

Indian Opinion

OFFICIAL WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE BRITISH GUIANA EAST INDIAN ASSOCIATION

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

— EDITORIAL —

Franchise Again

We know now as a matter of fact that several meetings have been held in protest against the Franchise Commission's Report which failed to recommend Universal Adult Suffrage.

We wonder what our Commissioners are thinking since they read that the Trinidad Franchise Commission has recommended Universal Adult Suffrage for that democratic colony.

We must here record that it was a waste of time for the local Commission to take evidence. The Report as we know it is purely the wish of the Commissioners and not of the people

Race, Religion and Colour Discrimination

Time and again we have been directly and indirectly accused of indulging in race politics. Time and again we have been taken to task because fearlessly, we made mention of the fact that racial discrimination was indulged in and not infrequently the coloured peoples in general and Indians in particular are the easy victims.

We are now more than ever before, convinced that even those well-placed leaders of the British Empire are conscious of the fact that such discrimination, as we have pointed before do exist. To those who know the true situation, but will still close their eyes to facts; we put the frank question: Why did Captain L.D. Gammans, M.P. in his six suggestions for Empire unity (etc) state,

"The creation of an Imperial Civil Service to which any British Subject with the necessary qualifications can

The Guiana Sunday Graphic Opens Barrage Of Attack On Sir Gordon Lethem

SUGAR INDUSTRY THE UNHOLY TERROR AND BUG BEAR OF DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH GUIANA

(BY THE WATCH DOG)

Once again [the sugar paper the Sunday Graphic has openly attacked the Governor, trying by all power a their command to divert the conflict once that the masses have in his Excellency much to their own interest. They say that CHANGES as have been advocated by Sir Gordon are due to a change of heart of the people in Britain and not him; we ask whether there is a change of heart among the Sugar Gods both in Britain and British Guiana and whether they have shown in any tangible way this change of spirit for the masses?

Certainly it could not be, by caring mules more than human beings. Sugar seems to be rejoicing that they have finally been able to pull the strings in England to have the Governor to think their way; Sugar has sown the whirlwind by establishing an industry based on the sweat, blood, misery, and starvation of an entire people we are certain that they will reap the whirlwind and will disappear with it. The great factor, time will tell. Every chimney that comes down will never be replaced and will be blown with the whirl wind.

Seven Organisations Claim Universal Adult Suffrage Forthwith For Masses

Comments on Majority Report of Franchise Commission Handed Sir Gordon

Observations on Report of the British Guiana Franchise Commission by:—

The British Guiana East Indian Association,
British Guiana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha,
The Islamic Association of British Guiana,
Sadr-Anjuman E-Islam,
The Men Power Citizens Association,

aspire WITHOUT ANY DISTINGUISHMENT OF RACE, RELIGION, or COLOUR?"

We wonder now, what our public men, and Governmental heads have to say to this admission made by Captain L.D. Gammans.

The Guiana United Trade Union
The Cosmopolitan Workers' Union
In presenting the claims of the masses as contained in the joint Resolution cabled to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, we wish to emphasise the age-old slogan NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION—the cardinal principle of democracy. In British Guiana taxation being indirect we submit that everyone is entitled to representation.

2. According to the Majority Report of the British Guiana Franchise Commission, a somewhat erroneous impression has been created as to the percentage of illiterates in the colony by the Commissioners using figures from the 1931 Census—thirteen years ago—and made out that 30.1% of the general population, and that of this

Continued on page 3

Human Masses Treated Like Beasts In British Guiana

MULES RECEIVE MORE CARE THAN HUMAN BEINGS

The general masses whether East Indian or Africans are treated with the utmost contempt in British Guiana. This treatment is a policy fostered by the Sugar Interests and the administration, as evidenced by the system in the colony of keeping a large number of landless and unemployed people. Any casual observer to a sugar estate would see the majority of the labourers suffering from extreme malnutrition while at the same time and place the mules of the same estate enjoy full health and suffer no degree of malnutrition.

A visit to any of the coastal areas would show one the presence of mosquito to a degree which is horrifying. How can human beings live and prosper under these conditions baffles all. No wonder British Guiana has been described as the land where men die faster than they are born.

A Bouquet for the Youths Of Bushlot W.C. Berbice

Reports reaching this office indicates that several Youth Clubs started by the B.G.E.I.A. during 1943 are doing well. The recently established Tagore Youth Club at Bush Lot West Coast Berbice where Mr. Chinnapan takes an active part has been doing extremely well. Indian Opinion extend its congratulations to this club and wishes them all success.

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AGENTS

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Seven Organisations Claim Etc.

Continued from page 3

lative Council today [Messrs. E. A. Luckhoo, J. B. Singh, Peer Bacchus and C. R. Jacob] have been elected by voters who are Africans in the Majority. The same can be said of the three Portuguese [Messrs. J. I. D'Aguiar, Jos. Gonsalves and C. P. Ferreira] three Europeans, or supposed to be Europeans, Messrs. F. J. Seaford, H. C. Humphrys, and A. G. King; three Guianese or creoles of mixed races, [Messrs. E. G. Woolford, C. V. Wight, and P. C. Wight and Mr. Theo. Lee, a Chinese who have been elected by the combined votes of all the races in the colony.

5. It is felt that the amount of red-tape recommended in the Majority Report would by itself exclude a considerable number of persons from placing their names on the Voter's List. Vide par 11 and 18.

6. There is a good deal of doubt in certain quarters as to the proportion of the population in favour of Universal Adult Suffrage. To settle this, we unhesitatingly recommend a country-wide plebiscite.

7. A casual examination of the personnel of the British Guiana Franchise Commission will reveal the important fact that the Minority Groups of the country had the majority of members on the Commission the majority of whom although continuously absent at sittings of the Commission have signed the Majority Report. They seized the opportunity of protecting themselves at the expense and detriment of the bulk of the masses, and the majority groups of the colony. It is therefore considered that the recommendations of the Majority Report of the B. G. Franchise Commission is biased and prejudiced in regard to the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith to the masses. The groups to be affected would be principally Africans and Indians.

8. In view of the above observations, it is strongly urged that this Majority Report be set aside, as it does not reflect the true wishes of the mass of people of the Colony.

9. Under the circumstances, having faith and confidence in His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, we trust that he will grant to the people of this Colony as he has granted to the people of Jamaica, Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith.

Rambaros Misir

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19 Water Street

Georgetown

Letters To The Editor

The Editor, Indian Opinion.

Dear Sir,

Kindly grant me space in your paper for the publication of this letter.

Can you tell me Sir, how long should a Government officer (be he who may) remain in a district.

Personally, I feel three years should be removed and their good and bad habits go with them elsewhere.

There are some on this Coast, who has been here for four, five and seven years, these officials believe themselves to be the Gods of Olympia and Lord Bishop of Canterbury, they can do no wrong in the eyes of the already Blind Government, believe me when I tell you Sir, that these officials treat the already suffering Public with such contempt and utter Ruthlessness that will shock an onlooker, who dares to say nothing. Its even worse now, than when Mr. Evelyn Moe and Hon. A. M. Edun visited it some years ago.

Some time I often wonder if this is really a British Colony or that of a Nazis,

Thanks Etc,
DEO. NARAYAN,

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INDIAN OPINION: Published at 61 Hadfield Street, Georgetown, Demerara, by JOSEPH N. BUTLER, for the British Guiana East Indian Association of Lot A Coral Street, Georgetown, Demerara.

Letters to the Editor

Head Office,
Indian Welfare League,
Rose Hall Village, Corentyne
31st July 1944

The Editor
Indian Opinion,
Sir.

Kindly insert the following in your newspaper.

The following replies to three Resolutions as under and which were passed at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Indian Welfare League have been received from Government.

RESOLUTION NO 1

"Your resolution in support of the proposed Drainage and Irrigation Scheme on the Corentyne will be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies as requested."

RESOLUTION NO. 2

With regard to the Agricultural Sub-Station at Whim, the Director of Agriculture reports that its services are being extended, but it would be impracticable to establish a livestock farm there. The Agriculture Department is also extending its services at No. 63 Corentyne and in course of time other sub-stations will be established so that all agricultural centres can be satisfactorily served. It is hoped to send an Agricultural Instructor to Whim in the near future."

RESOLUTION NO. 3

The request that a District Administration Office should be established in the mid-Corentyne area is receiving the sympathetic consideration of Government.

Yours Faithfully
RAMJEET SINGH.

The Editor
"Indian Opinion"

Sir,
I have been taking a keen interest in the representations the Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K. C., Nominated Member of the Legislative Council, has been making on behalf of the Indian Community. I wish to say that I am not impressed with them.

No one known what he has been doing in the Executive Council and on Advisory Committees, except his colleagues. Talking to some of his colleagues, I am not impressed with their replies as to what Mr Luckhoo is doing for the Indian Community.

We are told he represents Indians in the Executive Council. We are also told that the Hon. H. N. Critchlow represents Labour in the Executive Council. The representations of both these members as expressed by them in the Legislative Council on the franchise question is entirely against the labouring classes and the masses. They are against Universal Adult Suffrage. Mr Critchlow has changed his life long views and Mr Luckhoo does not think that the mass of the people are fit to exercise the vote. One wonders if the Luckhoos are from the mass of the people, and further one wonders if their forefathers came from India as indentured labourers.

Mr Editor, it is to be hoped that you will let the people of the Colony understand what Mr J. A. Luckhoo is doing for their welfare in your widely read paper. The time has come when the mass of the people must be told the truth about their representatives and the Government must be made to understand that the public will not be fooled any longer.

Yours etc.,
INDIAN

Georgetown,
4th August, 1944.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

The recent debate on the Franchise question concerning Universal Adult Suffrage in the Legislative Council has shown how utterly backward are the majority of the present legislators of British Guiana, in the matter of grasping the trend of the world towards a better humanity.

The denial by the majority of members to concede Universal Adult Suffrage forthwith to the people is tantamount to a denial of liberty and equality among men.

British Guiana belongs to the inhabitants of the colony and its constitution must be framed to meet the requirements of its people. The present composition of the Legislative is not the people's choice and therefore cannot speak for the people of British Guiana.

Seven Organisations Claim Etc.

Continued from page 1
59.2% are Indians. We therefore presume that about 40% of the balance of illiterates are Africans. It is therefore urged that there should be no literacy test whatsoever as this would not only exclude a substantial section of the population but would also demoralise their aspirations and interest in the welfare and advancement of the Colony. On the other hand it cannot be disputed that there is very little difference in the intelligence and mentality of individuals who can merely read or write "A SIMPLE SENTENCE IN ENGLISH AND SIGN THEIR NAMES" as compared with individuals who are illiterate, especially when one takes into consideration that these people live together, move together and think together, and are engaged in the same type of occupation, dwelling in the same environment.

3. East Indian and African women would be denied the right to vote according to the qualifications recommended in the said Report both from the monetary and literary standpoint as it is a known fact that they do not earn \$10.00 per month if employed, while a great number taking care of the home earn nothing even though literate.

4. There is a definite fear impliedly expressed in the majority Report according to paragraph 40 that Indians will predominate at elections and that Indians will swamp the polling booth resulting in a preponderance of Indians in the Legislative Council.

There is surely no ground for such fear or anxiety according to the present distribution of the Indian population, but in case of likely preponderance in any constituency the majority of the voters will certainly use their better judgment, in voting for the right candidates, be he Indian, African European Portuguese or others. This observation is supported by the fact that there was not a single Indian Member of the Legislative Council until the year 1918, and that the four Indian Elected Members of the Legis-

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Letters to the Editor

HON. H.N. CRITCHLOW SOMERSAULTS

The Editor,
Indian Opinion.

Sir,
I have known the Hon. Herbert Critchlow for over 25 years, throughout this period and I understand all his life he advocated in and out of this Colony UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE for the people in the whole West Indies.

Before the B.G. Franchise Commission he and his Union advocated without reserve the adoption of Universal Adult Suffrage. The Trades Union Council, of which Mr Critchlow was Secretary advocated the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage to the workers forthwith. Mr Critchlow is fully aware that the people of Jamaica was granted Universal Adult Suffrage by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and no one knows better than he that if the people of this Colony continue to ask for universal suffrage it will be granted. But what did he do? He somersaulted, and why?

Mr Critchlow is well aware that the majority of the people in Trinidad asked for Universal Suffrage and it is now known that their request has been granted. But Mr Critchlow is now against Universal Adult Suffrage for the Workers of B.G. Has he ceased to be a worker now? I advise the working people to have a good look at him from now on in his office and in the Legislative Council.

B. G. & W. I. CONFERENCE SUPPORTS UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE

At the B. G. & West Indian Labour Conference held at the Town Hall on 28th February, 1944 Mr Critchlow voted with all the Delegates from Trinidad, Barbados, and Grenada demanding Universal Adult Suffrage with Self Government. Mr Critchlow was not man enough to say he has now changed his mind. But in the Legislative Council Mr Critchlow was able to let the Governor and others know that he has changed his mind. What is the reason?

LALL BAHADUR SINGH

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MR CRITCHLOW IS GIDDY
Some one suggested that Mr Critchlow is now giddy sitting as he is in the Legislative and Executive Councils I am afraid that he is more than giddy. Let us keep a close eye on him and we will see.

MR J. A. LUCKHOO AGAINST MASSES

I am not surprised that Mr J. A. Luckhoo and Mr H. Critchlow have both spoken against Universal Adult Suffrage in the Legislative Council. The majority of the people are most unfortunate in their representatives and unless and until all Members of the Legislative Council are elected by the votes of the people the masses cannot hope to get true representation in the Legislative Council of British Guiana.

I desire to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the combined Organisations who are leaving no stone unturned to continue the fight for Universal Adult Suffrage. The masses are behind you—go on and may God's blessings rest on you and all your supporters in this worthy cause. The article in your last week's issue is very timely.

Yours etc.,
LABOURITE

Georgetown, Demerara,
8th August 1944.

T. Annamanthadoo

GENERAL PROVISION
AND
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Strand, New Amsterdam, Barbice

News in Brief

Book-keeper Bertis Soobrian of Bath Estate Office who was holidaying for a month on the Corentyne Coast and in Georgetown, has resumed duty recently.

Assistant Teachers Alan Ramlal, Muriel Gunraj and George Bulkan of Bath have been selected for a course of training at the Government College for Teachers.

Mr. Gaya Persaud of the Magistrate's Office, spent a week-end recently at the Persauds of Hopetown Village, W. O. Barbice.

Mr. Goolcharan of No 4 Village, who is employed at a sugar factory in Trinidad recently arrived in this colony. He was accompanied by his son, Mr. Bridglall Goolcharan.

Capital Blunders Again

The Indian hating Chronicle and Iconoclasts under the heading "Era of today is partnership in all things" takes the opportunity once again to insult and deprecate the East Indian community.

Most certainly the capitalistic paper is setting the stage for a disastrous outcome of the future of British Guiana (may be it suits them) No one better than the East Indian leaders are aware of the fact that only by cooperation, mutual understanding and a give and take method can prosperity await the colony of British Guiana as a whole; but has Mr Iconoclasts and his type of leaders ever thought of the terrible ordeals the Indian community has passed through and is undergoing at present? Have they (the Indians) been ever given a square deal, have they been treated with justice and fair play in British Guiana?

Has Iconoclasts really got British Guianese at heart or only his type of men who live off the sweat and blood of the East Indians who really and truly work on the Sugar Estates from 5 a.m to 6 p.m and waist deep water planting rice to sustain him in a white collar job.

The Indians have asked for none of the free flowing advice neither from Iconoclasts nor the Governor of British Guiana. It is an old saying, when advice is given freely without asking for it, it is worth little or nothing so we tell these Sweet and Dear lovers of the East Indians to mind their own business.

Indian leaders have never overstated their case Indians have never been given fair play and justice in British Guiana and as just as a reminder to our free advisers we state that no country can ever prosper while half her population is deliberately being kept under the heels of the rest.

In conclusion will Mr. Iconoclasts try and develop a well-intentioned and generous public mind and advise the Daily Chronicle to the same way of thinking. We welcome the idea "Era of today is partnership in all things"; but don't forget the Indian community in that partnership which has been so subtly practised in the past for only certain groups of the inhabitants of the colony. Indians are willing at all times to cooperate with others if only the hand is stretched under a banner of equality.

V. Lam

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18 Water Street

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