in Pretoria recently on the resolution moved by the Archdeacon of Pretoria, the Rev. H. S. Sharp:

That this Synod desires to express its condemnation of the Colour Bar Bill as contrary to the principles of Christianity; and, while anxious to safeguard the legitimate interests of white workers against undue native competition, it asserts the inherent right of every native to the fullest development of which he is capable.

A suggestion made during the course of the subsequent debate on the Colour Bar Bill, that either the Prime Minister or Mr. Tielman Roos be asked to address the Synod, was negatived by the Bishop of Pretoria.

"It was the duty of the Churches," continued the Archdeacon, "to speak with a clear and united voice on the fundamental principles of Christianity. They were not concerned with details of government, but to them it was the enunciation of a vital principle, and the Colour Bar Bill was alien to the spirit of Christ. It was not the duty of the Synod, as such, to say how these things should be done, but it was for them to say what they believed to be the will of Christ on a subject. They had to avoid all side issues and concentrate on the fact that the Colour Bar Bill was contrary to the principles of Christianity."

#### Professor Brookes

Professor E. H. Brookes, of the Transvaal University College, opposed the resolution, and moved:

That this Synod feels strongly that any restrictive legislation such as the so-called Colour Bar Bill should not precede the legislation extending to natives the right to acquire land outside the limits laid down by the Native Land Act, which, it understands from his speeches in the Transkei, is part of the Prime Minister's native policy.

That this Synod assures the Prime Minister of its fullest sympathy with his efforts to formulate a national native policy on non-party lines.

Professor Brookes said he opposed the Colour Bar Bill in so far that had he been in Parliament he would not have introduced it. In other respects it was simply putting into law a regulation that had always existed, and there was no very marked dif-

ference between the new law and the old regulation. He would like to know how many natives there were anxious to proceed to any post enumerated in the Colour Bar Bill, and in how far the Bill was opposed to the principle of Christianity. In those circumstances restricting Indian immigration was similarly against those principles. What the country needed, said Professor Brookes, was a scheme by which both races would be allowed to develop along their own lines, where they came as little as possible in contact with each other. It was the intention to introduce a Bill for the advancement of the native franchise in some form or other to all the other provinces. It seemed to him that the Synod was condemning generally, without a word of gratitude for anything that the Government had done.

Rev. S. A. Bishop insisted on absolute justice without regard to colour.

Mr. C. Baber supported Mr. Brookes, and said that the Colour Bar Bill should not be opposed on the grounds that it was a bit of piecemeal legislation.

#### Bishop Of Pretoria

The Bishop of Pretoria thought that Professor Brookes was hedging and that his amendment was something diplomatic. "I hate politics," said his lordship. It was wrong to make the rise of individual native impossible by legislation.

In replying, Professor Brookes said that the Colour Bar Bill need not necessarily be against Christian principles, and the Church must never forget the case of the white man, too. If they opposed every bit of native legislation they happened to disagree with, it would mean that they would be shoved on one side and the whole thing might be scrapped. In many respects the Colour Bar Bill was a political device to secure a majority for native legislation, which was exceedingly hard to obtain. Were they going to register public disapproval without knowing the whole of the Prime Minister's policy?

The Bishop of Pretoria stated that the white man had had full opportunity of acquiring land, and it had become necessary to reserve land for the native by artificial means. The imposition by legislation of the colour bar was a wrong principle.

On being put to the vote the amendment of Professor Brookes was lost.

The Bishop then moved that this Synod desired to express approval of the Prime Minister's genuine effort to formulate a native policy on non-party lines, and to safeguard the white worker against undue native competition, but that this be not embodied in a bill like the Colour Bar Bill, on the grounds that any such attempt was in conflict with Christian principles, which laid down that every human being is entitled to the fullest development of which he is capable.

This was carried unanimously, and the original resolution moved by the Archdeacon was lost.—*Rand Daily Mail*.

## Maritzburg Indians Protest Against Asiatic Bill

A Mass Meeting of Indians under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress (Pietermaritzburg District Committee) was held in the Town Hall, Maritzburg, last Saturday at 8 p.m. Mr. R. B. Maharaj presided. There were delegates present from the different parts of the Province and a number of European sympathisers were also present. Among the prominent speakers were the Rev. Haywood Harris and Mr. J. A. Rowlands who strongly protested against the action of the Government and expressed their sympathy in the cause of the Indians. Messrs. S. R. Naidoo, R. N. Moodley, A. I. Kajee, A. H.

Kazi, Sorabjee Rustomjee, M. B. Naik, F. Gareeb, Molvi G. Mustafa and the Rev. J. M. Sundrum and the Rev. Chunoo also addressed the gathering. The following resolutions were passed unanimously :—

1. "That this mass meeting of Indians held in the Town Hall, Maritzburg, under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress (Pietermaritzburg District Committee) emphatically protests against the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill in that the Bill aims at the compulsory segregation of the Indians, deprives them of their existing and proprietary rights, and further restricts their domiciliary rights with a view to their ultimate extermination from the country."

2. "That this mass meeting of Indian assembled at Pietermaritzburg strongly supports the resolution passed by a representative meeting of Natal Indians held at Durban on the 31st August, 1925, affirming the suggestion of holding a Round Table Conference as the only solution for a settlement of the Indian question."

## Hindu Tamil Institute

### Prize Distribution

#### Record Crowd Witness Children's Acting

The following report has been forwarded to us by the hon. Secretary of the above Institute for publication :—

A record crowd gathered at the Rawat's Bro Hall on Sunday, the 18th October, to witness the Prize Distribution to the children attending the Hindu Tamil Institute. The proceedings were timed to commence at 2 p.m. and when Messrs. V. S. C. Pather, the Trustee of the Institute, who presided, P. R. Pather, the Secretary, and S. Mooniswami Pillay, the Headmaster, took their seats at the table punctually at the appointed hour, the hall was filled to overflowing. An interesting feature was that the audience comprised of over 500 women of all sections of the Indian community. At 1 p.m. fully 200 children headed by the Committee of the Institute, marched from the Institute in Cross Street to the Rawat's Bro Hall. Two of the children carried a beautiful banner of the Institute. The procession presented an interesting spectacle.

Punctually at 2 p.m. the proceedings commenced with a short address by the Chairman. The programme was an interesting and varied one and included the rendering in Tamil of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." Paper-folding which was a novelty in so far as Natal is concerned was an interesting item in the programme and the ten little girls who made square pieces of paper into triangles, baskets, shirts, boots, trousers etc., accompanied by a suitable song, received continuous applause from the 1250 present. Another item in the programme that held the huge audience spell-bound was the song "Colours." Thirteen little girls were dressed in a real oriental fashion, each carrying a different flower and each with a sari of the same hue as that of the flower she was carrying. The stage was so set as to represent a beautiful garden, the entrance to which was a beautiful floral arch lit with beautiful electric bulbs. Each girl sang on the colour of the flower she carried. The scene presented was a beautiful one and reminded one of the garden parties that are given by the Provincial Governors in India.

"The Merchant of Venice" was rendered in Tamil

and the children who were taught to perfection presented the play in an excellent manner. The acting of the children was without a flaw and the parts of Portia as presented by a girl of 12 years, and of Antonio, Bassanio and Shylock, by boys all under thirteen, were presented excellently so much so that at the conclusion of the play, numerous requests were made for the re-staging of the play at an early date.

The whole programme was carried through without a hitch. The children were presented with valuable Tamil books and the infants with beautiful toys. At the end the 300 children present were treated with refreshments kindly given by Mr. M. L. Sultan.

Great credit is due to Mr. S. Mooniswami Pillay, the Headmaster who was responsible for the writing of "The Merchant of Venice" in Tamil, to Mrs. V. R. R. Moodaly and Miss R. Goonaruthinam Moodaly who were responsible for teaching the children of the beautiful songs. These two ladies devoted much of their time in bringing the children to perfection.

The stage-setting was in the capable hands of Mr. R. E. Moodaly and each scene was fully appreciated by those present.

On the whole, the Prize Distribution was a splendid affair, a whole afternoon well spent.

The Headmaster, Mr. S. Mooniswami Pillay, and the teachers, Mrs. V. R. R. Moodaly are to be highly commended for the excellent manner in which they are bringing up the Tamil children.

#### OUR LONDON LETTER

[ FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT ]

24th September, 1925.

Birmingham's Medical Officer of Health, in his annual report, speaks of the mischievous results of a knowledge of birth-control by young people. For Birmingham's birth-rate last year was the lowest on record 19.2, as compared with 30.7 twenty years ago. And Sir James points out that for England, as a whole, the population is almost stationary at present, a condition which he considers is likely to portend the decay of the Empire, as in other nations where birth-control has been practised for long periods. But he, however, does not discuss the question from the point of view of the individual, in relation to the economic conditions prevailing in the world.

The death has occurred at Cambridge, at the age of 77, of the distinguished botanist Sir Francis Darwin, one of the five sons of Charles Darwin, the author of "The Origin of Species," all of whom attained eminence in Science. Sir Francis gave up a medical career to assist in his father's work, and after the death of his father, he carried on his research in connection with the life of plants. In 1908 he was President of the British Association of Science. He held the view that plants had a faint consciousness, though he added, there was no need to assume that they felt pain or pleasure. Plants were also things of habit, of "unconscious memory"; as for instance a plant that raises its leaves to the sun's light and drops them at night time. When such plant is kept entirely in the dark, as in a cellar, it continues to observe the times of its habit.

There have been many fine novels written about lunatic asylums, and some perhaps written by lunatics, but when the bibliography of madness is compiled, Mr. H. G. Wells will as usual find himself in capitals. It is a human and a good book. If it has not the characteristics of Charles Reades' "Hard Cash," it surpasses by far in the qualities of life

and truth, that ancient and commendable endeavour. And if by this book Mr. Wells achieves anything in favour of the better and more humane treatment of the lunatic, the nation will indeed be beholden to him, for apart from the treatment of the lunatic, there is ever a doubt, whether one who is declared a lunatic is really so, and it is just possible that those who have the power to certify others as lunatics, are themselves not free from some form or other of the same malady.

There is a struggle going on between the Ministry of Health and the West Ham Board of Guardians on the amount of relief payable to the out-of-works in the district of West Ham, which owing to its situation in the dock area on the Thames, has a very large population. Some 70,000 unemployed are in receipt of poor relief, the rate of such relief allowed by the Guardians is 59/- per week per family. The Ministry of Health insist on the amount being reduced to 55/- but the Guardians refuse to accept this legal standard rate. They hold that they are justified in allowing what they consider a living rate, regardless of the fact that the recipient of such a rate of relief, when in work, earned a lesser sum. The Guardians have from time to time been financed by way of loans by the Ministry of Health, which already amount to over a million pounds, and the Ministry were prepared to guarantee a further loan of three hundred thousand pounds if the Guardians would reduce the rate of allowance as suggested by the Ministry. As a result of the Guardians' refusal to fall in with the views of the Ministry, they are not in a position to pay out any relief. So the Ministry has taken up the relief of the out-of-works, and will no doubt later seek for the necessary Parliamentary sanction. And at the same time the struggle continues between the Ministry and the Guardians. The Guardians threaten that when the poor rates are collected in the district, they will make up the difference in the rate, which the Ministry is paying, so that the rate of relief in the end would amount to the rate the Guardians are fighting for. There is to be a deputation of the Guardians on the Ministry next week.

The League of Nations at Geneva has been notified by the British Government that the Governor of Burma has completed an agreement in the Hukawng Valley, to emancipate about 3,000 slaves, men, women and children, by a ransom which those freed will pay in annual instalments. The practice of selling slaves, giving them away as part of a marriage dowry, or in settlement of blood feuds, and breaking up families of slaves is to cease.

The death is announced to-day of the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir, Pratab. H.H. Sir Pratab Singh is in his 75th year. The Maharajah was the third of line, grandson of the founder of his dynasty. There was one child born to the Maharajah in 1904 but died from an accident the year after. He is succeeded by his nephew Sir Hari Singh. The dead Prince succeeded to the throne 30 years ago. The area of his rule was 80,000 square miles, and the population over 3,000,000. During the late war he made a very courageous break from tradition in leaving his country and visiting France and the Indian Expedition. He saw the battle of Cambrai, he was hon. lieut.-general of the British Army; was a friend of Lord Roberts, gave £100,000 to the Indian Memorial to Queen Victoria, and waived a claim of over £113,000 for the use of his soldiers overseas. He was interested in History, Religion, and Politics. When he was over 50 he won the Royal Humane Society's Medal for saving the life of an Englishwoman at Isanibad, and he was still playing cricket after he was, sixty. But he played it under distinctive conditions. A story is told of him that on hearing that "Ranji"

was nearby, he said he would like to see him. They had a long chat about the game—then the Maharajah asked if Ranji had ever made "an egg." "Oh yes," was the answer. "More than one egg?" "Of course, lots of them." "Ah," was the Maharajah's proud reply. "That has never happened to me, not once." The reason was simple. Bowlers, wicket keepers and fieldsmen were diplomatic, everyone of them, in every conceivable way, made it possible for him to score. But that was an example of oriental politeness and grave humour, which nobody derided. He was entitled to a Royal salute of 21 guns. Kashmir is noted as a land of romance and magnificence and travellers call its capital Srinagar, the Venice of the East, and among the many wonderful things to behold is the Royal Barge, manned by 50 oarsmen behind the canopy and 50 in front. They keep perfect time with the paddles, and are gorgeously dressed. It is the land of the Arabian nights.

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## Cremation

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### Its Economic Advantage To The Nation

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Mr. Arthur E. Piggott, speaking recently on "Cremation" at a meeting of the Manchester Rotary Club, Johannesburg, said that cremation was a reverent treatment of the dead, and in that respect might be regarded as an advantage to the living. Its advantages from the hygienic point of view were generally conceded, but its great advantage was on the score of economy—not alone to individuals, but particularly in the saving of the cost of large areas of land cemeteries. Cremation reduced both the civic and the individual cost; burial increased the burden of expense to the nation.

Mr. Piggott claimed that cremation was in entire accordance with Christian belief and interfered with no religious ceremony or rite. It avoided the dangers attendant on graveside funerals in inclement weather. It transformed corruption into cleanliness and made the disposal of a dead body something not repulsive but artistic and symbolic. Cremation could only take place after searching inquiry as to the actual cause of death, and removed all possibility of being buried alive, while the regulations made by law eliminated the risk of murder going undetected.

In the course of the address Mr. Piggott pointed out that the amount required to be raised in the year 1923 for municipal cemeteries in Manchester amounted to £3,314, equivalent to a rate of 0.05d. Powers were, however, recently sought by the Corporation to acquire no less an area than 90 acres in extent in the neighbourhood of the Southern Cemetery "and its appropriation for burial purposes." The Southern Cemetery already occupies an area of 98 acres and approximately some 134,000 dead bodies lie there. Now the scheme was to withdraw more acres of fertile soil from the service of man, caused by improper treatment of the disposal of the dead. If cremated ashes were stood in an urn—which was by no means necessary—or if the ashes were pulverised and scattered a very few acres would suffice for the city for generations.—*The Star*.

## Original Correspondence

The Editor, INDIAN OPINION.

### Canon Haywood Harris At Maritzburg Meeting

Sir,—It seems to me that the presence of Canon Heywood Harris on the platform at Maritzburg on Saturday last requires some explanation. The meeting was called by the Indian Congress to protest against the legislation now being introduced against the Asiatic races, but an allusion to this was made by the Canon. Instead he repeated some common Christian platitudes about "righteousness" and "principle," and laid great stress on "team-work" i.e. co-operation.

Judging however, from a report of this gentleman's words in the *Natal Witness* of 15th Oct. 1925, his homily on "principle" falls very flat, and he himself stands convicted of inconsistency and insincerity. His words as reported are: "The Indian, native and coloured people were encroaching on many of the ordinary avenues of work, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to place all the European boys. He wanted the school-boy of to-day to grasp that the white people would only hold their position in work and in government in this country so long as they proved themselves better able than the other races to fill the various posts." No "team-work" between the races here, but cut-throat competition on racial lines!

I am,  
Yours etc,  
CHAS. BAKER.

Box 335,  
Maritzburg,  
26th Oct. 1925

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