

Indian Opinion

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Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8th, 1908.

Humility

THERE is an Indian proverb that "The more the mango tree flourishes, the more it droops." There can be no gainsaying the fact that Indians in the Transvaal have come out of their struggle with honour, and, what is more, without their sacred resolution having been broken. The suffering that they have gone through must be taken as a necessary process of purification.

The compromise contemplates the ultimate repeal of the Act, which was the soul of the objection. The voluntary registration which has been offered often has now been accepted, and the condition stated in the dignified, yet humble, letter written by Messrs. Gandhi, Quinn, and Naidoo is that the Act is not to apply to those who voluntarily register themselves. The Government receive all they wanted in the way of identification, so that each party gets the substance it was striving for. Looked at in that light, the compromise reflects credit alike on the Government and on the Indian community. The Government have

shown their strength in having even at the eleventh hour recognised the necessity of consulting Indian sentiment. The much-discussed finger-prints remain, though in an elastic manner, and their acceptance by the Indian community shows not only its prudence, but it shows that the Indian objection has never centred round finger-prints.

We must decline to call this compromise a victory for Indians. That were an abuse of terms, but, if it be at all applicable in this connection, the victory is for Truth. Indians have always stated, and rightly so, that this was a religious fight. People who only give a superficial meaning to the word religion, have failed to see any in the Indian struggle, but Indians themselves have thought otherwise. They undertook it in the name of God, and they have to humble themselves before Him for having received sufficient strength to come through the ordeal.

Moreover, Indians have little reason to glory over the compromise, but every incentive to walk humbly, because the work of a different and higher type has only just commenced. The community has, of its own asking, been put upon its trial. Instead of the Law requiring it on pain of suffering the penalties, they have incurred a moral and, therefore, a higher obligation by offering the Government every facility for identifying all Indians entitled to reside in the Transvaal. It is, therefore, now constructive work, and, whilst the community has proved itself capable of carrying on in an orderly, peaceful and perfectly courteous manner, the necessary work of destruction, it has now to show that it is capable of solid and substantial constructive work. When it has proved itself worthy of the confidence reposed in it, the Indian community may have reason to congratulate itself, and will certainly have risen very high indeed in the estimation of all thoughtful men.

WE ARE AFRAID THAT IT WILL BE needful for British

The Need of Discrimination Indians in this Colony to keep a watchful eye on the turn of events here. From inspired reports, it appears that the Imperial Government are quite prepared to deprive the Natal Indians of the municipal franchise, under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Bill, if only this Colony will amend the Licensing Law to the extent of allowing appeal to the Supreme Court from the decisions of Licensing Courts' Officers. We hope that the Indian community will accept no compromise upon such

a basis. The two matters are entirely distinct and should be dealt with each on its own merits. A franchise once granted ought not to be taken away. We are at a loss to understand why, for instance, an Indian merchant's name should be allowed to remain on the municipal roll (for there are signs that even the Imperial Government will not permit an attack upon vested interests), whereas his son, who may be, from the European point of view, more highly qualified for citizenship, will be debarred from exercising the civic franchise. And what the municipal franchise has to do with the question of meting out justice to the licensed dealer it is not easy to explain. If an injustice has already been done the Indian community, we are unable to conceive that it can be remedied by its replacement by another injury. It is plain that Natal Indians are called upon to take a strong position if they wish to safeguard their children's privileges. There seems, indeed, to be much ado about nothing, for, though, to-day, the Indian is, in theory, qualified as a municipal voter, in practice, he has not exercised his rights, realising, with great self-restraint, the expediency of not adding fuel to the fire of prejudice against him. Surely it is the height of unfairness to penalise him for this display of common-sense and patriotic duty.

A Theatrical Performance

In Aid of Transvaal Indians

A Theatrical Play entitled *Dage Hasarat*, in Hindustani, was given on the first instant, in the Victoria Theatre, Durban, under the auspices of the Durban Fruiterers' Association. The actors of the East Indian Theatrical Company and other amateurs took a prominent part in the proceedings. The net proceeds are to go to the funds of the British Indian Association, Johannesburg, in aid of Indians in the Transvaal. The Theatre was closely packed by all sections of the Indian community.

Mr. Dada Osman thanked the audience on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress, and Messrs. Dawad Mahomed, Parsee S. J. Randeria, and U. M. Shelat also addressed the audience.

Mr. Parsee Rustonjee paid a tribute to the communities represented by the audience and specially thanked those present on behalf of the British Indian Association, under the direction of the Assistant-Secretary of that body. Mr. Rustonjee also asked the people to extend the same generous support on the next Saturday when a

Gujarati play is to be given for the same purpose.

Mr. O. K. Patel, on behalf of the Fruiterers' Association, thanked the leaders of the Natal Indian Congress and the audience for their presence.

Voluntary Registration

Full Instructions

We have been informed that the work of voluntary registration for all the Indians in the Transvaal and which has been accepted by the Government commences in right earnest on Monday next, the 10th instant, at Johannesburg, in the Old Dutch Church, Von Brandis Square, from 9 o'clock in the morning, except on the first day, when it will be from 10 o'clock. Due information will be given with reference to registration in other places, and it is stated that, except in Pretoria and Johannesburg, the receiving of applications will be left in the hands of the Magistrates in the different parts.

The form of registration certificate and the form of application have been considerably changed, in order to suit the new situation. Every adult male Indian should present himself for registration, and all those who are entitled to receive the certificate will be registered. Roughly, those who are in possession of permits *bona-fide* issued to them, and those who are in possession of Old Dutch registration certificates, being their property, and all children who entered the country openly when they were under the age of 16 years will be registered. The following may be, to all intents and purposes, laid down as the rule regarding the methods of identification:—

(a) At the discretion of the Registrar, signatures, that is to say signatures well-formed, bearing the impress of the signatory and not a mere tracing of letters, will be accepted in place of finger-prints from those who may possess property qualifications, or may be otherwise known as residents of the Transvaal.

(b) Signatures in place of finger-prints will be accepted from those who possess educational qualification sufficient to satisfy the test under the Immigrants' Restriction Act.

(c) Those who have any real or conscientious objections to giving ten finger-prints, and who do not fall under either of the above clauses, may be allowed to give thumb-prints instead of digit impressions.

Whilst all these are very liberal concessions, in our opinion, it will be more becoming of the Indian community not to take advantage of them. The main point having been secured, we are of opinion that everyone should give digit impressions without the slightest hesitation. In any case, the leaders who have a right not to give finger-prints should be the first to wait and offer to give those

impressions, so as to facilitate the work of identification, and make the process easier for the Government. We believe that the Indian community will show its real dignity by making as limited a use of the concession as possible. We understand that Messrs. Essop Mia, Gandhi, and others who have been closely identified with the struggle, have decided not to claim the concession.

Indian Women and the Struggle

A Magnificent Example

[SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED]

The record of the struggle so satisfactorily ended in the Transvaal would be incomplete without a word said of the heroism of the Indian women. There are not very many of them in the Transvaal, owing to the many unfortunate circumstances attending the residence in that Colony of British Indians, but their courage and self-denial have received as trying a test as could well be imagined.

No one who is at all acquainted with the intense family affection existing amongst Indians can be unaware of the supreme self-sacrifice of the Transvaal Indian women. Not one knew from one day to another when her husband would be torn from her side and consigned to the gaols of the Colony, when the father of her children would suddenly disappear, when her natural protector and the family bread-winner would be swiftly withdrawn, and she and her children left to starve, or obliged to rely upon the honour of the Indian community, that it would be true to the solemn pledge taken in September, 1906, and would maintain the women and children of those who should be incarcerated.

One thing these brave women did know. They were positive that it was impossible for their husbands to fulfil the religious vows, taken on the occasion of their nuptial ceremonies, if the latter could forswear their sacred oath not to register under an enslaving law. They realised instinctively that, whereas their husbands were, in a sense, fighting for themselves alone and their own freedom, they, the women, not only had to regard the honour of their husbands and the preservation of the spirit of the marriage rites of themselves, but they had also to secure the permanent liberty of their children. Thus they realised that a double duty, a heavier responsibility, was imposed upon them. It was for them to safeguard the present and the future.

And nobly did they fulfil their honourable task. One of the men arrested at Pietersburg was in Pretoria when the Pretoria men were sentenced so barbarously, terrified at the thought of heavy penalties, including hard labour, he hastily proceeded to Natal,

where his wife lay upon a bed of sickness whence she might never again arise. Upon his arrival in Durban, however, she demanded of him the cause of his departure from the Transvaal, and when she heard the cause peremptorily ordered him to return by the next train and submit to his punishment. He returned, surrendered to the police in Pietersburg, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Another man, in Pretoria, who had disobeyed the magisterial order to leave the Colony, was to appear before the Court to receive sentence. His courage began to leave him, but his wife informed him that if he were a coward, she would don his clothes and herself receive punishment on his behalf. He went to gaol.

The Madraśsi women of Pretoria informed their husbands, sons, and brothers, who had undertaken picket duty, that they need not be alarmed for them. If the men were arrested and sent to gaol, they themselves would at once take their places in the pickets' ranks and warn the people of the perils awaiting them.

At Germiston, on Tuesday week, a mass meeting of Indian women was held, to protest against the iniquities of the law. A resolution was passed calling upon the Government to respect Indian marital vows, which forbade the separation of husbands from wives and wives from husbands, and demanding the right to share their husbands' imprisonment. A similar meeting was being arranged for Friday week last in Johannesburg, when the happy culmination of events rendered unnecessary such a proceeding.

Instances such as these make us realise something of the religious spirit that animated the opposition of the Indian community to the Registration Act. When the women could show such courage, it was impossible to doubt the success of the passive resistance movement, for the men dared not prove themselves weaker than the women. In the light, then, of these incidents, who shall say that the Transvaal Indian community was without its heroines. And better still, who can doubt the possibilities for good of their offspring. To be born of such mothers as these is an honour not easily deserved, and the European colonists should rejoice at the prospect of the advent of a generation of Indians born in times of heroism and struggle, imbued at birth with the very instinct of self-sacrifice and deep religious duty.

A. CHESSEL PIQUET.

INDIANS IN JAMAICA. Free Indian Immigrants into Jamaica can obtain employment as agricultural labourers and can buy good land at from £1 to £5 per acre, with good prospect of making a comfortable livelihood.

The Settlement

News and Views

The Position Up to Date

In the House of Commons on the 31st ult., Mr. John Morley (Secretary of State for India), amidst cheers, announced the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty in the Transvaal. He paid a tribute to the Transvaal Government for accelerating the good end of a most critical episode. Mr. Morley added that a good spirit had been shown throughout the trouble. *Reuter.*

On the same date a *Mercury* special cable states :

The Times to-day expresses profound thankfulness at the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty in the Transvaal, and congratulates all parties concerned in the matter. The newspaper praises especially the conduct of Mr. Gandhi and his friends.

At the same time, *The Times* remarks, that nobody in the Transvaal, whether Government or Opposition, English or Boer, seems to have looked at the question from any point of view but that of the most limited provincialism; and deplores the fact that this provincial spirit seems to have prevented the idea of an earlier compromise.

The Times correspondent in Calcutta telegraphs that the Transvaal settlement of the Indian question has been received with unqualified satisfaction in India. The sympathetic attitude of the Indian Government will, he says, appease the indignation hitherto prevailing regarding this matter.

Speaking to a *Transvaal Leader* reporter Mr. William Hosken, M.L.A. said he believed the settlement was agreeable to all sides. "I think," he added, "the Government is to be commended for recognising the extremely difficult position that has arisen, and meeting it in a practical and statesmanlike manner."

The London correspondent of the *Star*, telegraphing on Saturday, says that *The Times* prints in a prominent position a letter signed by Mr. Patrick Duncan (late Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal) and by Messrs. Curtis, Feetham and Martin (members of the Transvaal Legislative Council), explaining that the real object and effect of the Registration Act is not mainly the question of trade rivalry, but regard for the future population of the country, at the gates of which a flood of immigrants is waiting.

After insisting on the necessity of the Registration Act and denying that the finger print system is degrading, the writers declare that the question in South Africa, as in Canada and Australia, is whether partnership in the Empire necessarily carries the obligation to allow Asiatics to enter

freely, knowing that they can compel the European shopkeepers and artisans to adopt lower standards of living or give place to them. The writers refuse to believe that the partnership is incompatible with the firm belief of the European in South Africa that the future of the country lies with him and his race.

London, Feb. 3.—Lord Amptill, replying to the recent letter to the Press from Mr. Patrick Duncan, former Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, and members of the Transvaal Legislative Council, dealing with the Asiatic Registration Act, and the ideal of a white South Africa, deprecates such letters at the present moment. He repudiates the assertions that the objections of Indians to the regulations are insincere.

His Lordship advocates regarding the matter in favour of the Imperial standpoint, and wants restricted immigration.—*Reuter.*

London, Feb. 4.—A further Blue book was issued to-day publishing additional dispatches on the Asiatic question in the Transvaal of which the following is a synopsis :—

On Jan. 25, Lord Elgin sent a communication to Lord Selborne explaining the methods of taking the finger-prints in use in India. His Lordship points out that the practice of taking ten finger-prints is confined to cases of criminals.

Lord Selborne, in reply, dated Jan. 28, replied, that the Transvaal Government will gladly accept the same practice as is in vogue in India, but that the Indians object to the spirit rather than the details of the law.

In a dispatch on the following day, the High Commissioner announces that a settlement has been arrived at.

The final dispatch is one from Lord Elgin on Jan. 31, which congratulates Lord Selborne and the Transvaal Ministers upon the settlement, and acknowledges their uniform courtesy throughout the correspondence on the subject.

Johannesburg, Feb. 5 (*Reuter*).—Speaking at a political meeting to-night, Mr. Smuts devoted the most part of his remarks to the Asiatic question. He maintained that there had been no climb down on the part of the Government. The Government did not wish to exclude the Asiatics in the country, but to have a proper registration of those who had the right to be here. The object of the Act had been attained, and the Immigration Act would keep from henceforth all Asiatics out. He eulogised very highly the action of the British Government in not interfering with them on the question, especially as the vast majority of the British Empire was not constituted of white people. He also thanked the Progressive Party for helping the Government.

General Smuts on the Compromise

An Interview by the "Star"

The Colonial Secretary, interviewed on Friday morning on his way to the Sterkstroom meeting as to the arrangement arrived at between the Government and the Asiatic leaders, made the following statement to the *Star* correspondent :—

"The position is this: I have repeatedly stated at meetings that we are not going to receive the registration of A, B, and C as they might come along. If the Indians come to us as a body and offer to register within a certain period, then we will accept their registration. But the matter will have to be legalised by Parliament. There will be no special sitting of Parliament. The matter will be laid before Parliament at the next ordinary session. The arrangement that we have arrived at is that all those Indians who are well known, who have property, and who are educated, will be exempt from the finger-print system, and they will not be pushed to answer questions about which they have religious scruples. The Colonial Secretary reserves the discretion to state who are to be exempt. This offer, which I have been asking them to make for a month past, they are making now, and they promise to register in three months. Then I will bring the matter before Parliament, which will have to pass a special law legalising the arrangement. Meanwhile I undertake not to prosecute them. No licences will, however, be issued to them pending the decision of Parliament, but they can trade without licences. There is no question of the Government having given in. These people have insisted that before they register the law must be repealed; but the Government has refused, as it considered this a preposterous proposal, and now the Indians have dropped it."

At Sterkstroom, General Smuts said the Government had never any objections to taking the signatures instead of the finger-prints of the few hundred men of education, property or standing among the Asiatics in the Transvaal. The Indians had now offered that they would come in and register, all of them giving their finger impressions except those who were educated, were owners of property, or were men of sufficient standing and length of residence to make their identification certain. Registration would now take place within three months. This would place the Colony in a position to prevent any further Asiatic immigration; most of the Asiatics in this country did not have wives here, consequently the Asiatic population would decrease, and in twenty years or more there would be no Asiatic questions, and then they could fight out the native question for themselves.

Mr. Gandhi Interviewed

"Playing the Game"

Mr. Gandhi made a statement to representatives of the Press immediately on his arrival at his office. He said: "This campaign has undoubtedly shown one thing, if it has shown anything—that Indians in the Transvaal are deserving of self-respect and of being classed as men. The charge has often been brought against them that they are incapable of acting in concert for the common good. I think I can fairly claim for my countrymen that they have shown unexampled self-sacrifice. Hundreds of poor hawkers, rather than pay the small fines that were inflicted on them by the Magistrate, underwent the hardships of prison life, simply for the sake of principle. In the course of my practice I have not noticed many clients who have been willing to go to gaol when there has been the option of a fine. They have been willing to pay the heaviest fines if thereby they could avoid imprisonment. I must say that, to a certain extent, the cohesion that has been shown by the poorest Indians in the Colony has been an eye-opener even to me, and I have no doubt it has been to the Colonists. I think it might also, therefore, be claimed that if the compromise that has now been arrived at is honourable to Indians, as it undoubtedly is to the Government, Indians have figuratively bled for it. It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the sacrifice made by hundreds of Indians, and in this category I include those Indians who left the Colony because they did not consider themselves strong enough to brave the struggle. Merchants with large stocks in the Colony were perfectly resigned to any consequences, but they would not submit to a law which in their estimation degraded them. It was necessary, I think, for British Indians to show as much as they have before they could claim to be trusted, and in accepting the petition the Government have done nothing more than give British Indians three months' grace. We are now put upon our mettle. To my mind the real work commences only now. We have

TO PLAY THE GAME.

We have to show to the Government and to the Colonists that Indians as a body have nothing to do with surreptitious entry—that although there is no legal obligation we recognise a moral obligation to give the Government complete identification of every Asiatic who is entitled to remain in the Colony or to re-enter it, and if we succeed in doing that I think that the bitterest opponent of British Indians will have to admit that those who prove their right to domicile and give the Government full particulars as to identification should not only be left in the Colony unmolested, but that they should have every encourage-

ment, so that instead of remaining in the Colony as a festering sore they may so far as possible be assimilated and form part of the future South African nation. I do think that the highest statesmanship in South Africa consists not in treating any class of its inhabitants as almost animals or pariahs, but it consists in

TREATING THEM AS MEN,

and raising them to a higher level. The question of unfair competition and such other questions crop up only because sometimes one notices cases of unfair competition, but all these matters can certainly be remedied if the different races living in South Africa were to be educated up to a proper sense of citizenship. By proper citizenship I don't for one moment claim that all the races should be clothed with the franchise, but I do claim that the dominant race should look forward to a time when those lower races will be raised higher in the scale. Looking at the whole question in that light, I for one have no hesitation in agreeing entirely with General Smuts' remarks with reference to the indentured Indians in Natal. As a matter of fact, the British Indian population there has always submitted that indentured labour should be stopped, no matter at what sacrifice. Indians—that is, free Indians—have never countenanced nor wanted the system of indentured labour, and I admit that, but for the system of indentured labour in Natal, the Asiatic question would not have caused the trouble it has. I certainly believe that, so long as Natal continues to import indentured labour, so long will there be some trouble or other in connection with Asiatics, but I don't wish, in making this statement, to be understood as saying that indentured Indians, after regaining their freedom, have been flooding the Transvaal. I know such statements have been made before now, but I am positive there is absolutely no foundation for them, if only for the reason that the supervision over indentured Indians is very strict, and no Indian from India is allowed to leave the Colony unless he has received his free pass. The Immigration Department of Natal is practically in a position to trace every indentured Indian.

Questioned with regard to his

EXPERIENCES IN THE FORT

Mr. Gandhi said: "So far as the gaol authorities are concerned, they could not have been more considerate. The Governor and all other officials were most kind and courteous. The Governor paid a visit every day, and regularly enquired whether we had any complaints or requests to make, and, if there were any, they were promptly remedied. Any request that could be granted within the regulations was immediately granted. Facilities were given for taking out books from the Prison Library and for receiving books from outside.

Mr. Gandhi added that, lest a remark in yesterday's *Transvaal Leader* should be misunderstood, he desired to state that the gaol premises, so far as he was concerned, were kept scrupulously clean, the only exception being a place where prisoners who could not be sent to their respective cells had to wait. This place was full of bugs, which came, however, from the woodwork, and its condition was not the fault of the gaol officials, but was due to the cramped space at their disposal.

"Leader" Interview with Mr. Gandhi

Late on Thursday night, a *Leader* representative interviewed Mr. Gandhi on the settlement. In the course of the interview, Mr. Gandhi remarked:

"The compromise arrived at is largely the same that was offered by the Asiatic communities before proceedings under the Registration Act were commenced. This compromise will give complete identification of every Asiatic over the age of 16 years in the Colony, and those who may be entitled to remain in or re-enter it. The main distinction between the Act and the identification under the offer will consist in a sting of compulsion being removed. The compromise puts Asiatics on their honour and responsibility, and if it is not carried out faithfully by my countrymen I have no doubt that our position will deservedly be worse than it would have been under the Act. But I do not anticipate any difficulty. With reference to the wholesale arrests that have taken place during the last three weeks, I do not think that Asiatics can have any cause to grumble; that procedure was necessary in order to test the intensity—as also the reality—of our feeling about the Act. I may state that we who were at the Fort were allowed to petition the Government offering once more voluntary registration, and the course adopted by the Government was in response to that petition. In my humble opinion the Government have shown real strength in acceding to the request. I would further and at this stage say that the leaders of the Asiatic communities, so far as I am aware, will loyally abide by the decision of the colonists to avoid further immigration of Asiatics not entitled to enter by reason of previous domicile."

THE ASSISTANT PROTECTOR. A Government *Gazette* notice informs the public that "H. Robinson, Assistant Protector of Immigrants, is authorised to enter upon all estates or places where Indians are employed.

Meeting at Caxton Hall

Huge Success

Expressions of Sympathy

[SPECIAL TO INDIAN OPINION]

The meeting at Caxton Hall, London, on Thursday, 9th Jan. convened under the auspices of the South Africa British Indian Committee, was extensively advertised for a week in advance by the whole of the Metropolitan and Provincial Press. It had been one of the chief subjects of conversation and discussion since the Immigration Restriction Act was sanctioned. The hall was packed, crowds standing at the back blocking the aisles and stretching through the door into the passage beyond. Some dozen M.P.'s were present. The majority of the audience were English sympathisers; the proportion of Indians which ordinarily would have been considered to be numerically large, was small. A great number of those present were delegates from important organizations numbering thousands of members, so that the meeting may not improperly be regarded as a huge mass meeting expressing the feeling of the Metropolis on the subject. Among the organizations represented were:—The New Reform Club, The London Indian Society, The National Indian Congress, The Fabian Society, The Union of Ethical Societies, The West London Ethical Society, The Positivist Society, The Wandsworth Trades and Labour Council, The Lambeth and District Trades and Labour Council, The East Indian Association, The Wesleyan Methodist Society and others. The accompanying extracts from telegrams and letters are but a few of the chief expressions of regret received from sympathisers who were for various reasons unable to be present. The proceedings were characterised by an earnestness and enthusiasm such as has seldom been experienced. The difficulty of the Chairman was to restrain the indignation of the audience and some of the speakers. Of the latter, the Labour representatives especially sought to press the Government to go much further than, in the circumstances, the conveners of the meeting felt to be politic. They insisted upon an additional resolution being put to the meeting demanding equal rights for British Indians in South Africa, and over twenty, mostly delegates, actually voted in support.

The resolutions were carried unanimously, only one amendment, that of Mr. Rees, M.P., to resolution No. 1, being proposed and finding no more than two supporters. It was impossible to bring the proceedings to a conclusion before 7 o'clock, they lasting not less than three hours. Fully a dozen Press men took reports, and the whole of the next morning's press dealt at length with the matter. There must have been present not fewer

than two hundred and fifty people representing in the aggregate very many thousands. Had the meeting been a public one, and an invitation been extended to all and sundry, there is little doubt that scarcely any hall would have been too large to have been filled.

The following expressions of sympathy were read:

Lord Roberts wired from Ascot: "I much regret being unable to attend Meeting to-day, the object of which appeals to me."

The Natal Indian Congress, representing the Indians of Natal, cabled:—"Natal Indians thank your Lordship for fighting nobly for self-respecting Indians domiciled Transvaal. Hope to-morrow's meeting will show the might of Right."

Sir William Brampton Gurdin, M.P. wrote:—"I am afraid there is no chance of my being able to be in Town next week."

Mr. C. E. Mallet, M.P. wrote:—"I am greatly in sympathy with the objects of your meeting."

Mr. S. R. Richards, M.P. wrote:—"Being in Scotland will prevent my being at your meeting although with you in spirit."

Mr. J. F. Cheetham, M.P. wrote:—"I am in full sympathy with the objects of the meeting but greatly fear I may not find it in my power to be present on an occasion, the interest and importance of which, at the present juncture, it would be difficult to over estimate."

Mr. Tom Burt, M.P. wrote:—"I am fully in sympathy with the object of the conference on the 9th inst., and regret that it is impossible for me to be present. Best wishes."

The Deptford and Greenwich Trades Council wrote:—"Convey to your Committee our earnest hope that one result of your meeting may be to have the Government intervene on behalf of our fellow subjects in the Transvaal who are suffering such injustice by the application of the Transvaal Immigrants' Restriction Act. May I assure you that those whom our Council represent hope that your efforts may meet with every success."

Mr. H. F. B. Lynch, M.P.:—"I am waiting in London especially to attend your meeting to-morrow."

Sir Charles Bruce, formerly Governor of Mauritius and British Guiana:—"I am sorry to find that I am unable to undertake a journey to London to be present at the meeting at Caxton Hall to-morrow. I need hardly assure you of my complete sympathy with the objects of the meeting, and I observe with pleasure that this question of the position of British Indians in the Transvaal to-day occupies a position of the first rank among Imperial problems. It may be a difficult problem, but as Mr. Morley wisely said, 'people who find political problems insoluble are not for political life.' Your meeting will, I hope, do much to persuade the Government

that a solution is a necessity, and necessity will no doubt prove the mother of invention of an appropriate method."

The Bishop of Southampton:—"As a former Bishop of Bombay, I have been much distressed by the attitude adopted towards British Indians by the Transvaal Government. I have it in my mind to bring forward a resolution on the subject at the February Session of Convocation."

The National Indian Association wrote:—"This Association sympathises with the cause of the better treatment of British Indians in the Transvaal."

Mr. Murray Macdonald, M.P.:—"I shall not be in Town on Thursday, otherwise I should certainly have attended the meeting."

Mr. W. H. Cowan, M.P.:—"I regret my absence abroad will prevent my attending the Meeting. I feel strongly that His Majesty's Government ought to use all its influence in favour of British subjects so unjustly and harshly treated in a Colony which owes so much to British generosity."

Mr. Mill, Secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. Incorporated:—"Regrets that a Meeting in Session prevents their attendance and adds it may be assumed I think that every Englishman quite irrespective of political bias or connection will be only too thankful if means can be devised by which the harshness of the Transvaal Immigrants' Restriction Act, in its application to British Indians lawfully resident in the Transvaal, can be mitigated."

The Secretary, Hornsey Trades Council (Mr. H. Tomkins):—"Regrets the absence of the representative at the meeting but is requested to state that at their last meeting a strong resolution of sympathy was unanimously agreed to. It is deeply to be regretted" he continues "that almost the youngest of our self-governing colonies should so soon sully its reputation with vexatious and insulting treatment of fellow-subjects, but it cannot but be apparent that over and above the colour prejudice, that so strongly afflicts so many of our over-sea communities, there is also an underlying economic reason for the persecution. Wishing you every possible success in your agitation."

Mr. Ian Malcolm writes:—"I am particularly sorry that it will be impossible for me to attend the meeting. I need hardly say that I am in complete agreement with the considerations which are down for discussion at the Emergency Meeting."

Mr. J. Walton, M.P.:—"I hope that you will have a good attendance and that an effective intervention on behalf of our British Indian fellow-citizens may be made. When Parliament re-assembles, I shall be pleased to do all in my power to secure for them their full rights of British citizenship."

Mr. Roland Hunt, M.P.:—"If the British Indians had been rebels and

enemies of the British Empire, they would have everything possible done for them by the present Government."

Mr. G. Ridsdale: "I think the whole proceedings quite monstrous and likely to be fraught with the gravest consequence to our rule in India. I shall be happy to support any well considered steps that it may be thought desirable to take on my return."

Dr. John Clifford (Nonconformist Passive Resister): "I regret I am not able to attend the meeting, but I join your protest and appeal with all my heart. It is lamentable that we should fall so far short of practical brotherhood within our Empire."

Mr. Arnold Lupton, M.P.: "If it had been possible for me I should have attended the meeting to petition against the ill-treatment of British Indians in the Transvaal. I consider it is a mockery to talk about the British Empire and then allow British citizens to be subjected to such indignity."

The following is the text of the Resolutions passed:

RESOLUTION I.

"That this meeting deeply regrets the imposition by the Transvaal Government of differential Laws and Regulations such as the Asiatic Law Amendment Act and the Immigration Restriction Act of 1907 upon British Indians lawfully resident in that Colony to whom these laws seem humiliating and degrading, and regards with the gravest concern the enforcement of these Laws, in spite of the offer of the resident Indian community to re-register voluntarily, as an attempt at the expulsion rather than identification of that section of British subjects, and the extinction of their vested rights and property."

Proposed by Harold Cox, Esq., M.P., seconded by Ameer Ali, Esq., C.I.E., and supported by General Laurie, Mayor of Paddington.

RESOLUTION II.

"That this meeting deeply regrets that His Majesty's Government should have given its sanction to a measure so drastic as the Immigration Restriction Act which allows the deportation for a purely statutory offence of British citizens."

Proposed by Sir Mancherjee Bowmaggree, K.C.I.E., and seconded by J. O'Grady, Esq., M.P.

RESOLUTION III.

"That this meeting earnestly appeals to the Secretary of State for the Colonies even now to instruct the Governor of the Transvaal to exercise the power of refusing to order deportation vested in him by Clause 6, Section (c) of the said Act, viz.,

"No such person.....shall be removed from this Colony except on the order of the Governor provided further that every such person arrested shall be discharged from custody unless an order be made by

the Governor for his removal from this Colony within 10 days after the date of his arrest."

Proposed by Sir William Wedderburn, Bart. and seconded by Sir Raymond West, K.C.I.E.

RESOLUTION IV.

"That the Chairman of this public meeting be requested to forward copies of the above Resolutions to the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and India and the High Commissioner."

Proposed by Sir Henry Cotton, M.P., and seconded by Sir William Bull, M.P.

General Botha on the Situation

In the course of his Potchefstroom speech on Saturday last, General Botha said one little thing was touched upon about which he would also like to speak, and that was the Asiatic question. They knew with what object the law was promulgated. There was only one object—to see which Asiatics were in the country lawfully and which resided here unlawfully, and also to prevent the immigration of Asiatics into this country. The Government had suffered strong opposition from the side of the Asiatics from the day that this law was promulgated, but the Government, supported by the whole population of the Transvaal, had continued to carry out the law, and ultimately had to resort to measures which nobody liked to resort to. But the Government resorted to those measures in the carrying out of law and order in the country. The Asiatics had already agitated for the Government to withdraw this law, and had said when this law was withdrawn they would register voluntarily. The Government had refused to listen to that. Now, after most of the leaders had been put in gaol, the Government had received a letter in which they did not ask for a withdrawal of the law any more, but asked to be allowed to voluntarily register. Now no other registration was possible at the present time. They could only do it voluntarily, because no other way of registering was given under the law. The Government therefore, had accepted that proposal, and promised to put these proposals before the next session of Parliament. The Government had also promised not to continue further prosecutions until this matter had been put before Parliament again. He hoped that everyone of them would take up an honest attitude towards these people. It was not a question for them to say they did not wish these people in the country. These people were here lawfully, whether they liked it or not. The position was a most difficult one. It was impossible to take a man who lived here lawfully and put him over the border. Only men who were not

entitled to reside in this country could be put over the border. In his opinion, the Government and the population had attained their object with this law. Six thousand of these Asiatics who were here unlawfully had become afraid and had left the country, and they certainly would not come back again. So these who were still here were justified in thinking they had a right to remain here, unless, of course, they refused to register. Now they came to the Government, and said: Give us the opportunity of registering within three months and we will do so voluntarily. The white people were the victors, and they were the people who could show generosity. They must not look at this matter from the small Transvaal standpoint. They must also look at wider Imperial interests. The parties in Parliament had unanimously consented to this law, and he was glad to be able to say that all parties in Parliament had worked together, and had consented to the present policy.

The "Leader's" Comment

Commenting on the above in Tuesday's issue, the *Transvaal Leader* says:

The Premier is reported to have said: "Six thousand of those Asiatics who were here unlawfully had become afraid, and had left the country, and they certainly would not come back." We are constrained to ask, if the officials know that 6,000 "unlawfuls" have left the country, how does it happen they did not know they were coming in, and check them? Will the Premier be good enough to state by what method this computation was arrived at? It has always been argued in support of the new Asiatic Law that there was no adequate way of detecting the entrance of Asiatics to this Colony. But, if it has been possible to detect the outgoing with such precision as seems to be at the command of General Botha, why did not the same method apply to the incoming?

The Right Prevails

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth" I said:
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth He
sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, goodwill to
men!"

LONGFELLOW.

The Press on the Transvaal Situation

The *Transvaal Leader* (January 31), in a leading article, says:

The news of the settlement of the Asiatic difficulty, of which details will be found in another column, will be received with relief by the bulk of British citizens all over the world. Upon reading the rather piquant report from Pretoria, that Mr. Gandhi was recognised in that pleasant Capital yesterday, the plain man is likely to remark that it is a pity the Indian leader was not seen there earlier and oftener. If he had been, it is possible that the taxpayer would have been saved considerable expense, the Asiatic bodily suffering and mental distress, and the Colony an agitation which has not added to its reputation. . . . It would be interesting if one could know two elementary facts affecting the present situation. First, what has been the official experience in Asiatic communities of the permanent officials charged with the work of administering this Act, and with what languages of India are they conversant? Second, upon how many occasions have the Government taken counsel with the heads of the Asiatic community before passing and administering a novel law? This course is taken every day in India in regard to races not directly represented in the Government, and it is one reason why British administration is the success it is. It is significant that so soon as the Asiatic leaders and the Colonial Secretary are brought into direct touch, what had seemed a deadlock became a not unhopeful situation.

The Government might have gone on imprisoning the protestors, to the number of thousands, thereby, apart from physical difficulties—and they were not trifling—inflicting upon the white population a degree of moral injury not easy to be estimated. But the available evidence goes to show that this would have been futile, as far as the Government's object was concerned. It is to the credit of both sides that they have had enough commonsense to agree upon a compromise which seems reasonable and—given a right tendency of the official mind—workable. The reasonable-minded majority of white colonials will, we venture to predict, approve of the settlement. There have been a few demands for an extreme and vindictive policy towards the Asiatics. But the spectacle of men going to prison for semi-political offences, and giving up profitable businesses rather than do what seemed to them just and right, has left most white Transvaalers unhappy; and the consideration that the prisoners hail from a State of the Empire of which every Briton feels proud increased their unhappiness. . . . What has led to the present modification is in part recognition of the insuperable difficulties in the way of applying the Act as it stood, and in part the growing alienation of intelligent public opinion from the administrative course adopted.

Even a hasty reference to the situation would be incomplete if no mention were made of the admirable part which the Opposition has played throughout. Although it was responsible equally with the Government for the passage of the Bill, the Opposition was not responsible for the administration of the Act. It might easily, fortified by this consideration, have taken up an attitude which would have gravely embarrassed both the British and Transvaal Governments. It declined to take any such view of its responsibilities, remembering the British citizenship of most of the Asiatics involved, the claims of India and the desirability of bringing to an end an agitation injurious to the Colony. It is to be hoped, however, that in agreeing, as it finally did, to acquiesce in the course provisionally agreed to by the Government, the Opposition has urged, or will urge, earnestly upon the Colonial Secretary the necessity either for bringing a fresh official mind to bear on the delicate work to be done during the next few weeks, or for making clear to the existing wielders of official authority that

the references to discretionary power in the Asiatics' communication are to be construed in a wide sense. It is no question of favouring Asiatics. The *Transvaal Leader* has from the first expressed doubts as to the workableness of the Act in its present form.

There is a feeling among men of all parties that the proceedings now happily brought to an end have not been deserved by those against whom they were directed. Mr. Gandhi's statement, made upon his release last night, will not lessen this feeling.

The *Star*, the same day, remarks:

The extent of their (the Government's) concession to Asiatic sentiment is to test the *bona fides* of the passive resistance movement by reopening the registration offices for a limited period of voluntary registration.

If the Government are satisfied that they can make an end of a troublesome business by this change of method, we think they are very well advised to give it a trial.

To do Mr. Gandhi justice, he does not show the smallest disposition to abuse his liberty. His dignified reticence does him the greatest possible credit, and the complete control which he exercises over his compatriots is the best possible omen for the success of the new arrangements. We confess that the distinction between "voluntary" registration within three months and "compulsory" registration of precisely the same nature is just a little too subtle for the average European mind; but if the change will satisfy a sensitive Oriental people, we are all for making it. At least it will be the last nail in the coffin of the grotesque theory that a single thumb mark is the extreme limit of human self-respect. As for the intention to discriminate between Indians of recognised social standing and the rest, that is entirely a matter for the European officials whose business it is to identify them. No one whose opinion is worth having has ever underrated the social gulf which yawns between Mr. Gandhi, for instance, and the average coolie hawker. But there are minor distinctions which, however apparent to the Asiatics themselves, are not readily appreciated by Europeans even of long Asiatic experience. The essential condition of any concession of this kind is that every lawful Asiatic resident must be susceptible of prompt identification, and so long as that condition is absolutely fulfilled the precise method is of little consequence.

The Registration Bill and the Immigration Bill were both passed with the unanimous approval of Parliament. The policy which these laws represent, viz., the restriction of the Asiatic community to the immigrants lawfully resident in the country already, is the Progressive policy just as much as the *Het Volk* policy. . . . In the light of experience we are all entitled to doubt whether the wisest methods were always chosen to carry it out, whether the regulations framed under the Registration Law were well considered, whether the advice of the Government experts, which the Opposition was bound to take on trust, has not been at fault from first to last. If there have been mistakes in administration the Government must bear the responsibility.

The *Rand Daily Mail* writes as follows:

We have been treated to bombastic protestations of inflexible resolution. To-day the citadel has been abandoned. The Government has surrendered.

It has for a long time been apparent that the legislation passed last March in order to deal with the Asiatics was ill-advised. We did not scruple to state, in spite of declarations to the contrary, that the *Immigrants' Restriction Bill*, the weapon upon which the Government appeared to be relying, was practically useless; and for many months now grave doubts have been entertained by a large section of the public as to the outcome of the Government's campaign against the Asiatics. Therefore we should not have been inclined to quarrel with the decision now arrived at to accept a compromise; and no one of us is entitled to throw a stone at any other

on account of the hasty, ill-framed law which was passed last March. For that we must all bear our share of the blame. But the principal object of that legislation, it must always be remembered, was not directly to keep fresh Asiatics from coming in, but to register those who were already here; and inasmuch as that object will be achieved by the compromise which has now been accepted, the Government cannot be said to have violated any principle of policy to which it was committed. It is once more in its methods of administration that it has erred. It would never at this moment appear to be so weak, if it had not for the past ten months professed to be so strong. For the compromise which has now been accepted is no new proposal.

Mr. Smuts informed Mr. Gandhi, on the eve of the commencement of hostilities, that "the Colonial Secretary will carry out in full the provisions of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, and if the resistance of the Indians residing in this country leads to results, which they do not seriously face at present, they will only have themselves and their leaders to blame." He was adamant; not only inflexible, but even minatory. Those who defied the law, and incited others to defy it, should have been forced to pay the penalty which they had deliberately incurred. That they should have achieved a moral victory is a fact which will not have a wholesome effect either on the Asiatic or the native mind. That they should have set the law at defiance and go unpunished is simply to encourage the spread of organised passive resistance.

The *Rand Daily Mail* (February 1), adds the following:

Mr. Smuts has stated that "there is no question of the Government having given in," but he will find it very difficult to persuade the public to agree with him. . . . It is certain that the compromise now agreed upon differs in no material respect from that suggested by the Indians themselves in May last; and it is just as certain that, for this reason, every Indian regards the compromise as a complete victory over the Government, in spite of the very generous and exemplary attitude adopted in public by Mr. Gandhi himself.

The *Transvaal Leader*, on the same day, remarks:

Copies of the official correspondence between the Colonial Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition, with reference to the Asiatic question, will be found in another column. Perusal of them serves to strengthen one's feeling of satisfaction, on the one hand, that the Government called into its councils the members of His Majesty's Opposition, and on the other at the attitude taken up at Thursday's meeting by Sir George Farrar and those who think with him in politics. It is an attitude in keeping with the conduct of the Opposition in this difficult matter from the outset. "We feel it essential to success that the law should be administered with the least possible friction, and as far as possible with due consideration for the responsibilities and difficulties of the Imperial Government." So runs the closing paragraph of the letter sent by Sir George Farrar on behalf of his party. It breathes a spirit which reflects high honour on every man who subscribed to its terms. The Government cannot complain that, when it seeks the co-operation of the Opposition in matters which lie outside the legitimate scope of party, it is met in any but a frank and patriotic spirit.

The *Sunday Times* has the following:

Putting the best complexion on the settlement, one must admit that the Government have rendered themselves liable to criticism over the manner in which the question has been handled. . . . The Ministry have only now agreed to a plan which they could have obtained a year ago nearly, by the exercise of the tact they have now displayed.

The public cannot be blamed for grumbling. They were led to expect an exhibition of remarkable firmness. Almost daily they were adjured to witness the stern and immovable attitude of the Government. The law was to be enforced as it stood. Compromise was not to be thought of for a moment. And then suddenly the whole structure goes down with a run, and the unalterable law is to be modified by the consent of both political parties.

The *Pretoria News* has the following brief comment:

The official communication issued to the Press last night by the Colonial Secretary so completely and entirely vindicates the action taken up by this newspaper since first the position in regard to Asiatics became critical, and is so satisfactory and whole-hearted an acceptance of the policy which we have so persistently urged upon the Government, that nothing more remains for us to say but to congratulate both Mr. Smuts and the leaders of the Asiatic community upon having, by the adoption of a mutually forbearing and moderate attitude, arrived at a solution of the registration difficulty, which is not only statesmanlike, but which has been brought about without loss of dignity on either side.

The *Friend* (Bloemfontein), says:

Right-minded South Africans will be glad that General Smuts has been able to effect a compromise with the Asiatics. What General Smuts and his Government has yielded to has been no danger or difficulty, but their own sense of honour. They had no taste for making martyrs of conscientious, even if wrong-headed, men. Since Mr. Gandhi and his friends believed genuinely that to give their finger-prints would be to forfeit their self-respect, it became necessary to save them from themselves. This has been accomplished by waiving or modifying the provisions of the Registration Law. Apparently it has been arranged that Asiatics who can write shall be permitted to give their signatures, a suggestion which was first made in the columns of this paper. Probably, too, there will be recommendations to Parliament to cancel the clauses which distinguish Asiatics according to their religion. The requirement of the names of female relatives has never been insisted on by the Executive, and is not likely to reappear in any future legislation. We are sorry to see it stated by our Rand correspondent that the news of the compromise is likely to cause indignation and disappointment, the hope having been cherished by many that the conscientious scruples of the Asiatics would lead to their exclusion from the country. A meaner thought there could not be. The white man who cherishes it deracialises himself beneath the level of the meanest black. General Smuts can want no better certificate that he has done right than the indignation of men of this stamp. The compromise is proof that the principle of *noblesse oblige* is still a working force in the world.

The *Krugersdorp Standard*, in the current issue, remarks as follows:

The news that an amicable arrangement has been arrived at between the Government and the Asiatics over the terms and conditions of registration will have been heard with general satisfaction. Affairs had become critical. On the one hand was the Cabinet, bound to carry into execution an Act passed by the unanimous votes of both political parties in Parliament assembled, and on the other a solidly united body of men sworn to passive resistance, not against registration, but against a special form of it or special circumstances connected with it. The way to a compromise was obviously pointed out by the Asiatics themselves. They desired to be law-abiding, but they refused to obey in violation of certain religious scruples. History has repeated itself. Our Scottish friends some centuries ago found it necessary to say: "It is not the marriage we object to, but the manner of the wooing." The Indian has not objected to registration but to the mode of its

carrying out. It has now been settled that all Asiatics shall register voluntarily in a body within three months. We consider the above a statesmanlike adjustment of differences creditable to all concerned in it.

The *Natal Mercury* says:

Now that a settlement has been arrived at in the Transvaal over the question of Asiatic registration it is unnecessary to say much more about it, but, although every effort is being made to save the face of the Transvaal Government in the matter, and Mr. Gandhi has been diplomatically assisting in the process, nothing can alter the fact that the Government have simply had to retire from an impossible position, and from one which they could not carry out. There is no dispute as to the necessity and desirability of both restriction and registration. The trouble has been occasioned by the administrative methods adopted. These methods having now been abandoned, the laws can, unquestionably, be worked as effectively by other means.

The methods which have now been agreed to are those which, as far back as May last, were put before General Botha when he was in London on behalf of the Indian community in the Transvaal, and subsequently have been put forward by Mr. Gandhi on more than one occasion. These proposals were deliberately rejected at the time, and we have had General Smuts declaring on the public platform that the Government intended to carry out the law and the regulations to the letter; but, all the same, the regulations have been modified to the full extent proposed in May last by the Indians, and some other little concessions not then mentioned have been made. No amount of argument or sophistry can alter the fact that the Transvaal Government has backed down.

The *Heidelberg News* bluntly remarks:

It was the servility involved which they (the Indians) would not submit to. And that is exactly what they must submit to. A native of India must not expect to be treated any better in South Africa than a native of South Africa. In fact the native of South Africa has a prior right to consideration, because this is his country. Any Indian who expects to establish a better footing here than our own natives enjoy is doomed to disappointment and he may as well know it first as last.

"The Great Collapse"

In our issue of the 11th ulto., we reproduced a cartoon from the *Sunday Times* representing the Transvaal Government "Steam Roller" up against the elephant representing the Indian community, the idea being to illustrate the meeting of an "irresistible force" and an "immovable object." Last Sunday, the same paper published a sequel, the elephant surveying the wreckage of the steam roller, in the midst of which the driver, Mr. Smuts, is unhappily receiving an impression of the fingers of a typical passive resister, the digits being extended fan-wise at the extremity of the nose. The elephant inquires "Everybody happy?" Underneath is given the following extract from a speech of General Smuts at Pretoria, on the 11th ulto.: "When a law is passed by the unanimous voice of the people, and the Government was too weak to carry it out, that was a terrible condition of affairs; there must be a screw dreadfully loose somewhere."

The Release

The release of the passive resisters in gaol was a very quiet affair. On Thursday, the 30th ulto., Mr. Gandhi left the fort, and journeyed by the 11-30 a.m. train to Pretoria, in charge of Supt. Vernon, of the T.T.P., to interview General Smuts. The train was stopped specially at Fountains Halt, and Mr. Gandhi and his companion entered a closed carriage and drove to Government Buildings. Although the departure from Johannesburg was intended to be strictly private, Mr. Gandhi's movements were notified by watchful pickets and others from the moment he left the Fort until he arrived at Pretoria. There the Government Buildings were carefully picketed. Mr. Gandhi returned alone by the 7-45 p.m. train for Johannesburg, being provisionally released. He arrived at Park Station, and was met there by Mr. Essop Mia, Chairman of the British Indian Association, and drove to the Mosque, at Newtown, where a large gathering of Indians met, and shortly after midnight Mr. Gandhi addressed his eager hearers briefly, explaining to them generally the new position that was before them. Shortly after eight on Friday morning, Mr. Gandhi surrendered himself to the gaol authorities, and later, with the rest of the "gaol-birds," received his formal discharge. There was no demonstration whatever, less than a hundred members of the two Asiatic communities being present to welcome the "Emigrants." At Pretoria, about three hundred people waited outside the gaol, and afterwards walked to the location. Only in Krugersdorp was there any display of excitement, and that soon wore off.

On Friday afternoon a large private meeting was held in the Mosque grounds, and another on Sunday, where the position was more closely examined.

On Monday, partly in celebration of the Chinese new year, and partly in honour of the three Chinese gentlemen who had so courageously suffered imprisonment, a luncheon party was held at the Cantonese Club, whereat the Rev. Chas. Phillips and Mr. H. S. L. Polak were present. Afterwards, the guests adjourned to the premises of the Chinese Association, where addresses were given Mr. Leung Quinn, the Chairman, the Imperial Chinese Consul-General, Rev. Chas. Phillips and Mr. H. S. L. Polak speaking, the situation being carefully explained.

Registration commences on Monday next, in Johannesburg, at the Old Dutch Church, Von Brandis Square.

INDIAN MAIL. For India, Ceylon and the Far East per S. S. *Umfuli*, until 4 p.m. Tuesday, the 11th inst.

A British Colonial's Protest

The following letter, dated the 27th ulto., appeared in the *Transvaal Leader* of the 3rd inst. over the signature of Mr. Walter Evans, secular leader of the Johannesburg Baptists. Though somewhat belated, it shows a phase of public opinion that has been none too well advertised in the recent past, and we therefore reprint in *extenso* in justice to that large section of the European community that has regretted the bitterness that has been imported into the late struggle by the exponents of rabid anti-Asiaticism:—

I foresee a time when a great many of our citizens, including certain ministers of the Gospel, who are at present busily engaged in saying "Sah!" to the Government in the matter of the Asiatics, will bitterly regret the course they have taken and the injustice they have done. There are always extremists. Before the war there were violent partisans among both Dutch and English, who, by dint of persistence and shouting, succeeded in bringing about a conflict which would have been avoided if the moderate men on either side could have had their way. I am a Colonist of over 30 years, and I have always found extremists on the colour question—men who are ready to ignore the first principles of justice, not to speak of mercy, and to go to any lengths to keep down or to get rid of the Asiatics or the natives, whom they class together and designate, according to their own nationality, as "blooming niggers" or "zwart goed." This section of the people may not be numerous compared to those who wish to deal justly and fairly, though firmly, with the subject races, but their voices are loud and insistent. To-day they are shouting their loudest, and are carrying with them men who ought to know better, while many who radically differ from them seem afraid to raise a protest. "History repeats itself," and I believe that in every case where a nation has done injustice, either to an individual or to a community, the noisy minority has swayed the more mobile majority—the tail has wagged the dog. It was so in that greatest of all instances, in Judea 1,800 years ago, when the cry went forth, "Crucify Him!" The voices of the noisy clique prevailed. We have a case parallel in many points to-day, though I will only mention one resemblance, namely, that the rulers are on the side of the shouters. It may be thought that I am speaking too strongly; but I feel strongly. I believe that the law is needlessly stringent, and that the way in which it is being carried out is a disgrace to our race and our religion. What do the Asiatics ask for? They know that the inhabitants of the Transvaal have decided that further immigration of their people

shall be carefully restricted, and they accept the situation; they offer to co-operate to make the Asiatic Immigration Restriction Act a success. It may not be a pleasant dose for them to swallow, but they do not refuse it: they only ask that the draught may not be made too nauseous. They tell us that the Crown Colony Government promised them that those who had already registered should not be compelled to register again; yet they are ready to register if the regulations can be altered somewhat so as not to conflict with their ideas of religion and propriety. We Europeans may not be able to understand their views on these matters, but that does not prove that they are not vitally important in their eyes, or that we may safely disregard them. Remember that it was European disregard of Indian prejudice in the matter of the greased cartridges which was the immediate cause of the great Indian mutiny of 50 years ago. We are dealing with a body of men the great majority of whom are subjects of the Empire of which we are proud—an Empire whose boast is that it rules the subject races with justice and righteousness—and surely it should be an axiom dealing with these people that, inasmuch as they have no representation in our Parliament, special care should be taken to see that we do not even appear to oppress them. What is taking place to-day? The moderate requests of the Asiatics for enquiry and for revision of the regulations are ignored. Willing prisoners, who would not deign to attempt to escape, are handcuffed in droves and subjected to unnecessary indignity. Old soldiers, who have fought and bled for the Empire—men clothed in the King's uniform and wearing his medals—are being thrown into his gaols. Mr. Gandhi, a courteous and refined gentleman, who organised the Indian stretcher-bearers in the late war, who left the comfort of his home to nurse his plague-stricken fellow-countrymen, and so earned their lifelong love and esteem, singled out as one of the first victims. We see the "steam-roller" mercilessly and needlessly at work, the extremists rejoicing that, as they think, the Asiatics have played into their hands, and that not only will further immigration be stopped, but every Asiatic, born here or imported, will be kicked over the border. And, oh! the pity of it! we see the men who ought to speak up for a little forbearance, a little judicious concession, upholding the fanatics and urging on the Government.

I do not ask that the Asiatics should be coddled and given in to in all that they ask. It is possible that they are asking for more than they can expect to get, but I insist that they should have every opportunity to state their case, and that every effort should have been made on the part of the Government to avoid the present deplorable state of affairs. Surely by a little graceful concession the whole trouble might

have been avoided? Is it too late even now to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to induce them to meet the Asiatics in some way? Concession is not necessarily weakness, and in this case I believe it would strengthen the hands of the Government immensely, for if the Asiatics did not accept it a right no one could raise a voice if stringent measures were then adopted.

It is folly to think that the Indians are going to give in now that their leaders are arrested. They are united and resolved, and we shall see our gaols overflowing with 10,000 men who are no criminals, and even then they will not yield. We pride ourselves on our British love of justice and fair-play: we fancy ourselves because we are descendants of the men who freed the slave; yet we stand by and allow the extremists to carry the country into an act of folly, injustice and wrong. In conclusion, let me put two questions to those of your readers who wish to look at the matter in a fair way: (1) Is it not an axiom of good government that punishment should only be resorted to as a last resource, and after methods of conciliation have failed. (2) Have these methods been given anything like a fair trial in this instance?

Proposed Boycott of Asiatics

As a result of the settlement, it is proposed in certain circles in Johannesburg to boycott Asiatics. A meeting was held in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg, on Monday night last, when the following resolution was submitted:

"(1) That this meeting of the citizens of Johannesburg pledges itself to refrain from dealing with or otherwise supporting the Asiatics in South Africa."

"(2) That this meeting is of opinion that the best means of giving effect to the above resolution is 'co-operation.'"

Leading sympathisers with the Asiatics in their struggle against the original registration proposals, interviewed by a *Mail* representative, expressed themselves as heartily in sympathy with the boycott method of fighting the Asiatics. This could not but be viewed, it was admitted, as an evidence of grit and principle in the whites. They did not, however, consider that the proposal would be at all successfully worked out, because they did not think that the class of whites in the Transvaal were capable of showing the grit and principle necessary, nor did they think that the opposition to the Asiatic trader was as widespread and sincere as the organisers of the boycott would have them believe.

White Leagues on the above lines are being formed in the East and West Rand.

Government and Opposition

The following copies of correspondence between the Transvaal Colonial Secretary and Sir George Farrar, leader of the Opposition are published:

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Pretoria, January 27, 1908.

Dear Sir George Farrar,—Will you kindly consult your friends to see whether there would be any objection to registration being re-opened for Asiatics and the chance being given them to register voluntarily, as they desire to do, and to dispense with finger-prints in the case of educated or well-known Indians? It is probable that Parliamentary ratification of such registration will have to take place, and in the meantime the penalties under the Act will not be enforced against those who register voluntarily. I understand that Asiatics may be willing to make such an offer to Government, and before closing with it we should like to have your concurrence in so doing.—Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) J. C. SMUTS.

Sir George Farrar, D.S.O., M.L.A.,
Johannesburg.

January 30, 1908.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Pretoria.

Dear Mr. Smuts,—I am in receipt of your letter of January 27, and have communicated its contents to my friends.

From it we extract certain questions or suggestions, which I append together with our replies.

Question No. 1: Is there any objection to registration being re-opened for Asiatics and the chance being given them to register voluntarily as they desire to do?

Answer: No, provided time is limited.

Question No. 2: Is there any objection to dispense with finger prints in the case of educated or well-known Indians?

Answer: No, provided that other adequate evidence of identity be forthcoming.

Question No. 3: Is there any objection to the penalties not being enforced in the meantime against those who voluntarily register?

Answer: No.

Am I to understand from the concluding sentence of your letter that the Government do not intend to make the above concessions unless they are satisfied that the Asiatic community is prepared to accept the new position?

I desire to make our position in this matter perfectly clear.

We agreed to the law and adhere to it, and its objects must be secured. We would, however, point out that as the present regulations were not submitted to us before promulgation the

Government must accept all responsibility in regard to them.

We feel it essential to success that the law be administered with the least possible friction, and, as far as possible, with due consideration for the responsibilities and difficulties of the Imperial Government.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) GEORGE FARRAR.

Imperial Parliament

Transvaal Asiatics

The Debate in the Lords

London, Feb. 4.—Lord Amphil, in the House of Lords, congratulated the Transvaal Government on their courageous and statesmanlike action, also the Indians upon their modesty and constancy to ideals. He also congratulated the Imperial Government on obtaining the compromise, though he declared that the bargain should have been made when granting the Constitution or loan.

Lord Roberts expressed regret that an Indian Government official had not been deputed to confer with the Transvaal Government.

Lord Curzon declared that the Transvaal had rushed its anti-Asiatic legislation through with indecent speed.

Lord Elgin declared that the settlement was satisfactory. The Transvaal Government throughout had acted in a reasonable and conciliatory manner, and the policy of the restriction of immigration had been maintained unbroken for 20 years. The finger-print system had been introduced purely as a means of identification.

Lord Lansdowne said that the Imperial Government would have shown more courage if they had interfered earlier.

Lord Ripon insisted that a self-governing Colony should be left to manage its own affairs.—Reuter.

The *Natal Mercury's* London correspondent cables:—

London, Feb. 4.—During the debate on the Asiatic situation in the Transvaal, in the House of Lords, Lord Curzon complained that Lord Elgin had shown excessive deference to the pleas put forward by the Transvaal Government.

Lord Elgin contended that the influx of Asiatics would destroy the political equilibrium necessary for the development of the Colonies. He did not believe that the Transvaal intended to degrade the Indians, and thought that all the most serious grievances existing before the war had been removed. He declared that he rejoiced that the Indians, instead of being subjected to disabilities, though restricted as regards immigration, would in the future be

maintained in a definite and honourable position.

London, Feb. 5.—The House of Lords last night discussed the position of the Indians in the Transvaal with tact and moderation.

Lord Lansdowne expressed the general feeling of the House by unreservedly admitting the right of a self-governing Colony to decide whether it should be the home of the British rather than of an Asiatic race.

At the same time, the speakers recognised the enormous difficulties in which the Empire is involved by the complexity of its composition.

Lord Amphil criticised the dilatory conduct of the Colonial Office in allowing a dangerous situation to continue so long.

Lord Curzon deplored that the Colonial Office showed lack of the imagination absolutely indispensable in dealing with Orientals.

In this connection, *The Times* credits the Transvaal Government very handsomely for admitting the force of Imperial interests when these were tardily pointed out to them by the Colonial Office, who are responsible for the period of painful tension.

Press Comments

Both the *Morning Post* and *The Times* commenting upon the debate in the House of Lords yesterday on the Asiatic settlement in the Transvaal, discuss the Imperial aspects of Asiatic Immigration.

The *Morning Post* urges that the need for federal, and not provincial, control of this question has been exemplified in the Transvaal and Vancouver Island.

The Times declares that, in view of the certainty of the recurrence of such difficulties, the time has surely come to establish some public body in fuller touch than the Imperial Cabinet with the communities and races of the Empire—a body which will provide information where needed, and nip trouble in the bud.

Indian National Congress

And the Transvaal Trouble

We learn that, after the dispersal of the Congress, at Surat, the majority of the delegates remained behind to conduct an informal discussion. The debate was mainly devoted to the grievances of the Transvaal Indians.

The Natal delegate, Mr. Omar Haji Amod Johari, dwelt on the sufferings and indignities inflicted by the Registration Act, which, he said, reduced Indians to the level of culprits and vagabonds. He feared for the plight of the Indians in Natal if the example of the Transvaal were followed. He appealed to the audience to strive for the repeal of the Act.

Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee read drafts of telegrams to the Viceroy and the Colonial Office, asking the Imperial Government to intervene.

South African Indian Association

Congratulates the Transvaal

A mass meeting of British Indians from all parts of the Cape District was held on Friday evening, the 31st ult., in the premises of the above Association. All seating accommodation was occupied and a good number were obliged to stand on the balcony. The room was beautifully decorated with flags and the whole building was illuminated with electric lights, showing the great display of bunting to advantage.

The meeting was called by the Chairman with the object of celebrating the success obtained by the leaders of the Indian community in their gigantic struggle with the Transvaal Government over the enforcement of the provisions of the Asiatic Act of that Colony.

Notwithstanding the short time which had elapsed since the receipt of the information from the Transvaal centre announcing the glad news a very large attendance was nevertheless assured.

Mr. Ebrahim Norodien, the Chairman of the Association, took the chair, and amongst those on the platform were Messrs. Ahmed Abbas, Abdul Ganie Perker, Mahomed Sale, J. M. H. Gool, M. I. Dala, S. Ismail, A. G. Kuble, Esuff Ahmedjee Patel, Mahomed Bagas, Khachoo Ganoo (Woodstock), Ali Adam (Salt River), Hasan Shamsudin Guray (Observatory), A. G. Ghansoor and Yakoob Dalvi (Maitland), R. Nowrosjee, M. I. Rawood, Hoosen Ahmed (Claremont), Mahomed Hoosen Goteher (Parow), F. Ismail (Goodwood), Moosa Abdul Carim Noormahomed (Stellenbosch), S. Casimali and many other prominent Indians. The Chairman, in a very telling speech, expressed his heartfelt gratitude at the result of the decision of the Transvaal Government and affirmed the fact that this peaceful settlement of a very involved question had not only gladdened the hearts of the many who were carefully watching events but had occasioned a feeling of gratitude towards the Government who at the height of the crisis had the good sense to well consider the gravity of the situation and make amends which every honourable man has to applaud.

Mr. Ahmed Abbas proposed that a telegram be sent to the Transvaal Government thanking them for their consideration for meeting the Indian community in their struggle to obtain amelioration of restrictions hurtful to their religious susceptibilities.

This was seconded by Mr. A. G. Ghansar and supported by Mr. Esuff Ahmedjee Patel.

It was further proposed by Mr. R. Nowrosjee, seconded by Mr. M. Sale and supported by Mr. J. M. H. Gool, that a telegram be sent to the British Indian Association of Johannesburg,

thanking them for the firm position taken up by them in the struggle with the Transvaal Government and congratulating them on the success which crowned their efforts. Mr. S. Casimali proposed, Mr. Rawood seconded, and Mr. Abdool Gani Perker supported, amidst enthusiastic applause, that a telegram be sent to Mr. Gandhi applauding him on the great stand taken up by him with the Transvaal Government and congratulating him on the successful issue of his endeavours.

A Progressive View

Mr. A. E. Balfour, speaking at Johannesburg last week, said that the Asiatic question had happily been settled. He had no doubt that most of them had read the Colonial Secretary's speeches—he had made at least half-a-dozen of them—which he thought were admirable in tone and temper. He (the speaker) had only one criticism to make, and this was a strange and remarkable omission that occurred in every one of them. So far as he could remember, he thought they would not find one single reference to the fact that the action that might be taken by the Transvaal—by one small community in the whole Empire—might have very serious effects upon the continent which belonged to the Empire and which contained 300 millions of people. It was left to the Progressive Party, in a letter they wrote agreeing to the modification of the regulations of the Asiatic Ordinance, to point out that such a law as that should be carried out with due regard to Imperial difficulties and responsibilities. He agreed with the policy, on which they were all united, of restricting Asiatic immigration. It was what they intended to carry out. Given that condition, he would ask them to remember that while carrying out their fixed policy they should be careful that they did it with the least possible friction and embarrassment to the Imperial Government, which had to think not only of what was going on in the Transvaal but also of its millions of subjects in India and of the other coloured subjects all over the world; and, last but not least, of its allies and the other nations of the world who were its rivals.

THE IRON HEEL. At a meeting of the Vryburg Municipal Council, held on the 21st ult., a letter was read from Messrs. Rosenblatt & De Beer, on behalf of Mr. Ebrahim Khan, asking the Council to grant the necessary certificate to allow their client to transfer his business to Mr. Hajee M. Khan. The application was refused. An application from Messrs. Jesla and Kika, through Mr. F. J. Croxford, to rent three acres of the town commonage for gardening purposes was also refused.

Mr. Harold Cox writes to the "Spectator"

Mr. Harold Cox, M.P., replying to a leading article in a previous issue of the *Spectator*, concludes a well-reasoned argument in favour of just treatment of Transvaal Indians with the following words:

You also lay stress on the unwillingness of the Colonies to allow their territory to be "filled with a new population of two colours." But surely this consideration has no relevance to the South African problem. The predominant colour throughout South Africa is already black, and the blacks are rapidly gaining upon the whites, not only by increase of numbers, but by advance in education. South Africa cannot be a white man's land, and the only question is whether Indians should not be allowed to live there as well as Hottentots, Kafirs, Zulus, Malays, Cape Boys, Poles, Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians. That is the whole issue at the present moment, and I see no reason why it should not be dealt with on its merits alone. Let us apply the principle of liberty to the question immediately before us, and wait to see whether those same principles cannot equally well be applied to other difficulties that may arise in the future.

As, however, you have touched on a larger problems that lie ahead, I will venture to put forward a doctrine which may not meet with immediate acceptance, but which I believe to be the only possible basis for a permanent British Empire. That doctrine is that the strength of our Empire ultimately depends, not upon the supremacy of the English race, but upon the maintenance of English principles. However proud we may be of our English blood, we cannot study the history of our country without learning that the population of England has been recruited from many countries, and that this readiness to receive and absorb other races has been one of the main causes of our national expansion. Aliens have come here: they have imbibed our traditions and learnt our language, and have become English in soul without a drop of English blood in their veins; and then they or their sons have gone forth to build up the Empire. Those who have lived among natives of India as friends rather than as rulers have seen the same creation of English-minded men there in progress. Our ideals take root even where our race cannot flourish. I contend that this is the true conception of Empire for Englishmen to set before them. We cannot hope to people the earth with men of our own stock. In the competition of the cradle we are beaten by the Teuton and hopelessly outdistanced by the Slav; in the competition of ideals we may hold our own for ever. My faith is that if we adhere to the principles of liberty, which have brought us safely so far, we need never

fail. It may conceivably happen in some far-distant future that Rajpoots will rule at Westminster instead of Scotchmen; but they will speak our language, they will be inspired with our ideals, and they will carry on our Empire. This may seem a fantastic dream, but it is better to dwell even on such dreams as these than to contemplate the destruction of the Empire by racial conflicts.

Trading Licences and Franchise

Conference at Maritzburg

The Maritzburg correspondent of the *Star*, telegraphing on the 30th ulto., states:

The Premier to-day met the Mayors and the chairmen of the local boards. The meeting was of an entirely confidential nature, but I understand that the principal object was to gather the opinion of the Mayors and chairmen of local boards in regard to certain vexed questions relating to the Municipal Laws Consolidation Bill, which is still before the Imperial authorities awaiting approval or rejection.

For a long time the Natal Government has been in negotiation with the Imperial authorities in respect of the clauses in the Municipal Laws Bill which refer particularly to Asiatics and Indians, both in respect to trading licences and the franchise. The Imperial authorities expressed their willingness to concur in the Government depriving Asiatics of the franchise, but only on the understanding that in respect to trading licences they should be granted the right to appeal to the Supreme Court in cases of refusal by the licensing boards of the Colony. When the Municipal Association of Natal last considered the matter all the delegates, excepting those from Maritzburg, would not agree to the concession, insisting that the only appeal from the decision of the licensing officers should be to the town councils, or in the case of country places to the licensing boards appointed by the Government.

The situation has since become further complicated by a movement of recent date to insist upon all Indian indentures concluding in India and not in Natal. Lord Curzon, then Viceroy, broke off negotiations at the point when Natal pointed out that it could not see its way to grant the right of appeal to the Supreme Court in respect of licences.

The position in regard to Indian traders in Natal has since been rendered more acute owing to the recent action of the Transvaal, and presumably the Natal Ministry have realised the desirability of being *au fait* with the circumstances so far as they concern the people of Natal, in order that they may be prepared with an amendment to the Consolidation Bill when Parliament next meets.

Regarding the question of licences, it is a fact worthy of note that at present the old law providing for appeal only to the town and country licensing boards still holds good in the absence of the Consolidated Act, which awaits the approval of the Home authorities.

Education in Natal

Superintendent's Report

The report of the Superintendent of Education, Mr. C. J. Mudie, on the work of his Department for the year ended June 30, 1907, has just been issued as an official Blue Book. We take the following facts from the *Natal Mercury*:

During the year there were 523 schools under Government inspection—301 European, 170 Native, 33 Indian, and 19 for coloured (other than native or Indian) children—with an average enrolment of 28,847 (14,783 boys and 14,064 girls), consisting of 12,504 Europeans (6,671 boys and 5,833 girls), 12,246 natives (4,774 boys and 7,472 girls), 3,174 Indians (2,837 boys and 337 girls), 923 coloured children (501 boys and 422 girls). The average daily attendance is, in European schools, 85 per cent. of the number enrolled; in native schools, 67 per cent.; in Indian schools, 72 per cent.; and in schools for coloured children, 79 per cent. Of the 523 schools, 49 have been established and are maintained exclusively by the Government. All the other schools are either private, denominational, or board schools receiving grants varying from £3 to £500 a year. Nearly all the native and Indian schools are directly connected with the various religious bodies in the Colony. The Government schools consist of two high schools, 38 primary schools, two art schools, five Indian schools, and two schools for coloured children. Maritzburg has one high school and three primary schools, and Durban one high school and four primary schools. Of the remaining primary schools, one is at Addington, two at Greyville, one at Bellair, and 27 are country schools established in the chief centres of population. Maritzburg has one art, one Indian, and one school for coloured children; while Durban has the other art, the other school for coloured children, and the remaining four Indian schools. The European aided schools are divided into fixed and farm schools. There are 104 of the former, and 155 of the latter. The revenue derived from the Government schools for the year ended June 30, 1907, amounted to £14,222 7s.—£13,443 6s. 11d. from Europeans, £635 8s. 9d. from Indians, and £143 11s. 4d. from coloured children. All these fees have been paid into the Treasury.

One Government and six aided schools provide education for coloured

children. Two new Maritzburg schools have received recognition. Examinations at two farm schools have taken place during the year. The Indian syllabus has been introduced into some of the smaller schools, and it is hoped that its wealth of detail may make the instruction more definite. The want of school material is a grave trouble almost everywhere. One Government school (higher grade) and five aided schools educate about 500 Indian children. There is but one trained teacher in these schools. The work cannot be described as satisfactory, nor is it likely to be until the trained teacher is forced upon the managements. Overcrowding has been checked to a very large extent, but there is much uncleanness and weak discipline. The higher grade school appears to be suffering from a mild form of boycott, and is fed but to the smallest extent by the very schools which it was intended to supplement; the instruction down to Standard II. here is quite good, but Standard IV. should really be the lowest class. A weekly visit from an inspector, if time permitted, might achieve some reform.

"The Man on the Spot"

An Imperial View

The *Aberdeen Free Press*, commenting on the Transvaal crisis, says:

Some of our colonial friends are sometimes very fond of reminding us of the complete freedom of action which should be conceded to "the man on the spot." But who in this case is "the man on the spot?" Is it the British Indian boiling with passion at the humiliation sought to be imposed upon him by the finger print method of registration—which tears his British citizenship to tatters and labels him an alien—or is it the white man who, thinking solely of his own garden patch, rushes the Indian beyond the horizon? The garden patch has its worth, but what of the Empire that gave it its value and to that end has spent blood and treasure heavily? "The man on the spot" in the Empire—represented by those who in holding the reins of military and civil administration are daily confronting herculean tasks with a courage and devotion that cannot be surpassed—is surely as much entitled as he of the garden patch to a say with regard to proceedings that tie his hands and tend to make him reel in the saddle.

EAST AFRICA FOR INDIANS. To make the East African territories an open Colony for our Indian fellow-subjects, to be directly developed in the interests of India, would be in our conviction a brilliant stroke of Imperial statesmanship. *Observer.*