

# Indian Opinion

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## NOTES AND NEWS

**A**N important meeting of the Executive of the South African Indian Congress was held at the Hindu Tamil Institute, Durban, last week end. Mr. A. Christopher was in the chair supported by Messrs. S. R. Naidoo and E. M. Mall, Joint Secretaries and Mr. M. E. Lakhi Joint Treasurer. There were present Messrs. S. Rustomjee, A. I. Kajee, P. R. Pather, J. W. Godfrey (Natal) and S. B. Medh, Ashabhai and Dadabhai (Transvaal).

After some lengthy discussion the Executive decided to postpone the forthcoming Conference to Easter. The Conference was to be held at Capetown on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th January 1930.

Regrets were expressed at the meeting at the impending departure of Sir K. V. Reddi to India on sick leave, and the following resolution moved from the chair was conveyed to him by the Executive:—

"That this Executive meeting of the South African Indian Congress held at Durban, records its deep regret at the continued ill-health of Sir K. V. Reddi, Agent to the Government of India, which necessitates his departure to India on leave, and sincerely hopes that he may speedily recover and return to South Africa to resume his duties.

Messrs. Manilal M. Gandhi, E. M. Ally, Swami Bhawani Dayal, C. G. Patel, and A. M. Bhayat were elected to represent the S. A. Indian Congress at the forthcoming session of the Indian National Congress at Lahore.

The Free State municipal congress held recently at Ficksburg, unanimously decided to support the Transvaal Municipal Association in its effort to secure an amendment in the law relating to the ownership of land by Asiatic companies. This arose from a request from the Transvaal Association which feels that any company which has Asiatic shareholders should not be permitted to own land, and that Asiatics should not in any way be able to acquire control of land and property.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, replying to Earl Winterton, said that the contemplated statement in regard to the future of East Africa did not include proposals for the future government of Northern Rhodesia. Lord Winterton pointed out that there had been a greater increase in the material development of Northern Rhodesia than in any other territory in Africa. The East African Commission which had visited the country made considerable reference to the future government in its report. Mr. MacDonald said that the Government was dealing with the report of the Commission appointed by its predecessors relating to the government of East Africa. The report was the basis of what they had to decide and subsequently report to the Commons.—Reuter.

Replying to the subjects and associations of various Indian States who claimed the right to be represented at the forthcoming conference between His Majesty's Government and representatives of British India and the States (as outlined in the Viceroy's famous statement), the private secretary to the Viceroy pointed out that, as far as the Indian States are concerned, matters which it is proposed to discuss at the conference will be confined to broad questions of constitutional policy, concerning which the rulers of States are the only persons who can speak with authority. It is also pointed out that questions in regard to the internal government of the States will not arise at the conference.—Reuter.

A Reuter's message from Bombay states:—

The Child Marriage Act, which comes into force in April next and raises the age of marriage of girls to fourteen, has aroused the resentment of the Moslem community, and parents in many parts of the country are hastening arrangements for the marriage of their young daughters in order to forestall the Act.

## THE EXTENSION OF THE BOROUGH BOUNDARIES

**T**HE Commission appointed by the Natal Provincial Council to enquire into the question of the "Extension of the Borough Boundaries of Durban" commences its work at the Durban Town Hall on Tuesday the 10th instant.

We are informed that Mr. Peck who is the Secretary to the Commission, has written to the Natal Indian Congress in the hope that it may represent the Indian case at the enquiry.

Next to the enquiry into the housing conditions of Indians in and around Durban, the present enquiry is undoubtedly the most important. The enquiry vitally affects some thousands of Indians living outside Durban and it is, therefore, necessary that the Indian case should be submitted to the Commission. We have no doubt that the Natal Indian Congress, which is co-operating with representative Indians living outside Durban in the preparation of the case for the Indian, will advise the Indians to support the idea of incorporating the Districts with Durban. The Health Boards have

held several meetings at which resolutions opposing the extension of the Borough boundaries have been passed. We see nothing strange in these resolutions, for, if the incorporation of the Districts were brought about quite a number of men engaged in the various Health Boards would be thrown out of employment. The European residents are whole-heartedly supporting the Health Boards. This is but natural. To them it would be a case of a surprising increase in rates.

We are sure that the Indians will not easily be led away by these Health Boards. It is within our knowledge that some of the Health Boards have been very harsh in their treatment of Indians who, through some misfortune, were not able to pay their rates. To quote one instance. A very poor Indian has been squatting for some years on certain four acres of barren land, the income from which was barely sufficient to upkeep his family. His dwelling comprised an old wood and iron building valued at about ten pounds. His monthly income was in the neighbourhood of two pounds. He was assessed by his Health Board at one pound which eventually rose up to about seven pounds, the difference representing legal costs. The Indian offered to pay five shillings per month but the Health Board refused the offer and proceeded to attach the building, an act which would throw the Indian out into the streets. This is one of the many similar cases that have been brought to our notice. The number of summonses that are being issued against Indians is appalling. For this reason alone, if for nothing else, it would be wise to support incorporation.

The extension of the Borough boundaries will bring with it several benefits to the Indian. At present the average Indian pays between ten to eleven pounds yearly. The amount includes water, electric light and sanitary fees. If he were taken in by the Borough, he would be assessed according to the value of his property. The present anomaly whereby an Indian with a property valued at two hundred pounds pays the same rates as does the European who owns a property valued at five thousand pounds, would be non-existent. The rating under the Health Boards is decidedly unjust. The extension will no doubt hit the European resident but the rating of his property on a valuation basis is equitable. Many Indian

houses in the Districts are connected with Corporation water and electric light. Water is charged to residents inside the Borough at one shilling per thousand gallons whilst to those outside Durban it is charged at six shillings per thousand gallons. There is the same difference in electric light charges.

We have no doubt that the Indians resident outside Durban will strongly support the extension of the Borough boundaries.

## Sir Kurma Departs For India

### Impressive Send-Off

The second Agent of the Government of India, Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi, sailed by the *s.s. Karagola* on Monday the 2nd December. The ship which in the ordinary course would have sailed at 6 a.m. was, to suit Sir Kurma, timed to leave at 8 a.m. Long before the time of departure a big crowd of leading Indians and others congregated at the wharf to accord a fitting send-off to the Agent. The Natal Indian Congress arranged for the presentation of an address to Sir Kurma half an hour before the departure of the boat.

The continued illness had considerably weakened the Agent, and as he stepped off his car a few minutes after 7-30 a.m., he was helped to the chair provided for him in the doorway of Shed D.

### Congress President's Speech

The President of the Natal Indian Congress, Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee, delivered the following speech after which he garlanded Sir Kurma on behalf of the Indian community of Natal:—

"Sir Kurma and Gentlemen,—It is indeed regrettable that owing to the state of health of Sir Kurma the Natal Indian Congress has been denied the opportunity of according to him a fitting reception earlier. We are, however, grateful that we have been afforded this opportunity of expressing our sentiments before he leaves for India on leave.

Gentlemen, Sir Kurma arrived here eleven months ago and within a short period he was able, by his amiability, to win many friends amongst Europeans and Indians. He was not very long to grasp the Indian question in South Africa, with its complexity of issues. His earnestness to learn our many difficulties was evidenced by his constant touch with us. You will remember that when our Congress accorded to him a welcome reception at the Durban Town Hall on his arrival from India, he mentioned to us that his eminent predecessor was one of the ablest men in India and that it would not be reasonable to expect him to rise to his heights. But, said he, it would not be difficult to lay a few bricks on the foundation so well and truly laid by Mr. Sastri. I am, no doubt, expressing the sentiments of my fellow-countrymen when I say that Sir Kurma has been wonderful in his brickwork. He has very ably continued the structure which his predecessor had so well commenced. The eulogy that we have heard from the lips of our European sympathisers, of Sir Kurma's work in South Africa, is a testimony to his earnest desire to do his duty to the Indian cause in this country. The path of the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa is beset with many obstacles, but from what we have seen of Sir Kurma and his work, we may without hesitation say that in his progress over that path he has been very successful.

We regret very much that Sir Kurma has been subjected to continued illness during the last three months. Notwithstanding the care and attention of some of the best known medical men in Durban, he has not sufficiently recovered. Whilst we deeply regret his departure for India, we do sincerely hope that his trip to India will completely restore him to health and that he will soon be with us to resume his duties. I may assure Sir Kurma that though he may be thousands of miles away from us, the Indian community of Natal and, for that matter, of South Africa, will ever pray for his complete recovery.

We are profoundly grateful to him for all that he has done for us. His cheerfulness during his continued illness and his anxiety that our cause shall not suffer by his being confined to bed have created a lasting impression upon us.

As a token of the high esteem in which Sir Kurma is held and as an appreciation for his services on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress as representing the Indian community of Natal, I have pleasure in handing him this silver salver.

I desire to mention that, though we have been denied the opportunity to accord Sir Kurma a reception in the manner that is usual with us, this function in no way diminishes the warmth of feeling that we have for him.

The Hon. Evelyn Baring, we are happy to learn, will carry on the work of the Agent during his absence from this country. Mr. Baring has already won the hearts of the Indian community. His genial disposition and his keen desire to honestly help the Indians have added to his popularity. I desire to assure him that he can always look upon the assistance of the Indians in the carrying out of his duties.

I also take this opportunity of bidding bon voyage and a speedy return to Mr. and Mrs. Manilal Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi, as a Committee member of the Congress and as the Editor of INDIAN OPINION, has rendered invaluable services to the Indian community of Natal and of South Africa. Of a quiet disposition, Mr. Gandhi has, in his own way, contributed his share in the fabric of Indian politics in this country. We are happy indeed that he is travelling in the same boat as does Sir Kurma. Our anxiety of the Agent's trip by boat is, therefore, considerably lessened, for we know that Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi will spare no efforts to see that Sir Kurma is well cared for during the journey.

I am happy to state that at an executive meeting of the South African Indian Congress, Mr. Gandhi has been appointed as one of its accredited representatives to attend the session of the Indian National Congress at Lahore. Mr. Gandhi carries with him the best wishes of not only the Natal Indian Congress but also those of the South African Indian Congress."

Mr. S. Rustomjee was followed by Mr. S. R. Naidoo who, in the absence of Advocate Albert Christopher who was ill, garlanded the Agent on behalf of the South African Indian Congress. Then followed further garlanding by Advocate R. K. Khan on behalf of the Orient Club, Mr. M. B. Naik of the Surat Hindu Association, and several other organisations.

### Presentation Of Address

Mr. Rustomjee then presented the Agent with a silver salver on which was inscribed an address. The address which was read by Mr. P. R. Pather was as follows:—

"To Sir Kurma Venketa Reddi, Kt., B.A., B.L.,  
Agent of the Government of India in South Africa.

Sir,—It is with feelings of profound regret that we, as representing the Indian community of Natal, bid au revoir to you on your departure on leave for India.

During your short stay in South Africa, your interest in our affairs has endeared you to us.

We deeply appreciate and are grateful for the services which you have rendered unflinchingly on our behalf.

It has been a source of great pleasure to us that despite your continued ill-health during the last three months, the welfare of our community has always been foremost in your heart.

We fervently pray that the brief holiday in India will restore your health and that you will soon be with us.

We beg to remain, Sir,

Yours very truly,

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE,  
President.

A. I. KAJEE, } Joint Hon.  
P. R. PATHER, } Secretaries.  
Natal Indian Congress."

### Sir Kurma's Reply

Sir Kurma who was visibly weak replied in a low tone and towards the end of his speech he raised his voice to such an extent that at the conclusion he was exhausted and had to be carried up the steps of the boat to his cabin.

"You all know my state of health," he said. "It is not possible to give adequate expression to what is surging in my heart at this moment. I would like to say that I am profoundly grateful to the numerous friends, not only Hindus, not only Parsees, not only Mohammedans, but Europeans as well, who have extended their sympathy to me in my illness. It has often occurred to me that human sympathy knows no bounds of race or colour or nationality. It is human sympathy that flows, and it is so in my case.

"There is one statement which Mr. Rustomjee has made to which I would like to refer. He said that at my welcome I said I could not be expected to equal Mr. Sastri in the brilliance of his work. That is perfectly true, and I still adhere to it, but in fairness to myself I might say that I have utilised to the best of my ability the foundation he laid for me. Mr. Sastri has explained India to South Africa. He has brought the two countries together. In questions of policy and problems of administration I may, if you will pardon me, lay claim to something. I think I have done my best for the benefit of my countrymen here.

"For the rest, I am already exhausted. I am not leaving you for good. I can only say au revoir, not farewell. Once again I thank you all for your kindness."

Mr. Rustomjee then garlanded Mr. Manilal M. Gandhi, Editor of INDIAN OPINION who with Mrs. Gandhi are proceeding to India on holiday. Mr. Gandhi briefly returned thanks.

Prominent amongst those who were present at the wharfside were Messrs. S. Rustomjee, A. I. Kajee, P. R. Pather, Advocates J. W. Godfrey and R. K. Khan, Messrs. R. K. Naidoo, V. S. C. Pather, M. S. Randeree, M. A. H. Moosa, I. A. H. Moosa, I. Bobat, B. M. Patel, S. J. Randeria, S. R. Naidoo, B. M. Singh and M. E. Lakhi. Messrs. S. B. Medh, E. M. Mall, Ashabhai and Dadabhai were from the Transvaal to bid adieu.

### Message To Europeans

Aboard his ship Sir Kurma was kind enough to leave a message for his European friends. "I wish to thank the European friends of the Indian community very much for the unfailing help and kindness which I have received at their hands. I hope I shall return in due course to South Africa and be able to continue our happy association."

Mr. H. N. Vonn, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, was present, representing the

Government of the Union, and Mr. H. Teague, Principal Immigration Officer for Durban. The Hon. Evelyn Baring accompanied Sir Kurma as far as Lourenco Marques whence he will return to Johannesburg and go on to Capetown for the next session of Parliament. During his voyage he was represented by Mr. C. S. Ricketts, Secretary to the Agent-General.

### Sir Kurma Reddi's Progress

Writing to the South African Indian Congress secretary Mr. S. R. Naidoo, from Lourenco Marques, Mr. E. Baring, who is acting for the Indian Agent, states that Sir Kurma Reddi's condition of health is very satisfactory.

## Johannesburg Licensing Case

### Council Committee In The Wrong

### Rand Court Judgment Upheld

In the Transvaal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court, Pretoria, before Mr. Justice Tindall (Acting Judge-President), Mr. Justice Krause and Mr. Justice Gey van Pittius, arguments were heard in the appeal of the City Council of Johannesburg v. the Turf Stores (Pty.) Ltd., from the judgment of Mr. Justice Greenberg in the Witwatersrand Local Division.

Before the local division, the respondents had applied for an order directing the City Council to issue a certificate, in terms of the General Dealers' Control Ordinance of 1926, permitting them to carry on business as fruiterers and grocers on a certain stand in Turfontein. An order was granted in terms of that prayer.

The Turf Stores (Pty.) Ltd., it was stated, was a company represented by one Sedat, and the shareholders were Asiatics. The company secured the stand for the purpose of carrying on the business, and made application to the Council for the issue of a certificate in terms of the Ordinance.

After the matter had come before a committee of the City Council the certificate was refused on the ground that the locality of the premises was not one in which it was desirable that the business contemplated should be carried on by the applicants, or at all.

In the subsequent application before Mr. Justice Greenberg, the company sought a mandamus directing the issue of the certificate on the grounds that the refusal was based on class and racial discrimination, the manager being an Asiatic, and that its object was to prevent commercial penetration by Asiatics as a class.

### "Duty" Not Done

The judge in the Rand Local Division came to the conclusion that the committee had not done its duty. He held that there was no evidence before it on which a reasonable man could come to the conclusion that the business should not be carried on in that locality by the applicants.

Against this finding the present appeal was brought.

Mr. S. S. Taylor, K.C., with him Mr. Schreiner, appeared for the Johannesburg City Council. Mr. Brink, K.C., with him Mr. Rathous, were for the respondent company.

In giving judgment, Mr. Justice Tindall, referring to the evidence tendered before the committee of the Johannesburg Council, said that it was to the effect that the presence of Asiatics in the locality

would depreciate the value of property. Towards the end of the inquiry, one councillor asked if the main objection to the grant of the application was because natives congregated round the Asiatic stores in the vicinity. Up to then, the witness had not said a word about such being the case.

The conclusion which the Court had come to was that the judge in the court below was justified in the conclusion to which he had come. The committee seemed to think, no matter what class of business the Asiatic carried on, the result would be to cause a congregation of natives, but, on the evidence, no reasonable man could come to that conclusion. There were businesses which would not have that effect. The committee treated the applicants as members of a class, and came to the conclusion that, because they were members of that class, any business carried on by them would have that result. They did not inquire into the nature of the business proposed to be carried on, but based their inference on the mere statement by a witness that natives congregated outside the shops of Asiatics.

The judge in the court below was right in his view, and the appeal must be dismissed.

Mr. Justice Krause and Mr. Justice Gey van Pittius delivered concurring judgments.—*Rand Daily Mail*.

## Mine Workers' Union

### Section Fears Admission Of Indians

*The Star* (Johannesburg) writes:—

An extraordinary position has arisen in the South African Mine Workers' Union, a section of members employed on the Rose Deep and Simmer and Jack properties having intimated that they are discontinuing payment of their subscriptions and withdrawing from membership on a ground that is ridiculed in trade union circles generally.

According to representations made to the East Rand organiser, the men are apprehensive of Indians being admitted to membership of the union as a result of the precedent established by the South African Typographical Union, and they allege, without indicating any ground whatever, that Mr. H. W. Sampson, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, is in a position to exercise his influence in that connection. The representations have been seriously advanced, and, although the union officials have endeavoured to show that they are as baseless as they are ludicrous, the members demand that an official statement be made on the point, and that, in fact, Mr. Sampson be invited to make a pronouncement as well.

Some months ago the union's constitution was revised to permit of coloured workers (not Indians) in certain scheduled occupations in the mining industry being eligible for membership, but, despite that, the coloured employees adhered to their own particular organisation. At present the membership of the miners' union is homogeneously European and there are abundant indications that it will remain so.

"There is not the remotest likelihood of Indians ever being admitted to membership," said Mr. Day, secretary of the union, in an interview. "I cannot understand the attitude of those members who represent or suggest that Mr. Sampson is trying to influence us in accepting Indians as members. There is not an atom of truth in the rumours, or representations, for he has as much to do with our organisation as you have."

Other prominent members of the union declared that the Simmer and Jack and Rose Deep men, in attaching credence to idle talk, were a laughing-stock to trade unionists generally.

"The only interest that Mr. Sampson should have

in the Union—and it is the one we should like to see him take very fully," said one well-known member, "is that as a Labour member of the Government he might use his influence to secure fairer conditions than we have at present."

## Indian Tailor's Appeal Dismissed

Before Mr. Justice Krause and Mr. Justice Gey van Pittius, in the Supreme Court, Pretoria, Govind Parbhoo appealed against a conviction at Johannesburg for contraventions of an agreement for the bespoke tailoring industry under the Industrial Conciliation Act, in connection with wages and hours. There were four counts in respect of which fines were imposed.

The facts were admitted. The grounds of appeal urged on behalf of the appellant by Mr. Etlinger were based on the admissibility of certain evidence with regard to which objections were allowed by the magistrate, and that the notice published whereby the agreement was made binding on all employers and employers in the industry was invalid.

The Indian community contended that they were not affected by any agreement arrived at between Europeans in the industry.

The court held that where a litigant raised an issue relevant to the matter under investigation he was entitled to produce such evidence as would go to show that his contention was right or wrong. It was suggested that the documents, the production of which was not allowed, would go to show that the Minister, in the exercise of his discretion, had disregarded circumstances which he should have taken into consideration. Having regard to the purpose for which the defence had called for the production of the documents, they were, however, entirely irrelevant to the issue, and there could have been no prejudice to the defence owing to their non-production.

On the second ground of appeal it was held that the notice complied with the terms of the statute, the appellant was rightly charged, and the appeal must be dismissed.—*Rand Daily Mail.*

## Position Of Indians In South Africa

### Pandit Bhawani Dayal's Statement

Pandit Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi, Vice-President, Natal Indian Congress, and a member of the Ablurrahman Deputation of 1925, who recently arrived in Bombay made the following statement to the press with regard to the present situation in South Africa:—

Since my last visit to India the position of Indians in South Africa has vastly improved. It was towards the end of 1925 that I came to India as a member of the South African Indian Congress Deputation. Those were gloomy days. An attempt was then being made to hound Indians out of South Africa. The anti-Asiatics, heedless of the immense contributions of Indians to the progress of South Africa, were pushing them out of the country. Undoubtedly the position was serious.

### A Wonderful Change

Things have moved amazingly since then. A wonderful change has taken place throughout South Africa. It would be interesting to look back upon that gloomy period and ascertain the causes that have brought about this change.

To my mind the causes are three in number. Firstly, the Paddison Deputation. All honour to the late Sir George Paddison. The work of that deputation, visiting South Africa as it did at a period when the atmosphere was charged with antagonism, was remarkable. Mr. Paddison, as he then was, was one of those few Europeans who threw themselves whole-heartedly on the side of Indians. The object of this deputation was not only to gather information but to pave the way for the Habibullah Deputation. And the way was well paved indeed.

### Mr. Andrews' Work

Secondly, I refer to the work of Mr. C. F. Andrews—that saintly figure, whose presence in South Africa during that critical period resulted in the spirit of goodwill that pervaded the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. The wonderful influence he wielded even with the avowedly anti-Asiatic press of South Africa and his work in bringing the clergy of South Africa to interest themselves in the cause of Indians will ever be remembered with gratitude.

### Mr. Sastri's Achievement

Third and the most important cause was the appointment of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri as the first Agent to the Government of India in South Africa. Mr. Sastri's work in South Africa is still fresh in the minds of Indians there. His personality, his profound learning, his oratory, all these contributed to his success. It is needless for me to speak at length about it. Suffice it to say that his work will be written in letters of gold in the pages of South African history.

### Treatment Of Emigrant Indians

You will naturally ask me how far the Capetown Agreement has been successful. The fundamental basis of the Agreement is, of course, assisted emigration. Up to the period that ended three months ago, the average number of Indians leaving South Africa under this scheme of assisted emigration was 3,000 per year. The number has now dwindled down considerably. I cannot definitely assign any reason for this but rumour is persistent that assisted emigrants are not being looked after by the Government of India as required by the Capetown Agreement. I may say that I am armed with letters of introduction from the Agent-General in South Africa addressed to the gentleman in charge of the emigrants. It will be my first duty in India to look into the conditions of these emigrants.

### The Sastri College

As a result of the Indian Education Enquiry Commission, Indian education in Natal has made considerable progress. The Education Department is sympathetic towards Indians. The Sastri College, which will stand as a monument to Mr. Sastri's work in South Africa and will afford training to Indian teachers and education to our children up to the 10th standard was opened on the 14th October last by His Excellency the Governor-General. Six teachers have to be selected from India for the Sastri College. In this connection I must emphasise that the selection must be made in the best interests of education. Durban is an important educational centre in South Africa and it is therefore imperative that the best teachers available must be chosen. Let me utter a note of warning that unless the best teachers are sent the education of our children will be sadly neglected. Mr. Sastri has laid the foundation of a wonderful edifice and it would fall to the lot of these teachers to build upon



it. I do hope that Mr. Sastri, Mr. Kichlu and Sir Mahomed Habibulla will co-operate in this selection.

### Indian Housing In Durban

Towards the end of last year the Housing Board sat in Durban to enquire into the conditions of Indian housing in and around Durban. The report submitted by this Board was most favourable and although nothing has been done so far to improve the housing conditions of Indians I entertain the hope that in the near future effect will be given to the recommendations of the Board.

### Indo-European Councils

An important work that Mr. Sastri has done in South Africa is the formation of Indo-European Councils. One such council has been established in Johannesburg and another in Durban. The object of these councils, which consist of equal members of Europeans and Indians, is to bring both the sections together on a common platform so that they could understand each other better. These councils are doing good work and will be a bulwark to the Indian cause.

### South African Indian Congress

Now, a word about the South African Indian Congress. This is an organisation to which are affiliated the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Cape British Indian Council representing the Indian communities of Natal, Transvaal and Cape Provinces. It is recognised by the Indian and the Union Governments. It is truly representative and enjoys the confidence of Indians in South Africa. I do hope the Indian press will take note of this, for it is indeed regrettable to find at times a section of the Indian press in India lending itself to a recalcitrant group, whose main object is to wreck everything that is good.

—*Bombay Chronicle.*

## India And Dominion Status

### The Viceroy's Announcement

The following is the full text of the much-talked-of announcement by His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Irwin with regard to granting Dominion status to India:—

I have just returned from England where I have had the opportunity of a prolonged consultation with His Majesty's Government. Before I left this country I said publicly that as the King-Emperor's representative in India I should hold myself bound to tell my fellow-countrymen, as faithfully as I might, of India's feelings, anxieties and aspirations. In my endeavours to discharge that undertaking I was assisted by finding, as I had expected, a generous and sincere desire not only on the part of His Majesty's Government but on that of all persons and parties in Great Britain to hear and to appreciate everything that was my duty to represent. These are critical days, when matters, by which men are deeply touched are in issue, and when, therefore, it is inevitable that political feeling should run high; and that misunderstandings, which would scarcely arise in conditions of political tranquillity, should obtain a firm foothold in men's minds. I have, nevertheless, not faltered in my belief that behind all the disquieting tendencies of the time there lay great mass of Indian opinion overflowing all divisions of race, religion or political thought, fundamentally loyal to the King-Emperor, and, whether consciously or not, only wanting to understand and to be understood. On the other side I have never felt any doubt that opinion in Great Britain, puzzled,

as it might be, by events in India or only perhaps partially informed as to their true significance, was unshaken in its determination that Great Britain should redeem to the full the pledges she has given for India's future. On both countries the times have laid a heavy and in some ways a unique responsibility; for, the influence on the world of a perfect understanding between Great Britain and India might surely be so great that no scales can give us the measure either of the price of success or the price of failure in our attempts to reach it. In my discussions with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State it was inevitable that the principal topic should have been the course of events in India. It is not profitable on either side to discuss to what extent or with what justification the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission two years ago has affected the general trend of Indian thought and action. Practical men must take facts and situations as they are and not as they would have them be. Sir John Simon's Commission, assisted, as it had been, by the Indian Central Committee, is now at work on its report and until that report is laid before Parliament it is impossible and even if it were possible, it would, in the view of His Majesty's Government, clearly be improper to forecast the nature of any constitutional changes that may subsequently be proposed. In this respect every British Party is bound to preserve to itself complete freedom of action. But what must constantly engage our attention, and is a matter of deep concern to His Majesty's Government, is the discovery of means by which, when the Commission has reported, the broad question of British Indian constitutional advance may be approached in co-operation with all those who can speak authoritatively for opinion in British India. I would venture to recall some words which I used in addressing the Assembly eight months ago in reference to the then existing political situation. "On the one side," I said, "it is as unprofitable to deny the right of Parliament to form its free and deliberate judgment on the problem, as it would be short-sighted of Parliament to underrate the importance of trying to reach a solution which might carry the willing assent of political India." We shall surely stray from the path, at the end of which lies achievement, if we let go either the one or the other of those two main guiding principles of political action. But there has lately emerged from a totally different angle another set of considerations which is very relevant to what I have just stated on this matter to be the desire of His Majesty's Government.

The Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission has pointed out, in the course of correspondence with the Prime Minister, which, I understand, is being published in England, that, as their investigation has proceeded, he and his colleagues have been greatly impressed, in considering the direction which the future constitutional development of India is likely to take, with the importance of bearing in mind the relations which may, at some future time, develop between British India and the Indian States. In his judgment, it is essential that the methods by which this future relationship between these two constituent parts of greater India may be adjusted should be fully examined. He has further expressed the opinion that if the Commission's report and the proposals subsequently to be framed by the Government take this wider range, it would appear necessary for the Government to revise the scheme of procedure as at present proposed. He suggests that what might be required after the reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee have been made, considered and published, but before the stage of the Joint Parliamentary Committee is reached, would be the setting up of a conference in which His Majesty's Government should meet representatives both of British



India and of the States for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament. The procedure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee conferring with delegations from the Indian Legislature and other bodies, which was previously contemplated and is referred to in Sir John Simon's letter to myself of February 6, 1928, would still be appropriate for the examination of the Bill when it is subsequently placed before Parliament, but would, in the opinion of the Commission, obviously have to be preceded by some such conference as they have suggested. With these views, I understand that His Majesty's Government are in complete accord. For, while they will greatly desire, when the time comes, to be able to deal with the question of British Indian political development under conditions most favourable to its successful treatment, they are, like the Commission, deeply sensible of the importance of bringing under a comprehensive review the whole problem of the relations of British India and the Indian States. Indeed, an adjustment of those interests, in their view, is essential for the complete fulfilment of what they consider to be the underlying purpose of British policy, whatever the method for its furtherance which Parliament may decide to adopt.

The goal of British policy was stated in the declaration of August 1917 to be that of providing for the "gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." As I recently pointed out, my own instrument of instructions from the King-Emperor expressly states that it is His Majesty's will and pleasure that the plans laid by Parliament in 1919 should be the means by which British India may attain its due place among his Dominions. Ministers of the Crown moreover, have more than once publicly declared that it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fulness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions; but in view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government, in enacting the Statute of 1919, I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status. In the full realisation of this policy it is evidently important that the Indian States should be afforded an opportunity of finding their place, and, even if we cannot at present exactly foresee on what lines this development may be shaped, it is from every point of view desirable that whatever can be done should be done to ensure that action taken now is not inconsistent with the attainment of the ultimate purpose which those, whether in British India or the States, who look forward to some unity of All-India, have in view. His Majesty's Government consider that both these objects, namely, that of finding the best approach to the British Indian side of the problem and secondly of ensuring that in this process the wider question of closer relations in the future between the two parts of greater India is not overlooked, can best be achieved by the adoption of a procedure such as the Commission has outlined. When, therefore, the Commission and the Indian Central Committee have submitted their reports, and these have been published, and when His Majesty's Government have been able, in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all the material then available, they will propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian

States to meet them separately or together, as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to the British-Indian and the All-Indian problems. It will be their earnest hope that, by this means, it may subsequently prove possible on these grave issues to submit proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general assent. It is not necessary for me to say how greatly I trust that the action of His Majesty's Government may evoke response from, and enlist the concurrence of all sections of opinion in India; and I believe that all who wish India well, wherever and whoever they are, desire to break through the webs of mistrust that have lately clogged the relations between India and Great Britain. I am firmly assured that the course of action now proposed is at once the outcome of a real desire to bring to the body politic of India the touch that carries with it healing and health and is the method by which we may best hope to handle those high matters in the way of constructive statesmanship.—*The Indian Social Reformer.*

## The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[ BY M. K. GANDHI ]

### Part V. Chapter XXXIX.

#### EXPERIMENTS WITH CHARKA

I do not remember to have seen a handloom or a spinning wheel till the year 1908 when in HIND SWARAJ I described it as the panacea for the growing pauperism of India. In that book I took it as understood that anything that helped India to get rid of the grinding poverty of her masses would in the same process establish Swaraj too. Even in 1915 when I returned to India from South Africa, I had not actually seen a spinning wheel. When the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarnati, was founded, we introduced a few handlooms there. But no sooner had we done this than we found ourselves hard up against a difficulty. All of us belonged either to the liberal professions or to business; none of us was an artisan. We needed a weaving expert to teach us to weave before we could work the looms. One was at last procured from Palappur, but he did not communicate to us the whole of his art. But Mahatma Gandhi was not the one to be easily baffled. Possessed of a natural talent for mechanics, he was able fully to master the art before long and one after another, several new weavers were trained up in the Ashram.

The object that we set before us was to be able to clothe ourselves entirely in cloth manufactured by us. We therefore forthwith discarded the use of mill-woven cloth and all the members of the Ashram resolved to wear hand-woven cloth made from Indian yarn only. The adoption of this practice brought us a world of experience. It enabled us to know from direct contact the conditions of life among the weavers, the extent of their production, the handicaps in the way of their obtaining their yarn supply, the way in which they were being made victims of fraud and, lastly, their ever-growing indebtedness. We were not in a position immediately to manufacture all the cloth for our needs. The alternative, therefore, was to get our cloth supply from handloom weavers. But ready-made cloth from Indian mill-yarn was not easily obtainable either from the cloth-dealers or from the weavers themselves. All the fine-cloth worn by the weavers was from foreign yarn, since Indian mills did not spin fine counts. Even to-day the output of higher

counts by Indian mills is very limited, whilst highest counts they cannot spin at all. It was after the greatest effort that we were at last able to find some weavers who condescended to weave Swadeshi yarn for us if the Ashram had promised to take off all the cloth that they might thus produce. By thus adopting cloth woven from mill-yarn as our wear and propagating it among our friends, we made ourselves voluntary agents of the Indian spinning mills. This, in its turn, brought us into contact with the mills and enabled us to know something about their management and their handicaps. We saw that the aim of the mills was more and more to weave the yarn spun by them; their co-operation with the handloom weaver was not willing but unavoidable and temporary. We became impatient to be able to spin our own yarn. It was clear that till we could do that ourselves, dependence on the mills would remain. We did not feel that we could render any service to the country by continuing as agents of Indian spinning mills.

No end of difficulties again faced us. We could neither get a spinning wheel nor a spinner to teach us how to spin. We were employing some wheels for filling bobbins and bobbins for weaving in the Ashram. But we had no idea that these could be used as spinning wheel. Once Kalidas Jhaveri discovered a woman who, he said, would demonstrate to us how spinning was done. We sent a member of the Ashram who was known for his great versatility in learning new things. But even he returned without wresting the secret of the art.

So the time passed on and my impatience grew with the time. I plied every chance visitor to the Ashram who was likely to possess some information about hand-spinning with questions about the art. But the art being confined to women and having been all but exterminated, if there was some stray spinner still surviving in some obscure corner, only a member of that sex was likely to find out her whereabouts.

In the year 1917, I was taken by my Gujarati friends to preside at the Broach Educational Conference. It was here that I discovered that remarkable lady Gangabehn Majmundar. She was a widow, but her enterprising spirit knew no bounds. Her education, in the accepted sense of the term, was not much. But in courage and commonsense she easily surpassed the general run of our educated women. She had, already, got rid of the curse of untouchability and fearlessly moved among and served the suppressed classes. She had means of her own and her needs were few. She had a well-seasoned constitution and went about everywhere without an escort. She felt quite at home on horseback. I came to know her more intimately at the Godhra Conference. To her, I poured out my grief about the charka, and she lightened my burden by a promise to prosecute an earnest and incessant search for the spinning wheel.

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