

Indian Opinion

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A FAREWELL MESSAGE

BY C. F. ANDREWS

I HAVE been asked to give a farewell message before my departure and I gladly do so. It is difficult to sum up my experiences during the past four months, but the greatest impression of all made on my mind is the supreme need of unity. That which is merely personal seems often to come in at the last critical moment and to ruin the common cause. There is no town centre free from this evil. In such a critical time as this, when all depends upon unity, the evil I have mentioned cannot be neglected. For without unity, there is no possibility of meeting the common enemy, which is ready to destroy Indian interests in this country.

But when I have given this warning, as truthfully and faithfully as possible, I can go on to say with great happiness that there has also been a remarkable growth of unity in the past few months. The common danger *has* really brought us all together, and there is much less division now than there was a few months ago. Nevertheless in spite of this new growth of unity, which I gladly recognise, it is still necessary to utter this simple and emphatic warning. For the unity, which is required, is not needed for a few months only; it must be always present. There must be a common recognition by all of those who are good men and true; and then everything must be placed in their hands. There must also be a solid union between the different provinces. There should be no divided interests. Fortunately the division between Hindus and Muslims is not so acute in South Africa as it is, alas! in India. That is all to the good. But there is the very great need of unselfish personal service and willingness to sink all differences in the common cause.

I come to the next point. Only by strongly supporting the few institutions which are founded for the one common cause can the unity I write about be effected. The most important organ of public opinion, which Mahatma Gandhi left behind him, is the weekly newspaper called INDIAN OPINION. It was his great and precious treasure, while he was in South Africa; and he himself spent much time and money and thought upon it, as we all know. When he left South Africa in 1914, this weekly newspaper was entrusted to the whole Indian community to support. Hitherto, it has been carried on with great difficulty. Its success has been owing to the very unselfish work of one Editor after another; its position throughout, though somewhat precarious, has been splendidly maintained. But a new situation has lately arisen, owing to the very great rise of the price of printing. The minimum wage is now being brought into force everywhere; and therefore INDIAN OPINION will be much more expensive to produce than it has been in the past. This expense cannot possibly be helped and a remedy must be found for its payment. It is not my duty to point out what the remedy should be; but it is clearly my duty to press upon everyone the need of supporting this very important organ of Indian public opinion, which goes all over the world. I would point out, that if I did not receive regularly my own copy of INDIAN OPINION in India, I could not

possibly do such effective work in that country on behalf of the Indian cause in South Africa. The same would be true about one who is of infinitely greater importance than I am,—Mahatma Gandhi himself. The same would be true also of Mr. Polak and other supporters in England. There are, also, those like Mr. Taraknath Das and others, who make our Indian cause known in America. In order to obtain all this benefit for our Indian community in different parts of the world it is absolutely necessary that INDIAN OPINION should not only be kept up to its old standard, but also should contain all the important documents bearing on the Indian Question.

Let me give a further example of its great usefulness. While I was in Capetown it was necessary to refer to the old columns of INDIAN OPINION on almost every occasion. Without this I should have been completely lost. The most vital information, which could not be supplied in any other way, was obtained as early as possible by looking through the old files of INDIAN OPINION. One original document about the Smuts-Gandhi settlement had been lost altogether, namely the two draft letters between General Smuts and Mahatma Gandhi on which the whole Smuts-Gandhi Settlement was based. The whole question of the exact meaning of the phrase 'vested rights' could be solved only by a reference to that original correspondence; for the phrase had been used there and General Smuts had adopted it from that former letter of Mahatma Gandhi. I searched through all the newspapers of the date, January 21, 1914, in the Capetown Library, but I could find no full record. Then I sent for the file of INDIAN OPINION Jan.—July 1914 and there alone I found the correspondence given in full. So important was it that I reprinted it in my first volume of 'Documents.' Yet if there had not been that care taken with these records, so long ago as 1914, this important and indeed vital fact in our evidence could never have been recovered. Hundreds of years hence, it may not be unlikely that historians will wish to explore the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa, which formed a turning point in the world's history. For the Passive Resistance Struggle of 1913—14 was the first time when man turned from the violence of war to peaceful methods in overcoming old long-established wrongs. How sad it would have been then, if that one document which formed the Draft Agreement itself had been lost! To-day, also, there are extremely important statements being made with a view to the settlement of this present struggle. INDIAN OPINION is carefully recording these, and is thus doing an invaluable service for the future as well as for the present. I have often heard it said, during my stay in South Africa, that INDIAN OPINION should be made more a 'fighting' paper by inserting articles written in a fiery style. I do not agree with this idea of a 'fighting' paper of this kind at all, though I believe in a fight of another kind. INDIAN OPINION now 'fights' for the Indian cause by using one weapon only, the weapon of Truth. It keeps exactly true to the lines which Mahatma Gandhi laid down, namely to publish all the ascertained facts. This is

infinitely more effective than publishing articles containing merely abuse of the other side. Just as we discard the weapons of violence and force and rely upon justice and love in our actions, so we have to discard the weapons of abuse and vituperation and rely upon reasoned argument alone in stating our case. Thus we are able to speak strongly and firmly and yet at the same time to avoid vulgarity and race hatred. When, for instance, the Editorial of a recent issue replied to Mr. Boydell's vulgar attack on the Indian community, there was no hesitation in calling his attack that of a bully; for it was the Truth. But at the same time, there was an appeal to Mr. Boydell's own better mind and a hope expressed that he would retract. This spirit was entirely different from the spirit of vulgar ruthless vituperation, which disfigures so much of the writing of the South African press to-day. Just as the Indian community has led the way in mitigating the horrors of war, by engaging in Passive Resistance, even so we have to set up a new standard in newspaper writing.

[NOTE:—Mr. Andrews' message is incomplete owing to the remaining pages being misplaced during transmission.—Ed. I.O.]

Indians in Natal

Archives Tell The Tale

Mr. Andrews' Address at Maritzburg

Addressing a meeting of Indians in the H.Y.M.A. Hall, Maritzburg, on Tuesday 6th instant, Mr. O. F. Andrews told the history of Indian immigration to Natal.

Here, in Maritzburg, he said, the old capital of British Natal, the archives of this Province are kept. They tell in records which cannot be disputed, the tragic story of the introduction of Indian indentured labour more than sixty-five years ago in Natal. It is necessary from time to time to go back to these records, because the popular mind in this young country is all too soon forgetful of its own past history; and yet it is just the tragedy of those earlier days—the mistake that was then committed—which has been dragging the country down ever since with its terrible entail of debt. It is that tragedy of errors which we have to meet with a brave front and honestly redeem.

Let us go back, then, to the earliest correspondence between the Natal Government and the Colonial Office in London, dated 1859. It was a time when Natal was very nearly bankrupt, and the white colonists were leaving the Colony, because they could not make two ends meet. With almost feverish eagerness these early settlers had made efforts in every quarter to get labour. A representative had gone, at the colonial expense, to different parts of the world to obtain cheap labour. China had been explored; but Chinese labour was found too expensive. It required in the West Indies nearly one pound sterling a month. Kafir labour had already become scarce. The price of it had gone up from five shillings a month, or twopence a day, to ten shillings a month, or fourpence a day. There was a danger of the price going still higher. Therefore the whole white colony cried out at last for indentured labour from India. For after the abolition of slavery, in 1834, this Indian system had been tried in Mauritius. The Indian labourer had been found there to be cheap, frugal, industrious and docile. The British Colonial Office could always be relied on to ensure the supply and keep down the cost; because India was a British possession. So the Mauritius Indian system was eagerly asked for in Natal.

But the archives show that a hitch took place at

first. The Colonial Secretary in London writes: "The Indian Government do not appear very desirous of seeing an immigration of coolies from India to Natal."

This was discouraging news. The situation was desperate; and the Natal authorities urged that another attempt should be made. To make a long story short, the Colonial Office in London was able to overcome the reluctance of the Indian Government. After all, India was, as I have said, a British possession. So the order went forth from London to India, that Natal had to be supplied with indentured Indian labour. There was great jubilation in the white colony of Natal when this fateful step was taken in the year 1860.

Let us examine the documents a little further. The first shipload contained 207 males and 88 females. The second ship brought out 176 males and 55 females. Subsequent vessels brought an even lower sex proportion. Thus, from the very outset, the evils due to the impossibility for these young adult people, crowded in barracks, of a decent married life, began to show themselves. We go on to read about outbreaks of dysentery on board the emigrant ships, and cholera outbreaks even after landing. But Natal appears, from the very first, to have been a climate extraordinarily well suited to the immigrants, and the death rate did not run high. Only the moral conditions were intolerable and led to unspeakable evil.

10s. a Month

These new emigrants were paid in cash ten shillings a month, or half-a-crown a week for a man, and at first six shillings for a woman. They worked for this wage from sunrise to sunset, usually about ten hours a day. The labour was so remunerative that every effort was made, after their five years' contract was over, to make them stay on in the country and continue their labours. No employer was allowed to pay more than half-a-crown a week under the regulations of the Colony.

The Colonial Secretary of Natal states in a letter written at this time: "These Indian coolies are not a saving people, and few will be able to pay their passage back to India. There is every reason to believe that they will become permanent residents."

Certainly it was not likely that these immigrants would become a "saving people" on half-a-crown a week!

Sweated Labour

Let me continue the story. For six years this pitifully sweated labour from India—with always its vicious sex proportion of three men to every one woman herded together in barracks—continued to come over unchallenged and unchecked. Clover professional Indian recruiters were employed, who used all forms of fraud and guile in their profession of "coolie-catching." The recruiters were paid so much per head for every Indian labourer they brought to the depot. The sum paid was more for a woman than a man, because women were more difficult to obtain. Then, after six years' trial, the Indian Government, which had always been reluctant to send out this Indian labour, found a means to stop it altogether. But at once the prospects of Natal Colony suffered, and again every form of pressure was brought to bear in London in order to obtain a renewal. At last, after six years of effort, the same indentured Indian labour was reopened. Again, the second fateful step was taken, after full deliberation, and with universal consent of the white population of Natal, without a single protest.

At the time of renewal, the Indian Government stipulated a free passage back for any Indian who had faithfully served out his indenture and had also remained an extra five years as a resident in Natal. As the policy at this time was entirely directed to

wards getting Indians in some way or other to settle in the country, and not to go back to India, this new move of the Indian Government in obtaining a free passage back was countered by offering free land for permanent settlement to Indians, who decided to take it instead of their return passage.

Coolie-Catching

For as long as their constant stream of cheap and reliable labour could be obtained from India and so long as a great part of it could be induced to settle near the sugar plantations, it was possible to supplement this Indian labour with kafir labour, and thus to keep down the price of all agricultural labour in the colony to the Indian level of 10s. a month. Some of the wealthiest families in Natal have made their fortunes in the past out of this organised indentured Indian labour. Among them are those Europeans who are the bitterest anti-Asiatics to-day.

(To be Continued)

"Natal Witness" on the Asiatic Bill

The *Natal Witness* dated April 8, has the following leading article which is unusual for that paper since it has never been pro-Indian:—

Of the many speeches which have been made on the Asiatic Bill there have been few more important or of more interest to those who live in Natal than that delivered by the Rev. C. F. Andrews in the City on Tuesday night, the 6th instant, a report of which we publish to-day. There may be some who will pass it over because they imagine that Mr. Andrews is a "crank" or a fanatic on the Indian question. All such we would urge most strongly to lay aside prejudice or preconceived opinion for half-an-hour while they read and reflect upon the survey which he has given of the history of indentured Indian labour in Natal. His tone is studiously moderate, his facts can be verified, and if at the end of that time they do not admit that we have some duty towards the Indian whom we imported, then we must suppose that Sir Thomas Watt was right when he declared that to South Africa the justice or injustice of the proposed legislation is immaterial, and that in this country the rights of man are regarded as "a nonsensical consideration" which cannot be allowed to weigh in the balance against self-interest. That such a view can be the view of the majority in this or any other English-speaking colony which has been founded on English traditions of freedom we refuse for a moment to believe.

But even if we are to abandon the moral and ethical case against the Bill, it can, on the most severely practical grounds, be shown to be equally defensible. What is our indictment of the Indian? It is that he under-sells the white man, and that he has a lower standard of living which enables him to do so. Both these charges may be admitted. But the remedy is in our own hands. We can refuse to deal with him when he comes to our door, we can refuse to go to his shops, we can refuse to be waited on by him in clubs and restaurants. All social problems are in their essence economic, and if our object is to drive the Indian out of business, an economic boycott will do it. Further, we can enforce our building and sanitary regulations against him and oblige him to comply with them. It will be said that the law of buying in the cheapest market is stronger than any human prejudice, and that while the Indian sells cheaper than the white man, there will always be white men and women ready to deal with him. It will be said that it is impossible for the Indian to conform to white standards until he

receives a white man's wage. What, then, is the solution? "Ship them all back to India," is the popular cry. But 69 per cent. of them, according to the 1921 census, and probably 72 per cent. of them to-day never came from India. They are South African citizens, South African-born. If we were willing to defy both law and justice by deporting them, the Indian Government would not receive them. Segregation is the next suggestion. If the Indians in Natal were allowed to spread all over the Union, which would be the simplest way of dealing with them if only the other Provinces would agree, they would be swallowed up and the Indian problem in a very short time would cease to exist. But as that is impossible, what would be the effect of segregation? Without a doubt it would be to make matters far worse than they are. Wherever a population is herded together under slum conditions, it breeds more rapidly, and although infant mortality may be high it does not compensate for the increased birth-rate. If the Indian problem is serious to-day it would be ten times more serious after a few years of segregation. Restrictive legislation designed to drive the Asiatic out of the trades in which he is now engaged will only have the effect of forcing him down to still lower levels where he will become far more degraded than the poor white, whose very existence he will threaten. He cannot, presumably, be allowed to die of starvation: if he is segregated and not allowed to work he will breed even more rapidly than he does at present: if he is allowed to work he will monopolise the unskilled labour market which is the poor white's last refuge. Were the Indian not an Indian there would be no two opinions as to how he should be dealt with. Labour politicians would unite in declaring the only way to raise his standard of living to be to get hold of his children, to see that they were sent to school, to see that they were clean when they came there, and by gradually instilling into them ideals of decency to reform, if not this generation, then the next. At the same time they would urge that housing conditions should be improved, that greater opportunities to progress and prosper should be offered, and that partly by force and partly by example and encouragement, the Indian should be raised from his present position.

But because these men whose fathers we invited and enticed to come here are not white, we propose to force them down still further. The effect on India is already evident. It is not only Indian opinion which is aflame. Lord Reading spoke as plainly as his official position allowed, and prominent business men like Sir D'Arcy Lindsay have spoken more plainly still. On the most material grounds can we afford to sacrifice the friendship of India? A glance at the map shows that we cannot. Natal must look eastward for trade. It may easily be that before long she may have to look eastward for danger. Australia, confronted with the same problem, has decided that India's goodwill is too valuable to lose. That we are gravely embarrassing the Home Government is a consideration which should affect Natal, even if the Nationalist Party is indifferent to it. But more serious than the effect either upon India or even upon the Home Government is the probable effect upon the native. The Nationalists plead that they must get the Indian question out of the way before they tackle the native problem. But are we seriously prepared not only to face the passive resistance which must inevitably follow, but also to allow the native to stand by and look on at it with a view to profiting by the example of the Indian and imitating him when his own time comes? The memory of the last passive resistance movement has surely not so soon been forgotten.

What, then, it may be asked, do the opponents of the measure suggest? They suggest nothing more than that it shall be held up for another year while

a conference between the Union and the Indian Governments takes place. Out of open hostility no good can come. But if the whole question can be debated in an atmosphere of conciliation it should not be too difficult to find a way out which will be acceptable to both sides. When General Smuts and Gandhi were working amicably together in 1916 voluntary repatriations reached the figure of 5,580. To-day they are only between 1,000 and 2,000. The principle of a conference was admitted when Dr. Malan allowed the Indian deputation to give evidence before the Select Committee. Why, then, is the matter so urgent that it will not brook a little further delay? Those who are pressing for immediate action are the young Nationalists. The Indian problem is a Natal problem. When have the Nationalist hot-heads before shown themselves so exercised over the interests of this Province? Will they be equally studious of our wishes when the national flag comes to be considered?

And in the meanwhile what are they doing about the Cape coloured? Are the latter any more thrifty, any more hard-working, any more clean or decent-living than the Indian? Are not the worst forms of disease far more rife among them? Is District Six any improvement upon the slums of Durban? What, in short, can be said for the Cape coloured except that he has the vote and the Indian has not? But whereas the Nationalist Party, so far from interfering with the Cape coloured, are bent upon increasing their privileges and, if they were ten times as degraded as the Indian, would do nothing to annoy them, they do not hesitate to run the risk of setting the Empire ablaze for the sake of finding a so-called solution for a problem which not one in a hundred of them has genuinely at heart. If Natal is determined to fall into so obvious a trap it will not be for want of having her eyes opened.

Farewell To Mr. Andrews

Rawat's Bioscope Hall was full with Indians last Sunday afternoon to bid farewell to Mr. C. F. Andrews, and to express their gratitude of the services he had rendered in their cause.

At the opening of the meeting a pile of telegrams was read, wherein were expressed the sympathies of organised Indian bodies throughout South Africa in the cause for which Mr. Andrews had been striving so hard, as well as messages of reverence and gratitude to Mr. Andrews for the work he had been able to accomplish during his short stay in South Africa as the representative of the Indian people on the subject of the Asiatic Bill.

In his opening speech the president, Mr. Amod Bayat, described Mr. Andrews as a man who had, by virtue of his powerful character and sense of justice, endeared himself to the affections of Indian people as no Englishman had done before. After he had concluded his address the president garlanded Mr. Andrews on behalf of Natal Indians. Two other garlands were then presented, one from Transvaal Indians and the other from Natal Hindu young men.

Mr. J. W. Godfrey spoke at length on the Asiatic Bill. He enumerated the various points in the great question that had veered round in their favour, and all of these he attributed to the incessant effort which Mr. Andrews had directed against the iniquities in the Bill.

Mr. S. R. Naidoo paid a high tribute to Mr. Andrews on behalf of Maritzburg and said that his mission in South Africa had been a brilliant success and the success was due to his great faith in God.

The following resolutions were then unanimously passed:—

(1) "That this mass meeting of Natal Indians held

under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress hereby places on record its sincerest appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by Mr. C. F. Andrews at a most critical period in the annals of the history of the Indian community in South Africa, and prays to Almighty God that he may long be spared to continue his great mission in the cause of humanity." Proposed by Mr. P. S. Aiyar, seconded by Mr. S. R. Naidoo and supported by Mr. Beethasee Maharaj.

(2) "That this mass meeting of Natal Indians held under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress hereby places on record its deep sense of gratitude to the illustrious poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and the Imperial Citizenship Association for sending Mr. Andrews to South Africa to advise and assist the Indians in South Africa in their hour of trial." Proposed by Mr. A. H. Kazi, seconded by Mr. Jack Moodley and supported by Mr. C. R. Naidu.

Arch Deacon Hodson

arrived late on account of official duties, and was lustily cheered as he walked up the aisle. Called upon to speak, Archdeacon Hodson said he was convinced that, if passed, the Asiatic Bill would react disastrously on Europeans. He was pleased to be present at the meeting so as to testify to the fact that he was opposed to any legislation which had not the hall mark of truth and justice. The Asiatic Bill was not a Bill which had his support or that of a large section of the Europeans whom he represented. He felt that any adjustments necessary to ameliorate the conditions of the Asiatics and to bring about a better understanding between the European and the Asiatic was easily possible if both parties met the situation in a reasonable and just manner. Political privileges had always to be fought for and in England they had fought for the principle of "no taxation without representation" and it was surprising that 20 years after in this Union we should be doubting the position. He sympathised with the Asiatics and felt that they had right on their side and they were bound to succeed.

Mr. Andrews' Speech

Mr. Andrews spoke first in Hindustani and concluded his speech in English. In Hindustani Mr. Andrews said he feared no man but he feared God and if we fear Him and have faith in Him He would surely help us. Our cause was right and right would always triumph. He thanked the meeting for the purse he was presented with and said he would place it at the foot of his Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore.

In English Mr. Andrews spoke on the further research he had made into the archives of Natal and brought to light very interesting facts. (This portion of his speech will be published in our next week's issue).

From Maritzburg to Durban

Mr. C. F. Andrews arrived last Saturday in Durban from Maritzburg by car. He was welcomed at the late Mr. Purseo Rustomjee's premises by the officials of the Congress and after taking breakfast with Mr. Miankhan he interviewed the local Press and Reuter and went in the afternoon to Phoenix where he spent the night and went through the Indian papers. On Sunday the officials of the Congress had an interview with Mr. Andrews at Phoenix in connection with their future action. Mr. Andrews was invited to lunch by Mr. V. Lawrence and to dinner by Mr. A. I. Kujee. At 9 p.m. Mr. Andrews boarded the steamer and although it was raining there was a large number of Indians present at the Point to bid him farewell.

Draft Township Ordinance Congress Lodges Objections

[FROM OUR MARITZBURG CORRESPONDENT]

On the 8th instant, before a Select Committee appointed to report upon the Draft Township Ordinance, the Natal Indian Congress gave evidence objecting to several clauses in the Ordinance. Mr. S. R. Naidoo, (hon. Sec. Maritzburg Indian Congress) acted as spokesman, and with him were Messrs. A. I. Kajea, P. R. Pather, P. S. Aiyar, and R. B. Maharaj. It is to be noted that the Township Ordinance is modelled upon the Boroughs Ordinance (19 of 1924) and one of its main features is the disqualification of fresh Indian voters.

Mr. Naidoo, at the outset, said that Indians strongly objected to section 10 in Chapter III, which was designed to exclude all Indians from acquiring franchise rights in Townships. It imposed upon a person the necessity of acquiring not only a Township Franchise, but also a Parliamentary Franchise, the qualifications in each case being one and the same, before a person was entitled to be placed on the voters' list. In other words the registration as a voter on the Parliamentary Roll was a passport to be placed on the Townships Roll. Continuing he said, the Indians, as everyone knew, had been disfranchised (in Natal) from acquiring Parliamentary vote. That Act denied civic rights to Indians. And yet it was sought to bring within the scope of the Townships Ordinance the operation of Act 8 of 1896, so that the legislature not content with the deprivation of civic rights enjoyed by Indians prior to 1896, attempted to make further inroads upon the rights of Indians.

Proceeding Mr. Naidoo said, no single allegation of any misuse or abuse of the rights of franchise had ever been made against Indians, who made use of their vote in the interest and welfare of their respective Townships.

In 1922, when the Congress strenuously opposed the principle then introduced of excluding Indians from placing their names on the voters' list, the Minister of the Interior communicated to the Congress in the following terms:—

"In regard to the Townships Franchise Ordinance the Government in recommending the reservation of the Ordinance did so as they propose to appoint an officer to enquire into the conditions existing in the Townships in Natal so that they may satisfy themselves as to what steps, if any, should be taken in regard to restrictions of franchise specially affecting Asiatics."

The promise made in that communication, Mr. Naidoo said, had not been carried out, and yet it was proposed to disqualify all Indians.

Since the year 1921, and yearly thereafter repeated attempts were made to deprive the Indians of their vote. We therefore could not help feeling that the objective of the difficult ordinances, including the one under consideration, was to refuse to admit any more Indians to the benefits of the franchise, no matter what their interest or stake in the Township might be.

Proceeding Mr. Naidoo submitted that rates and votes must go together. It was needless to point out that in the different Townships there were hundreds of Indians, who owned landed properties to a considerable value. They were required to pay rates, and to conform to all the duties and obligations imposed upon them by law. And yet if the present Ordinance was passed, they would be debarred from acquiring the ordinary and elementary franchise in Townships, to voice their feelings and to protect their interests. Finally he said, "The principle of excluding Indians, who are otherwise qualified, cannot be justified, nor can it be defended on grounds of justice, equity or expediency."

object to any amendment to the existing law relating to the franchise. The amendment proposed is an attempt to alter the existing constitution of Townships, and this we contend besides being illegal is not within the power of legislation vested by the South Africa Act in a Provincial Council."

The Deputation further objected to section 91 of the Ordinance, which placed extraordinary powers in the hands of Townships in regard to the sale, use and occupation of unalienated lands owned by Townships. It was pointed out that similar powers given under a different Ordinance were detrimentally used against the interests of Indians. Instances were shown how in Durban and Maritzburg, Indian tenants occupying Corporation buildings for several years, were given no opportunity to purchase sites which were offered at public sales because of anti-Asiatic condition being inserted in the conditions of sale.

Balfour in Commotion

A Sequel to Supreme Court Decision

"Black vs. White."

The Supreme Court's judgment that the Town Council's proceedings in refusing licences to four Indian storekeepers were grossly irregular has raised the question as to how the Council is to pay the heavy bill of costs. The sentiment of the ratepayers is largely with the Council in refusing the licences, but since the point of the judgment was the manner of the refusal and not the refusal itself, there was much speculation as to how the four councillors responsible would fare at the public meeting called to discuss the position. This meeting was held recently in the Council Chamber. The room was crowded to the doors and every councillor attended. After some warm discussion, by a majority of seven votes, the four councillors were asked to resign.

Mr. A. M. Mostert said this was really a question of black versus white. Unless the question of Indian trading was settled forthwith not a single white store would exist here in a very short time. It was for the coming generations that he was fighting. Had the Council won the case nothing would have been heard about the matter. By their action the Council had proved themselves worthy of the confidence of the ratepayers. He suggested that the costs be met by a small levy on property owners. With the credit balance in hand the amount realised would meet the case.

Mr. McKenna said it was apparent from the judgment who was to blame. The Court had held that the Council's proceedings were grossly irregular. The Council had not consulted the ratepayers before giving their decision, and it was not fair that the ratepayers should be asked to pay for the Council's mistakes. (Cries of "No!")

Councillor Nichol: I objected to the Indian licences conscientiously and should it be necessary to do the same again, I should do it.

He suggested a levy of one penny on an erf valued at £25, which would mean only 2s. 1d. a year.

Councillor Boyd declared that the Council had carried out their duties in a proper and conscientious manner. He was chairman of the Council when the licences were refused, and everyone had a fair hearing. Were the applicants to come before him again he would act in precisely the same manner.

Mr. Mostert remarked that the committee who dealt with the licences did not include the Mayor. He was the normal chairman, but he was not present to censure those who were. The committee had done their best for the ratepayers. He predicted again that in five years no white store would remain

in Balfour. Then the present critics would rue the day on which they had refused to pay these costs. There were over 1,700 stands, and a levy of 10s. each would more than pay the costs.

Mr. Lauser, the Mayor (who presided at the meeting), explained his absence from the licensing committee of the Council. As an attorney, with the Indians concerned as clients, he could not conscientiously sit as chairman at that meeting and act impartially. This was explained to the committee at the second sitting. He was informed that his presence would be required during the discussion of the Indian licences. "The two members of the licensing board should have stood apart as I did, as they are storekeepers. I tried to point out the legal position and told them that the Council's case would be thrown out on the irregularity of the records."

Councillor van der Walt said the action of the Council was against all British ideas of fair play. They were not there to fight the question of Indian versus white, but the action of the Council at the licensing meeting.

After further discussion a vote was called for. Mr. Harold McHattie proposed that the four councillors responsible be asked to resign.

Mr. Mostert proposed that it be placed on record that the past good services of the four councillors receive the heartiest support of the ratepayers and that their action in refusing the Indian licences was upheld.

On the vote being taken, Mr. McHattie's resolution was carried by a majority of seven.—*The Star*.

Indians in South Africa

(Continued from page 106)

One must admit that the successful Indian traders do give the Europeans a vexing problem. The mayor of one of the big cities, after a long conversation with me, admitted that the proposed anti-Asiatic bill 'did not have a leg to stand on ethically.' However this same individual went on to say that he is in favour of the Bill, and that he believed 99 per cent. of the white people were in favour of it, and that they would adopt it, regardless of ethics; that the situation had become so acute that it was a matter of the preservation of the whites, and that his children in the next generation would not be able to compete with the children of these successful Indian traders; and that the whites could not do through fair competition, they must do through restrictive legislation.

The humiliations endured by the Indian communities are difficult of explanation. If the discriminations were social only, then the observer could find parallels in other countries. But where the restrictions are social, economic, domestic, political, racial and religious, one is compelled to look to ancient times for parallels. Indians must ride on the three rear seats only of the trams; they are debarred from certain public libraries; they are refused entrance to first-class hotels, dining rooms, clubs, Christian associations, and even churches. They are universally called 'coolies.' An official textbook in geography for certain of the white schools, shows the picture of a Bengalee gentleman with the caption 'a typical Indian coolie.' An Indian graduate of Cambridge or Oxford or any Indian University, will be pointed out by ignorant white children or adults as a 'coolie.' It is not culture which is taken as the standard, but race, and race alone.

All Indian business men are required to obtain a trade licence, which is given by a white official at his own discretion, and which must be applied for and renewed periodically. All Indians wishing to travel for commercial or social purposes from one

Province of the Union to another, must obtain a passport ticket which is always limited as to time, the maximum being two or three weeks. This humiliation partakes of the same nature as the indignity that is heaped upon the native African, who, since the white man has come into his country to control him, has been obliged to wear continuously a pass on his person, giving his registered number and showing that he has paid his tax. It is as though the whole black population were convicts at large. Nothing in modern times is at all comparable to it, save the infamous 'yellow ticket' of Czarist Russia.

In industry, the 'colour bar' reserves all remunerative labour to the white worker, and the colour of his skin determines whether a man may receive twenty-five shillings a shift or two shillings and his food. Just consider to what lengths an unblushing racial arrogance can go, when in the Transvaal, half the tax of a native African is remitted if he has worked three months for a white man!

In a province such as Natal, the prejudice against the Indian is understood when one considers the population figures. There are only 100,000 Europeans of all kinds, yet 140,000 Indians, and the Indians have a higher birth rate. The European who holds political and commercial sway, and controls the social system, looks upon the Indian as a foreigner. He realises that he cannot get rid of the native African, because Africa is the only native country of the black, and the black population is so great as to preclude the possibility of extermination. The desire for absolute white supremacy causes the European to believe that his own salvation rests upon the deportation and exclusion of all Indians.

Of course, the white man forgets the circumstances which brought the Indians to Natal. In the early days, the British sugar planters found that the Bantu was not a successful agriculturist. He had been a nomad and a shepherd, moving from one place to another. He had no permanent buildings, no permanent towns, no permanent farms. He would cut down the forests and for two or three years plant gardens. But when the soil became weak, and when his desire to move to a new scene became strong, he would move on, care free and happy. He refused to work under the restraints of modern farm labour. It not only caused him to work during long hours of the day, but it practically obliterated his old social system. His family, his tribal laws, and social customs were all built around another method of life, and he simply would not work according to the modern system. Therefore, the early planters looked to the great country of India for their agricultural labourers. Agents were sent to Indian villages, and labour was recruited. Individuals and families came. Many of them were recruited by agents who brought bags of gold to India, taking the nuggets from the bags and permitting the simple villagers to see the gold glisten in the Indian sunshine. They were told that South Africa was the promised land where gold and prosperity could be found. Thumb prints were used to sign contracts. They went by the boatload, and they worked with fidelity. There is no greater cultivator of the land in the world than the Indian. There is no agriculturalist so patient. There is no agriculturalist more industrious and steady. Men, women and children worked long hours. The contracts that they had signed stated that, if they successfully completed one or two terms, they were to be allowed to purchase plots of land and settle as permanent citizens of the new country. They successfully completed one term, two terms, three terms. They saved their little earnings, and purchased little sections of land on which they planted sugarcane and vegetables. They prospered, until after a while they or their native-born sons gained control of the vegetable markets of Durban and other towns.

Then came bitter opposition. The newly proposed anti-Asiatic Bill intends to take away this well-earned land which the Indians have acquired. A strip thirty miles back from the sea is to be confiscated. Let him who has a conscience answer whether this is justice or perfidy! 'Scraps of paper' has become a favourite expression of the Anglo-Saxon race of late, and perhaps it has got so thoroughly into our consciousness that we propose to make our own solemn contracts nothing but 'scraps of paper.' But let it not be forgotten that, where nominal Christians break contracts of this character, and are supported by government legislation, in parliaments opened by Christian prayer, they will have to answer to the conscience of Hindus and Mahomedans for their actions, and will stand condemned at the bar of enlightened public opinion.

Meantime, how did the Indian trader get to South Africa? It was on this wise. The thousands of Indian families who had migrated to the new country found themselves without ghee, without Indian sweetmeats, spices, curries, and rice. They found themselves without the little Oriental trinkets and jewels that they loved. They found themselves without the lovely coloured silks to which they had been accustomed. Nothing but plain Anglo-Saxon cloth was available. Therefore, certain traders began to import for the Indian communities the things that they loved; this little trade, with the growth of the population, grew until it became a thing of power.

Meantime, Indians began to find that they were successful intermediaries between European wholesalers and the African communities. They began to find that they were able to carry forward an ever enlarging commercial enterprise. Therefore, just as people of all nationalities follow the stream of successful commerce, so Indian traders grew year by year in numbers and in power. The proposal to deport the whole Indian community, and to deny it the rights of citizenship and trade, becomes all the more difficult when one remembers that, approximately, two-thirds of the present Indian population of the Union of South Africa is native-born, some families go back as far as three generations of native-born residence in South Africa. Thousands of these Indians have never seen India, and one might just as well talk of repatriating the third generation Americans, sending them back to England, Ireland, Scotland, France or Germany, as to talk about repatriating third generation Indians in South Africa.

The Government, a few years ago, adopted a bonus system whereby a cash allowance would be given to Indian families who would voluntarily migrate to India. Certain of the families which accepted this bonus have found themselves out of touch with Indian life and methods, and have become miserable beyond expression. Those in charge of Indian immigration in South Africa told me on several occasions of the miserable and bitter petitions which had come to them from these returned Indians, begging that they might 'come back home to South Africa.' All peoples who move to new countries drop certain of their ancient customs and take on new methods; an attempt to drive them back into the old country will always end in utter futility.

There is only one solution, and that is to permit the 161,000 Indians who are now in South Africa to live there in peace, and to grant them citizenship, to trust them, and to make them a part of the body politic. Under the Smuts-Gandhi agreement, no new Indian immigrants are coming to South Africa. The only increase is through birth. It is either a marvellous compliment to the Indians, or a serious indictment against the white citizens, to say that one and one-half million white men and women cannot successfully compete in a great new nation, in a vast territory with unlimited resources, with a small community of 161,000 Indians, scattered

throughout the territory of the Union, these comparatively few Indians could be easily absorbed and naturalized in due time.

(To be Continued)

THE M. K. GANDHI LIBRARY AND PARSEE RUSTOMJEE HALL COMMITTEE

Our Experience in India

A Lecture on the above will be delivered by Messrs. J. W. Godfrey and V. S. C. Pather (members of the South African Indian Congress deputation, who recently returned from India) at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, 140 Queen Street, Durban, on Wednesday the 28th April 1926, at 7-30 p.m. Mr. Pather will speak in Tamil if necessary. All are cordially invited to attend.

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કોલસા
કોઈ પણ સ્ટેશન
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