

Indian Opinion

No. 32—Vol. XXVI.

Friday, August 17th, 1928.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.
PRICE FOURPENCE.

SUNDAY'S MASS MEETING

MR. SASTRI'S STIRRING APPEAL TO TAKE CONDONATION

A MASS MEETING of Indians was held under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress last Sunday afternoon in the Victoria Picture Palace to explain the Condonation Scheme in the light of further correspondence between the Congress and the Government.

On the platform were seated the Rt. Hon. V. S. Sastri, Agent of the Government of India, Mr. J. D. Tyson, Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, Mr. C. S. Ricketts, Advocate R. K. Khan and officials and members of the Natal Indian and the South African Indian Congress and other leading members of the Indian community. The hall was fully packed when the chairman Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee, after a few opening remarks, called upon Mr. P. K. Desai (Secretary of the South African Indian Congress) to read to the meeting further correspondence with the Department relating to the scheme which he explained in Gujarati. (The correspondence referred to appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Speeches explanatory of the scheme were made by Advocates Godfrey, Khan and Christopher. The latter, in the course of a closely reasoned speech, pointed out that so far as Natal was concerned, there was no "limitation" at law as regards liability to deportation for illicit entry, an illicit entrant could be challenged and deported no matter how long he had been in the Province; certificates of domicile also were, and had been assailable in Natal, on the ground that they had been fraudulently obtained and they were not therefore a sure protection.

That was the justification for the condonation scheme. It took away no right which anyone at present enjoyed. It did not concern the lawful-entrant at all, nor did it, in any way, threaten his rights.

So far as the illicit entrant was concerned, it was a purely voluntary scheme, illicit entrants could take it or leave it. If they took condonation, they would receive a protection certificate, and the Government's assurance of immunity; but even if they decided not to avail themselves of the scheme, it left them in the position in which they were to-day, with those rights (and only those rights) of appeal which they at present enjoyed, and with the same risk hanging over them.

Congress had asked for a general amnesty or, failing that, for exemption certificates. The Government had not agreed to either demand, and the scheme was the best that Congress could get under the existing law. It was said that they wanted legislation; but in what way was legislation superior to a solemn assurance given to the Congress, and to the Agent of the Government of India? Another Government could amend or repeal a law.

They could not fight, went on Mr. Christopher, in defence of fraud; but if they accepted the Minister's assurance and took condonation, they would be able in future, if need be, to rely on the full support of the people and of the Government of India, and of Mahatma Gandhi himself, in seeing that the Minister's assurance was implemented.

Speeches in Opposition

Three speakers availed themselves of the opportunity afforded to opponents of the scheme to express their views.

Mr. John L. Roberts denied that the Minister's scheme was a generous one. British subjects, he said, had a right to enter South Africa just as Englishmen still entered India. The protection certificate offered was a temporary document liable to cancellation at any time, at the will of the Minister.

He would beg them not to trust the Government's assurances. As a result of the scheme, the time would come when even legal entrants would have to carry what the speaker called "dog-tickets."

Mr. Nicholas also attacked the scheme on the ground that there was no guarantee that every applicant would receive a protection certificate, and that past experience had taught them the folly of relying on the assurances of the Union Government.

Further speakers who urged the acceptance of the scheme included Messrs. V. S. C. Pather, A. I. Kajee, Rooknoodeen, B. M. Patel, M. A. Motala, Ismail Gora, Swami Bhawani Dayal, and A. H. Kazi.

Mr. Sastri's Speech

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri who had listened to the various speakers for over two hours then rose amid applause and delivered an impassioned appeal which was listened to with rapt attention.

Mr. Sastri welcomed the professions by Messrs. Roberts and Nicholas that they were solicitous for the welfare of the illicit entrant, and for the honour of the Indian community. It was surprising, however, that their ardour had led them so far astray.

"I wish," said Mr. Sastri, "that every illicit entrant would clean up his record and obtain a free pardon, but my friends over there, who are so solicitous of the honour of the Indian community, wish them to remain here unconfessed, unpardoned, for ever pointed at as people who defied the laws of the country, for ever living in fear of the policeman and the blackmailer, never knowing when they may be given away and apprehended and placed before the immigration officer.

"To say to an illicit entrant, 'Do not take this condonation scheme because it is given by a Government we cannot trust'—to say that to a person in peril, is to say to him, 'Live constantly under this cloud; never seek to improve your position; if you can sleep, well sleep with troubled dreams.' They say, 'That is all we can offer you.'

"Although they say they care for his honour, or for his welfare, or for his peace of mind, yet this is the only thing that our friends opposite can tell the illicit entrant. Is there any alternative that they offer? No. They say, 'Let things be as they have been in the past. The Government have not got hold of you before; the Government cannot get hold of you.'"

Perils of Spite

That, however, went on Mr. Sastri, was not the case. Were they sure of their own relations and friends? Cases had come to his notice even since he came to South Africa where someone who had something against an Indian had laid information and brought him to trouble. It was amazing that when the Government made an offer of pardon to those whom it could deport, the reply should be that they did not want it; that they preferred rather, if the Government could get hold of them, to be deported. That was not the advice of a friend, but of an enemy. Was that how the honour of the Indian community was to be maintained?

"When the illicit entrant is caught and brought before the courts, so is the honour of the Indian community maintained. When he has been deported and his property has been disposed of to anyone, so is the honour of the Indian community maintained. When he goes back to India, and people ask, 'What is the matter with you? Why have you come back?' if he says, 'I was deported from the Union as an illegal entrant,' do you think that the people of India will say that the honour of the Indian community has been maintained?"

Someone had referred to Mr. Gandhi, and had advised them to struggle as he did. Mr. Gandhi had fought in the Passive Resistance movement for the honour of the Indian community, for the prestige of the nation, and for such rights as remained to them; they had stood by Mr. Gandhi because they had known that he was a pure soul, fighting for a pure cause, by pure methods. But who dared get up and say that this cause of illicit entrants was a pure cause, or that he would be a pure soul who put himself at the head of such a movement, and said to the Government: "We prefer to remain guilty as we came?"

Trust Somebody

The other side had told them not to give up their names or to make confession till they held a conference in Capetown and a meeting in Durban—till they had consulted 150,000 Indians.

Was that how they conducted affairs in Mr. Gandhi's time?

They must trust somebody, some duly constituted body. Let them elect with care and having done so, give them power to negotiate. The Congress had conducted these negotiations from the beginning of January last. The last date for applications for condonation was September 30. How long then were they to wait?

Mr. Roberts had said there were no illicit entrants. He based that extraordinary proposition on their rights as British subjects. It would appear, therefore, that as British subjects, they had the right to come to South Africa, and the Union Government could not shut them out. All that he (Mr. Sastri) could say was that he wished that were the case. That was a right for which Mr. Gandhi fought in this country, but having fought, he had to accept the best compromise. That was old history, but were they now to tell the Union Government: "Never mind the compromise with Gandhi, never mind the immigration laws of 1913. We are going to assert our rights as British subjects, and come and settle here."

If there were laws that they disliked he could understand their desire to defy them; but in that case the illicit entrant had no business to come as an illegal entrant. When he entered the country he should have told the Union Government that he had come to assert his rights as a British subject, he should not have sneaked in by a side door, bribed officials here and there, and brought dishonour on the Indian community.

Lost Rights

Illicit entrants could not claim to have come here to assert their rights; they had lost those rights by a compromise to which India was pledged. Let them not listen to advice of that kind, that they should go back to their rights, as British subjects, which were surrendered long ago. When September 30 came their troubles would begin if they had not by that time applied for protection. It broke his heart to think of the consequences, but what would he be able to do to help them? He had done all he could to help them in this matter. He had nothing to gain. If they did not listen to him they would be injuring themselves fatally. He had seen much in a fairly long life; he had seen India go wrong politically; he had seen injurious social customs being defended by ingenious friends; but it was in South Africa, to which he had come at the bidding of Mahatma Gandhi to help them, that for the first time he found his countrymen doing wrong and very unwilling to acknowledge it. If they were guilty of entering this country illegally, the right thing to do was to take condonation. There was more rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner who repented than over 99 who had never sinned. "Let there be rejoicing in Heaven because you have all turned over a new leaf. And so will you maintain the honour of the Indian community, and not by the method advocated by one speaker this afternoon. He spoke the word "honour" but, believe me, he did not come within miles of understanding it."

He had not originated the condonation scheme. The question was there long before he came to South Africa. It arose out of legislation. They dared not ask for a change of law. No doubt the Ministers were pledged to the Capetown Agreement and meant to honour it, but that was not to say that there was a complete change of heart among the white population of South Africa.

A Bill of Amnesty

He could not see that there was such a change of heart that they could count on a bill of amnesty passing. If such a bill was introduced and thrown out, relief by administrative action would also be barred.

Mr. Nicholas had said there was no guarantee that a protection certificate would be issued to anyone who asked for it. Now, the protection certificate was only to be given to those who could satisfy the department that they were here before July 5, 1924. Unless the department were allowed to scrutinise the applications, what would there be to prevent those who came in one or two years ago from securing condonation? What would prevent the stowaways who came in the *Karagola* a few days ago from obtaining condonation?

"I believe, gentlemen," concluded Mr. Sastri, "you stand to lose heavily, and to suffer bitterly, if you reject our advice to-day and listen to that of Mr. Roberts and Mr. Nicholas. They have no alternative to offer to you except to say, 'Suffer like heroes.' They are sure they are right, but are the illicit entrants so sure? Will they suffer like heroes after September 30?"

"Gentlemen, be wise. Listen to the advice of those who have laboured hard for you. Long before September 30 comes let us have the happy thought that thousands of our countrymen have put in their applications for condonation. Then the day will come when they will sleep peacefully, and forget such a thing as blackmail."

"I ask you to think of your wives and children think of the interests you have built up in this country, think of the honour of the country which commands you now at least to do the honourable thing."

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

THE proceedings of the mass meeting convened by the Natal Indian Congress last Sunday must have convinced even the most sceptical among us of the undoubted advantages that illegal entrants obtain by taking protection certificates. Every aspect of the condonation scheme was gone through in detail, every difficulty and obscurity explained, every argument against it met, and met effectively, and every doubt cleared. The oppositionists were given every opportunity to put their case and were given a fair and patient hearing. We will not go over the various arguments once again now. We wish to draw attention to one or two points.

The oppositionists have not produced an alternative scheme. They have not challenged the statement that the only alternative is the risk of apprehension and deportation. We understand that some members of the Federation waited on the Minister of the Interior a few days ago. But of the proceedings nothing has so far been made public. Perhaps there is nothing except their discomfiture to publish.

We have no doubt that in some quarters the opposition to the condonation scheme is genuine, though misplaced. They still distrust the *bona fides* of the Government. They are so used to expect harshness from it that they view with suspicion even a kindly deed. They suspect a catch somewhere. We have shown repeatedly that this suspicion is unwarranted.

We have, however, some doubts regarding the motives of some others who oppose the scheme. They are anxious that the scheme should fail, that as few as possible should receive protection. There are those who want the illegals to be deported, though they do not avow it. We can understand those who come out openly with the proposition that the illegals should be deported. For, thereby the Indian population will be reduced, and the legitimate population stands better chance of uplift. But they are dishonest who conceal this, their real motive, and mislead people with false pretences.

There are others with hearts blacker still: the blackmailers. It is not to their interest that the illegals should be protected. Their trade will be gone.

Both these classes are among the loudest in dissuading the illegals from taking

protection certificates. After the period of grace, the illegals may be deported or if they remain, may be blackmailed. They are doing their utmost to provoke the Government into taking drastic action. The Government will not be disappointed if their scheme is not availed of and if a larger number get deported. It will suit their policy of reducing the Indian population; and they can secure the result without incurring any odium or expense. Even in the natural course of things, the Government is bound to keep a vigilant lookout for illegals if only to make an example of them and justify their condonation scheme. If they are provoked and challenged, it will not be surprising if they should institute a regular and determined hunt for illegals. That will give a chance for the blackmailers; that profession will become highly paying and therefore popular. Many who are now innocent will be tempted to it.

The illegal entrant stands to lose by declining, on the advice of these wolves in sheep's clothing, to take a protection certificate. We warn him against their advice, they are no friends of his, they are not concerned with his interest.

Further Correspondence On Condonation Scheme

Between the Congress and the Government

The following further correspondence has taken place between the S.A.I. Congress, Mr. H. N. Venn, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs and the Rt. Hon. V. S. S. Sastri, Agent of the Government of India in South Africa:—

Ref. No. 49/M/256.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Office of the Commissioner,
Immigration and Asiatic Affairs,

P.O. Box 244,

Pretoria,

28th June, 1928.

The Honorary General Secretary,
South African Indian Congress,
P. O. Box 5339,
Johannesburg.

Dear Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that judging by the number of applications at present being received from Indians resident in the Union for permission for their wives to enter it would appear that there is some slight misapprehension as to the meaning of the last paragraph (c) of the letter, dated 28th February, 1928, addressed to you. The meaning of the paragraph referred to is that the decision regarding the wives and children of condonees only applies to those in the Union at the date of that letter, viz., 24th February, 1928, and if any wives and children of Indians here illegally

enter after that date they will be required to leave the Union.

It would be appreciated if your Congress would make the position clear and do what is within its power to stop applicants who are not entitled to bring in their wives and children from making applications for forms D.I. 91 on their behalf.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Sgd.) H. VENN.
Commissioner for Immigration
and Asiatic Affairs.

P. O. Box 5339,
Johannesburg,
17th July, 1928.

The Rt. Hon. V. S. S. Sastri, P.C.,
483, Currie Road,
Durban.

Sir,—We are directed by our Congress respectfully to invite your attention to the accompanying copy of a letter of the 28th June, 1928, received from the Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs. The contents therein have come as a great surprise, and our Committee expresses its disappointment thereat.

Our Committee all along understood that the wives and children of prospective condonees would be free to enter the Union right up to the 30th September, 1928.

Our Committee have good reason to believe that on the strength of their understanding of the position as above mentioned a goodly number of women and children have already made their arrangements to depart from India, while others are already on their way.

In the case of some of these, D.I. Forms have already been issued. Our Committee earnestly hope that you will immediately represent the position to the Government of the Union and succeed in working the grave consequences that may result from the insistence of the Department of the terms of the letter in question.

Fears have been expressed that wives and children at present on the way may be refused admission to the Union on their arrival at Delagoa Bay; that they may be held up there by the Department until either a period for applying for condonation will have expired or until after the husbands and fathers have got their condonations. In either such event, wives and children would be shut out.

In the event of husbands succeeding in getting such wives and children into the Union against the wishes of the Department, the husband himself might be challenged as a prohibited immigrant and ordered for deportation before he had a chance for applying for condonation.

We have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servants,
P. K. DEASI.
I. I. HAZAREE.

D.O. No. D./325/28.

483, Currie Road,
Durban,
19th July, 1928.

My dear Pragji,—The matter raised in your letter of the 17th July, regarding holders of Form D.I. 91, is an important one. I had already discussed some aspects of it with Mr. Venn.

I have pointed out to Mr. Venn, with reference to his letter of the 28th June to the Congress, that his reading of Mr. Schmidt's letter of the 24th February is at variance with the wording of the Protection Certificate itself. The latter, in clause (b), lays down that "if his" (the condonee's) "wife and/or children

have not been admitted at date hereof he will not be permitted subsequently to introduce any of such persons. The important words are "at date hereof," which must mean the date of the Protection Certificate. It is to my mind clear therefore that, while it may have been the intention of the Department to fix the 24th February, 1928, as the critical date in respect of wives and children, they have in fact fixed some undefined date, namely, the date upon which in each case the Protection Certificate will be issued. I am prepared to take this point up with the Department and do not anticipate any objection on their part to this view.

Coming to the effect which this view of the case will have, if accepted by the Department, I understand that it has been the policy of the Department for some considerable period to refuse to issue Form D.I. 91 to those against whom the Department entertains a suspicion that they are illegal entrants. If this is so, the matter is much simplified, for the vast majority of those who now hold Form D.I. 91 must be legal entrants whose wives and children will not be affected by the condonation scheme. There will remain a small number who are illegal entrants, though not known to the Department as such, and who intend to apply for condonation. It is to these, presumably, that your letter applies. So far as such holders of Form D.I. 91 are concerned, since their number is likely to be small and since most of them must have received their forms before the details of the condonation scheme became public, I am prepared to recommend to the Department that the wives and children covered by the forms already issued should be allowed to enter, provided of course they do so before the last date fixed for application for condonation.

As regards the points raised in the last two paragraphs of your letter, so far as the persons referred to are holders of Form D.I. 91, their case is covered by what I have written above. If persons who are not holders of Form D.I. 91 seek to evade the obvious intention of the condonation scheme by smuggling their wives and children into the Union before they themselves apply for condonation, I must say at once that I could not take up the cases of such persons. Nor would it, in my opinion, be proper for the Congress to take up such cases in view of the assurance given to the Minister by resolution at Kimberley. Congress must be scrupulous in abiding by that assurance not only in the letter but in the spirit.

Yours affectionately,
(Sgd.) V. SRINIVASA SANTRI.

Pragji Desai, Esq.,
P. O. Box 5339,
Johannesburg.

P. O. Box 5339,
Johannesburg,
17th July, 1928.

The Secretary to the Minister of the Interior,
Union Buildings,
Pretoria.

Sir.—Our Committee desires us to request that the Hon. Minister will be good enough to favour them with a reply throwing light to the accompanying enquiries as set out in the following paragraphs:—

- (1) Need the holders, of previously issued condonations in names other than their original names which could be authenticated by their thumb impression, apply for condonation certificates?
- (2) Should the holders of Transvaal Registration Certificates obtained by virtue of P. P. O. permits, irrespective of their title to such P. P. O. permits and of any discrepancy in names or thumb impressions on the latter, apply for condonation certificates?

- (3) In regard to question 2 (above) with the answer in the affirmative or negative apply equally to T. R. C. obtained by holders up to and during 1908.
- (4) Should holders of the T. R. C., over the age of 16 years to whom certificates were granted during the statutory minority (under the age of sixteen years) through the misrepresentation of any other person, apply for condonation certificates?
- (5) Are we in order when we say that the wives and minor children of condonees, previously allowed to enter and reside in the Union and are now in India, will be allowed to re-enter the Union and reside here?
- (6) Are we correct in understanding that condonees will retain their Transvaal Registration Certificates and that such certificates will still entitle them to obtain trading licences?

Hoping to hear from you by return, for which we thank you.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servants,
(Sgd.) I. I. HAZAREE.
P. K. DESAI.
Hon. Secretaries,
S. A. I. C.

No. 60/M/256.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Office of the Commissioner,
Immigration and Asiatic Affairs,
P. O. Box 244,
Pretoria,
28th July, 1928.

The Joint Hon. Secretaries,
South African Indian Congress,
P. O. Box 5339,
Johannesburg.

Gentlemen,—With reference to your letter of the 17th instant, relative to the Condonation Scheme, I have the honour to inform you in reply to questions Nos. 1 to 4 of your communication that in any case in which a fraudulent entry was secured the individual concerned must apply for a Condonation Permit.

In reply to your enquiry (No. 5) as to whether the wives and minor children of holders of Condonation Permits issued under the Regulations published by Government Notice No. 1055 dated 29th June, 1928, in cases where such wives and minor children have previously been allowed to enter and reside in the Union, but who are now in India, will be allowed to re-enter the Union, I have to say that the answer is in the affirmative.

As regards question No. 6, I have to state that holders of Condonation Permits will be permitted to retain their Transvaal Asiatic Registration Certificates and the holders will, of course, retain all trading rights to which the possession of such certificates entitle them, vide condition (c) of the Condonation Permit.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
(Sgd.) H. VENN.
Commissioner for Immigration
and Asiatic Affairs.

Copy of letter No. D. O. D./361/28 dated Durban, 2nd August 1928, from the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Sastri, P. C. to H. N. Venn Esq. :—

"My dear Venn,—Please refer to your No. 60/M/256 dated 28th July to the Joint Hon. Secretaries of the South African Indian Congress, relative to the condonation scheme.

7 am inclined to think that the condonation

answer which you have supplied to questions Nos. 1 to 4 tends to obscure the arrangement arrived at with regard to those who, during the year 1908, obtained Transvaal Registration Certificates in exchange for permits issued under the Peace Preservation Ordinance.

"You will remember that on Saturday the 14th July, in a conversation which I had with you over the telephone, you authorised me to inform the Congress officials in Johannesburg—having in view their mass meeting of Sunday the 15th—that "those who registered in 1908 on Peace Preservation Permits need have no fear of inquiries from Government as to how they got them." In other words, holders of Peace Preservation permits who exchanged them for registration certificates in the year 1908 would not have to apply for condonation, even if their title to the P. P. permit itself might have been open to doubt.

"Your comprehensive answer to Pragji's questions 1 to 4 would seem to nullify this,—an effect which I do not think you intended. I would suggest your clearing up this point either in a letter to me or in a further communication to the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

Copy of letter No. M./256 dated Pretoria, 4th August 1928, from H. N. Venn Esq, to the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P. C. :—

"My dear Mr. Sastri,—With reference to your letter D. O. No. D. 361/28 of the 2nd August, 1928, relative to the arrangement under the Condonation Scheme published under Government Notice No. 1055 of 29th June, 1928, regarding those Indians who, during the year 1908, obtained Transvaal Asiatic Registration Certificates, you will no doubt remember that, when we discussed the matter in Johannesburg and again in Durban, I said that a hard and a fast 1908 line could be drawn but that in practice we would not be able, or desire, to go beyond that date.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) H. N. VENN.

Meeting of Kimberley Indians

Indian Political Association Supports Condonation Scheme

On Monday (August 6), the Indian Schoolroom, Bultfontein Road, Kimberley, was the scene of a big meeting of Indians, who were addressed by Mr. A. Ismail, hon. secretary, Cape British Indian Council, and Advocate I. I. Hazaree, joint hon. secretary, South African Indian Congress. Mr. P. M. Dawson, who presided, welcomed the visitors and explained that the object of the meeting was to enable the Indian community to learn the true position in connection with the Government's Condonation Scheme.

Mr. Ismail, in his opening remarks, said that it was necessary, in order to prevent misunderstanding, that representatives of the South African Indian Congress should acquaint the people with the terms of the Condonation Scheme, which had been formulated by the Government in order to legalise the position of some of their brethren in the country. Some of their compatriots viewed the scheme with alarm, because of misrepresentation by its enemies. They, continued the speaker, were present to justify the steps taken by the South African Indian Congress in favour of the Condonation Scheme, which was wholly voluntary, and in the best interests of those who had secured illicit entry to the Union, and were now established here.

In conclusion, Mr. Ismail invited opponents of the scheme, and particularly those who had addressed a previous meeting, to meet him on a common platform on this question in Kimberley.

Mr. Hazaree, who supported the previous speaker, eulogised Mr. Sastri, to whom, in the main, he attributed the present satisfactory state of affairs. The speaker felt that the scheme for condonation became possible only because of the Capetown Agreement, and it behoved the Indians affected to take advantage of the position now afforded them. The speaker pointed out that the South African Indian Congress, which had at all times protected the interests of the Indian in this country, had thoroughly discussed the scheme at its last session which had been in Kimberley, and had given wholehearted support for the scheme.

A resolution was unanimously carried repudiating a telegram stating that a meeting of Indians at Kimberley had objected to the scheme for condonation, and which had appeared in the *Cape Times* of July 31, and denouncing the Cape British Indian Council.

At the meeting, which was one of the largest held in recent years, were Messrs. S. I. Charnekar, Bapoo Sahib, H. M. Barday, A. R. Motlekar, N. K. Pillay, Mohamed Shariff, Said Kamorodein, Kasai Wallab, R. V. Padayachi, Rajagopal Pillay, Messrs W. T. McLeod and A. Richards, of the A.P.O. also attended.

A resolution of condolence was carried at the sad demise of Sir Syed Ameer Ali, P. C.

It was further decided to send a cable to Mahatma Gandhi and Valabhai Patel on the amicable settlement of the Bardoli issue.—*Diamond Field Advertiser*.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

Part IV. Chapter XXV.

HEART'S SEARCHINGS

The Zulu 'rebellion' was full of new experiences for me and gave me much food for thought. The Boer War had not brought home to me the horrors of war with anything like the vividness that the 'rebellion' did. This was no war but a man hunt, not only in my opinion, but also in that of many Englishmen with whom I had occasion to talk. To hear every morning reports of the soldiers' rifles exploding like crackers in innocent hamlets, and to live in the midst of them was a trial. But I swallowed the bitter draught, especially when the work of my Corps consisted only in nursing the wounded Zulus. I could see that but for us the Zulus would have been uncared for. The work, therefore, eased my conscience.

But there was much else to set one a thinking. It was a sparsely populated part of the country. Few and far between in hills and dales were the scattered kraals of the simple and so-called 'uncivilised' Zulus. Marching with or without the wounded, through these solemn solitudes, I often fell in deep thought.

I pondered over *brahmacharya* and its implications, and my convictions took deeper root. I discussed it with my co-workers. I had not realised then how indispensable *brahmacharya* was for self-realisation, but I clearly saw that one aspiring to serve humanity with his whole soul could not do without it. It was borne in upon me that I would have more and more occasions of service of the kind I was rendering, and that I should find myself unequal to my task if I was engaged in the pleasures of family life and in the preparation and rearing of children.

In a word, I could not live both after the flesh and the spirit. On the present occasion, for instance, I should not have been able to throw myself in the fray, had my wife been expecting a baby. Without the observance of *brahmacharya* service of the family would be inconsistent with service of the community. With *brahmacharya* both would be perfectly consistent.

So thinking I became rather impatient to take a final vow. The prospect of the vow brought a certain kind of exultation. Imagination also found free play and opened out interminable vistas of service.

Whilst I was thus in the midst of strenuous physical and mental work, a report came to the effect that the work of suppressing the 'rebellion' was nearly over, and that we would soon be discharged. A day or two after I heard this we were discharged, and in a few days we got back to our homes. After a short while I got a letter from the Governor specially thanking the Ambulance Corps for its services.

On my arrival at Phoenix I broached with zest the subject of *brahmacharya* to Chhaganlal, Maganlal, West and others. They liked the idea and accepted the necessity of taking the vow, but they also represented the difficulties of the task. Some of them set themselves to observe *brahmacharya*, and some, I know, succeeded also.

I took the plunge—the vow to observe *brahmacharya* for life. I must confess that I had not then fully realised the magnitude and immensity of the task I had undertaken. The difficulties are even to-day staring me in the face. The importance of the vow is being more and more borne in upon me. Life without *brahmacharya* appears to me to be insipid and animal-like. The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of *brahmacharya* in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience.

I saw that *brahmacharya*, which is full of that wonderful potency, can by no means be an easy affair, and certainly not a mere matter of the body. *Brahmacharya* begins with bodily restraint, but it does not end there. The perfection of *brahmacharya* precludes even an impure thought. A true *brahmachari* will not even dream of satisfying fleshly appetite, and until he is in that condition, he has a great deal of ground to cover.

For me the observance of even bodily *brahmacharya* has been full of difficulties. To-day I may say that I feel myself fairly safe, but I have yet to achieve complete mastery over thought which is so essential. Not that the will or effort is lacking, but it is yet a problem to me wherefrom undesirable thoughts spring their insidious invasions. I have no doubt that man possesses the key to lock out undesirable thoughts, but every one has to find it out for himself. Saints and seers have left their experiences for us but they have given us no infallible and universal prescriptions. For perfection or freedom from error comes only out of grace and so seekers after God have left us mantras, such as Ramanama, hallowed by their own austerities and charged with their purity. Without an unreserved surrender to His grace complete mastery over thought is impossible. This is the teaching of every great book of religion, and I am realising the truth of it every moment of my striving after that perfect *brahmacharya*.

But part of the history of that striving and struggle will be told in the chapters to follow. I shall conclude this chapter with an indication of how I set to the task. In the first flush of enthusiasm I found the observance very easy. The very first change I made in my mode of life was that I stopped sharing

the same bed with my wife or seeking privacy with her.

Thus brahmacharya which I had been observing willy-nilly since 1900 was sealed with a vow in the middle of 1906.

News In Brief

MR. ALBERT CHRISTOPHER who had been enrolled as a barrister on June 30, 1927, after a call to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, sought admission as an advocate of the Supreme Court (Natal Provincial Division), having complied with the rules. On the motion of Mr. R. Tomlinson, Mr. Christopher was duly admitted last Thursday before Sir John Dove-Wilson (Judge-President) and Mr. Justice Mathews.

We congratulate Mr. Christopher on his success and wish him the best of luck in his future career.

An unopposed motion was passed at the Committee meeting of the Natal Indian Congress held last Thursday evening at the Tamil Institute congratulating Mr. Christopher on his admission as an advocate of the Supreme Court of Natal.

Mr. and Mrs. Sorabjee Rustomjee gave a tea party to celebrate the success of Mr. Christopher at their residence at Mayville on Thursday afternoon where about fifty leading members of the Indian community were present. The Rt. Hon. V. S. S. Sastri was also present and garlanded Mr. Christopher and presented him with a brief bag on behalf of the host and hostess.

A meeting under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress (Maritzburg Branch) will be held on Saturday, August 18, at 4 p.m. at the H.Y.M.A. Hall, Maritzburg, when the Condonation Scheme will be explained. The officials of the headquarters will be present and the Rt. Hon. V. S. S. Sastri will also grace the meeting with his presence.

Similar meetings will also be held during the month at other important centres in Natal to explain the Condonation Scheme.

A reasoned appeal signed by many most influential people of Bihar and almost an equal number of ladies of that province advising the total abolition of the *pardah* has been issued in Bihar. The appeal states :

"We want that the women of our province should be as free to move about and take their legitimate part in the life of the community in all particulars as their sisters in Karnatak, Maharashtra and Madras in an essentially Indian way, avoiding all attempts at Europeanisation, for while we hold that a change from enforced seclusion to a complete anglicisation would be like dropping from frying pan into fire, we feel that *pardah* must go, if we want our women to develop along Indian ideals. If we want them to add grace and beauty to our social life and raise its moral tone, if we want them to be excellent managers at home, helpful companions of their husbands and useful members of the community, then the *pardah*, as it now exists, must go. In fact no serious step for their welfare can be taken unless the evil is torn down and it is our conviction that if once the energy of half of our population, that has been imprisoned artificially, is released, it will create a force which, if properly guided, will be of immeasurable good to our Province."

Sporting Pars

The annual general meeting of the South African Indian Football Association was held in Johannesburg on Saturday, July 28, in the Transvaal British Indian Association offices. The following delegates represented the various provinces affiliated : The Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney and Mr. Juan Marian (Transvaal), Messrs. S. L. Singh, E. G. David (Natal), Messrs. S. D. R. yeppen, and H. Alexander (Griqualand West), Messrs. D. Jossie, and M. Cunden (Eastern Province), Messrs W. Ernest, and K. N. Singh (Western Province). Mr. J. M. Francis, President, was in the chair and Mr. A. Sookdeo (Secretary and Treasurer.) Quite a large number of Indian sportsmen were present to watch the proceedings and amongst them were two ex-presidents.

The Secretary submitted a report in the course of which he mentioned that the Association was at last able to have printed rule books for the benefit of the affiliated associations. The Association was not so far successful in bringing a team out from India, but he hoped that the incoming officials would be able to do so. He pointed out that the work of the Association with the affiliated bodies was carried out in a very sporting spirit.

Delegates from various provinces spoke in eulogistic terms of the excellent services rendered by the Secretary Mr. A. Sookdeo and linked with him the President. An honorarium of £5-5-0 was voted for the Secretary and a gold medal for the President.

The election for the following two years was then proceeded with as follows :—Patron Mr. Sam China, President Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney, Hon. Secretary Mr. Juan F. Marian, Hon. Treasurer Mr. Willie Ernest, Hon. Auditor Mr. Humidat Khan.

The South African Indian Football Tournament will take place from the 8th to the 15th September and the venue will be Johannesburg. The following centers, Natal, Transvaal, Eastern Province, Griqualand, Western Province, will be competing this year, and apart from the players there will be quite a large number of supporters present. Great satisfaction was evinced at the election of the officials and a successful football tourney is expected.

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बने नाबन्नी विनेरेनी समक वामे भावे बयोः—

इकबरीन, इर प्रीत अकडं स्ट्रीट, इमन.

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