

# INDIAN OPINION

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Government proposes to consolidate the enactments relating to local government and the proposed Bill is before the Legislative Council.

Certain members of the council have asked Government to defer consideration of this Bill pending the Franchise Bill being finally passed by the Legislative Council with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Whether the Governor will pay any heed to the request of the members is another matter.

It appears clear to us that the local Government is determined to deny the mass of the people an opportunity to learn the principles of self government beginning from the villages and the Town of New Amsterdam and the City of Georgetown by allowing the residents of these places to elect ALL their representatives in the several Councils. Although Government promised to set up Commissions to consider the franchise of the Villages and Municipalities since July 1941 no effort has been made up to date to set up these Commissions. Here is another broken promise. What is the reason for this?

At the present time there are 25 village and 70 country districts. The residents of the village districts elect two thirds of their councillors while in the country districts all the councillors are nominated by the Local Government Board. In addition to the village and country districts there are numerous districts called rural districts which are also administered by the Board.

It is interesting to note what the President of the Village Chairmen's Conference stated about the Local Government Board in his 1944 and 1945 addresses as published in the Press.

At Bartica on 19th August 1944, Mr. T. T. Thompson stated that "the personnel of the Local Government Board does not inspire confidence on the part of the rural population."

And again at Mahaica on 21st August, 1945, Mr. Thompson stated that "there are cases where no attendance is registered "for a whole year, while with a membership of nine, "two or three important meetings have still fallen "through consecutively for want of a quorum, or they "have been barely constituted."

Comment seems unnecessary on this phase of the subject. This Journal and the British Guiana East Indian Association have made repeated representations to Governor after Governor regarding the personnel of Boards and Committees but these Administrators have a panel of "handymen" and "yes-men" and they are not prepared to go out of that panel.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies laid emphasis on local government in his despatch of 14th March, 1945 on the subject of West Indian Federation and self-government. In a portion of his despatch Col. Stanley stated that "I attach particular importance to the "development of village councils and community work on the lines "already recommended."

The West India Royal Commission stated in their 1936-1939 recommendations regarding British Guiana as follows: "Some initiative is required of Government to ensure the "proper organisation under the Local Government Law of ALL "rural and

## Mr. M. R. RAYMAN BACK ON SHORT HOLIDAY

Back to the colony on a short holiday is Mr. M. Raza Raman, a son of Mr. Abdool Rayman J. P. of Vreed-en-Hoop, West Bank, Demerara.

Our account of the recent congestion of the Queens College. Young Mr. Rayman had to be sent to Codrington College, Barbados.

After matriculating it is understood that Mr. Rayman will proceed to Canada to study medicine where his elder brother Mr. Hassan Rayman is already pursuing his medical studies. Mr. R. Rayman will return to Barbados about the 20th instant.

"Indian Opinion" wishes them every success.

## SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE REPORTED MISSING

Among those missing: ex-Congress President Subhas Chandra Bose, 48, Cambridge-educated leader of Japan's proposed puppet government for India. Last week, he was reported killed in an airplane crash in Formosa.

village communities, wherever situated, and "whether or no they have happened to express a desire to "be brought within the scope of the Local Government Board."

Since this recommendation was made the local Government showed not initiative whatever, and made no attempt to improve conditions. It is to be regretted that the present administration appears unconcerned in this very vital matter.

(To be continued)

# British Guiana Dramatic Society News

The usual fortnightly meeting of the of the B. G. D. S. was held at the residence of the Hon'y President, at 273 Lamaha St. on Friday 24th August commencing at 8. pm. The President Mr. Balkaran Singh presided and among those present were Patrons John Mohamed, Dr. J. B. Singh The Hon'y President, Mrs. J. B. Singh and several others.

The main subject that occupied the attention of members for the evening was a discussion on several points on a letter received from the Treasurer Mr. I. Kawall for the consideration of the Society. The following were agreed upon:

- (1) That the privilege to financial members of a 50 per cent reduction at our public functions be abolished.
- (2) That the annual subscription be raised to One Dollar for ordinary membership and \$5.00 for Patrons.
- (3) That the "Dramag, (the official organ of the Society) be printed half-yearly. [4] That the Society should present an Annual concert consisting of western and eastern music.

It was agreed that the other suggestions in Mr. Kawall's letter would be discussed at the next meeting which was fixed for Friday, September 7th commencing at 5. p.m.

It was unanimously agreed that the Annual Convention of the Society to which all Indian Organizations would be invited, should take place in August 1946.

It was also decided to dispose of all unnecessary belongings of the Society.

The chief feature of our meeting of Friday, Sept 7th will be impromptu speeches arranged by Mr. Guya Persaud. All members are asked to attend punctually at 5. p.m. as several matters of importance will be discussed.

## The Strike In Nigeria

(Continued from last week).

### Governor Makes Six Moves, All Fail

Determined to break the strike, Governor Richards has made six moves up to the time of writing this dispatch. Firstly, he threatened not to pay government monthly employees their salaries for the month of June and to forfeit their pensions, gratuities and cancel contractual rights of Public Works sub contractors engaged on government jobs. When the threat failed, Richards ordered the arrest of four railway workers' leaders and charged them with participating in an illegal strike. Unable to secure a conviction in the courts, the men were released. His next move was to try appeasement policy. He issued a public statement promising not to victimize strike leaders if they ordered their men back to work, but even this gesture was rejected. Then the Governor denounced the strikers and accused them of sabotage on the transport and communication systems. He declared that a train was derailed at a place called Oshodi and strikers had cut telephone lines between Lagos, the capital of Nigeria and parts of the interior. Ten supposed leaders were arrested at midnight by the police and charged. Action against one has since been withdrawn. The others will stand trial. Having got hold of some of the leaders, Richards directed his attack upon the African Press which has given full support to the strikers.

### Defence Regulations Re-Introduced

All the war time Defence Regulations which were rescinded after the end of the war in Europe last May, have been re-introduced. Under these regulations constitutional government has been superseded by dictatorial powers enabling the Governor to close down any newspaper publishing news or criticising the government, which in the personal opinion of the Governor is calculated to cause discontent against government.

[to be continued]

# India

## Second Try

Unshaken by his first failure to break Indian deadlock (TIME, July 16), Vic Lord Wavell would try again. Last week he explained for London to try to figure with the Labor Government a new way to crack the old problem.

This time there was a chance of a realistic proposal. The highest Hindu communal agreement between Hindus (100 million) and Moslems (92 million) has met the Moslem League's demand for Pakistan (a separate Moslem state). Before he parted, the Viceroy made a decisive move to clarify this befogged subject: he proclaimed elections, the first in eleven years for Central Assembly, in eight for the eleven Provincial Legislatures.

The hottest issue at the polls will undoubtedly be Pakistan, with the League and Congress against. The vote will show the real strength of the separatist trend. Commented the practical London *Time*: "The restoration of political life...even if it does not resolve the communal problem will relate communal claims to ascertainable fact."

Both Britain and India wanted a decision. The Raj lifted the ban on Mohandas Gandhi's All-India National Congress, restored its funds, was about to free its members still in jail. The Moslem League's president, shrewd, suave Mohamed Ali Jinnah, was already campaigning in the Punjab, heart of the hypothetical Pakistan state. The Congress Party prepared its biggest campaign. Jawaharlal Nehru (see BCOKS) and other leaders would make a platform tour that would take in towns and villages in all the voting provinces.

(TIME)

## JANAM ASTHMI AT PLN. VERSAILLES

The Hindus of Pln. Versailles assembled in hundreds at their Temple on Thursday evening 30th August, to celebrate the Anniversary of the Great Lord Krishna.

The Temple with its tasteful eastern decorations resembled one of the Great Temples of Mother India. Under the dazzling illumination of the electric lights sat Pandit Deodat Sharma, who read and explained to the people the Life History of one of the World's Greatest Benefactor-Shri Krishna.

The Ceremony which lasted until midnight was interspersed by musical items and Praises sang by the children and Latebmi Sabha.

# INDIA TODAY

## India And The Labour Victory

The Labor landslide in Great Britain will improve the atmosphere in India, but it will not necessarily mean a material change.

Here are the relevant facts that must be included in any estimate of the situation:

The official position of the British Labor Party is full of good will, but without commitments to specific action. (See *India Today*, Jan. 1945).

The position of Prime Minister Atlee is static [See interview in this issue.]

The position of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin is not known except for his pledge, made during the campaign, to abolish the Indian Office and place India under the Dominion Secretary.

Sir Stafford Cripps who will be President of the Board of Trade in the new cabinet recently urged general elections in India.

In India, comment on the elections was circumspect. *The Hindustan Times* of New Delhi, edited by Devadas Gandhi, said:

"This transformation in British politics may or may not mean radical changes in the imperialist creed, but cannot mean that the same values will be applied by Labor as by the Tories."

Vallabhai Patel, a member of the Congress Working Committee, seemed to express general Nationalist sentiment with his comment,

"We shall judge the Labor Party by what they do after they have formed a government. When they had their government on previous occasion we had a very sad experience. We hope that this time, having a good majority, they will live up to their professions."

The Moslem League organ *Dawn* had no editorial comment on the elections.

Only one prediction can be made with assurance: The Labor government will support Viceroy Lord Wavell in whatever moves he thinks ought to be made to break the deadlock.

The possibilities for new moves are:

Appointment of an Executive Council including Moslems but without the participation of the Moslem League, or the calling of new elections, or both

However, the new Labor Government must move very quickly if it wants to obtain the confidence of the people of India. Any delay will inevitably arouse suspicion and mistrust.

People of India and friends of India all over the world will now eagerly await the implementation of Labor Party's pledge

## Letter to the Editor

The Editor,  
Indian Opinion.

Sir,

The Great War is now over. The Pacific Ocean would be almost free for ships to travel; and as we all want to see foodstuffs and other goods from India, including sugar and rice bags, we the workers in this part of the Colony would like you and the Officers of our Association to take up the matter of getting ships to enable those of us who want to return to India to do so as soon as possible.

Cannot our Immigration Agent General act now by putting an advertisement in the papers asking all those who want to return to India to register their names? It is a very long time, since a ship has returned to India with people who are entitled to go back to their homeland.

When Pandit Kunzru was in the Colony a short while ago a large number of people told him that they would like to return to India. He promised to do what he could when he returned to India.

Please look into this matter for us.

Yours truly,

Indian

Rose Hall Village,

Corentyne,

25th Aug. 1945.

R. Sigh

of independence to India. The first move will be watched with keen interest as it likely to indicate the new Labor Government's policy towards India.

(India Today)

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# INDIA

(Continued from last week).

## The Wavell Plan

He found Britain's leaders engrossed in the war's end, and the coming general election. Said Prime Minister Winston Churchill testily: "Why trouble me about this business now? Can't you wait?" Wavell said no. Britain had pledged her word that India should have self-government when the war ended. Britain must keep her word. If she was to win Indian good will, it was vital to break the three-year political deadlock at once. The situation must not be allowed to drift dangerously while momentous events brewed in Asia. Said Wavell grimly: without a new offer backed by the Government he would not return to India at all.

For two months he cooled his heels in London, waiting for the Cabinet to approve his plan. Then it was modified and passed.

As presented to Congress and Moslem leaders, the Wavell Plan awarded to Indians all posts (except Defense) in India's Executive Council—the equivalent of a national cabinet—"on a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportions of Moslems and caste Hindus." The door was left open for the native states, but there would be no coercion. Dominion status, as promised in the Cripps proposals, was still the goal. The Wavell Plan brought it almost within reach.

As an earnest of his intentions, the Viceroy released eight Congress leaders interned since 1942, invited chosen representatives of all parties to Simla to discuss his Plan. The talks proceeded briskly; but stalled on the clause granting organizational parity to Moslems and caste Hindus. Canny Jinnah balked at the prospect of being outvoted in a Hindu-controlled Council. Hastily the factions adjourned for further consideration.

Lord Wavell waited quietly while the endless corridor conferences proceeded. He had come far, he had no intention of jeopardizing the success of his mission now.

The Congress leaders were willing to take office. The Moslem League would scarcely allow itself to be squeezed out of India's new government by the Congress ministers and non-League Moslems. This week, when the Simla conference convenes again, the prospects for settlement are bright.

## Next, Dominion Status

The stakes were greater than India itself, for they included the Empire and the world. The Wavell Plan was the first step toward Dominion status. When that was accomplished, India would become an equal partner in the Commonwealth, free (if she so desired) to secede from the Crown. Was Britain not risking "the brightest jewel of the British Crown?" Indians were not Britons linked by ties of blood and sentiment to the islands in the distant northern sea.

Perhaps. But Dominion status would confer undeniable advantages. India would join a free concert of nations who wielded an influence in world councils more potent than the sum of their parts. Industrial India, with a swiftly rising output (mostly steel and textiles), would expand most rapidly under the careful nurturing of imperial preferences. If the price came in (as they almost certainly would in time), the Dominion of India would become a mighty anchor in the storms that might ravage postwar Asia.

In his poetry anthology, whose footnotes are often as revealing as an autobiography, Lord Wavell had quoted one stanza of Poet Matthew Arnold's long, gloomy *Obermann*:  
*Once More:*

*The East bow'd low before the blast  
In patient, deep disdain.  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again.*

But none knew better than Lord Wavell that India was no longer content to remain plunged in thought. All Asia was astir. If Britain wished to keep India in her Commonwealth, she could only hope to tighten the bonds of Empire by loosening them.

Not until that step of high statesmanship had been achieved would India's Viceroy be free to turn to another project—a biography, of Belisarius, Byzantine conqueror of the North African Vandals

(Concluded)

P'n, Skeldon  
1st September 1945

The Editor  
Indian Opinion  
Georgetown  
Sir,

Kindly publish this important letter in your popular columns.

Being born and grown up at P'n. Skeldon I carefully observe a serious social dilemma developing among the resident Labourers.

Originally the Negroes lived in a separate section from the East Indians and this wise system was beneficial to both races. But today the entire scene has changed to corruption as both races are found living side by side in these ranges (Barracks) I want to think if the Manager deliberately do this as part of his policy or it is an oversight.

Since separate 'Heavens' are built for his Mules and Cows why not this same system for the two races, that they can more freely identify themselves with their religion and habits.

Let us see an early move to eradicate the present disgrace.

(Indian)

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## DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT NOTICE

Efforts are being made to trace the whereabouts of Pheru, male No. 113, B. R. 1901, and Itwaria, female, No. 952, B. R. 1914, who were married by the Magistrate, West Demerara Judicial District, at the Vreedet-Hoop Court on 6th July, 1931. The parties were then residing at Pouderoey. When last heard of in 1943 they were residing at Versailles.

Pheru and Itwaria are hereby requested to communicate with the Immigration Agent General or one of the District Commissioners as early as possible. If anyone can furnish information regarding the whereabouts of the parties or either of them, the Immigration Agent General will be grateful if he or she will communicate with him or one of the District Commissioners without delay.

W. ROBERTS.

Immigration Agent General [Acting].

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
Georgetown.

24th August, 1945.

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