

Indian Opinion

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Contents

EDITORIAL COLUMNS:—	Page
Britain and South Africa	241
What's the Use?	241
A Lesson and a Moral	242
The Immigration Problem in Canada	242
OTHER ARTICLES:—	
Natal Indian Congress	242
An Indian's Licence	242
The Natal Bills	243
Mr. Gandhi's Address Before the Y.M.C.A.	244
Canada and Indian Immigrants ...	245
His Majesty's Asiatic Subjects ...	246
The Assault on Mr. Essop Mia ...	247
Oriental Immigration	248
The Transvaal Crisis	249
At the Heart of the Empire	250

Indian Opinion

SATURDAY, JUNE 6TH, 1908.

Britain and South Africa

THERE is no doubt that, in matters relating to the Indian community in South Africa, British public opinion is far better informed to-day than twenty months ago, when the memorable deputation of Transvaal Indians left the shores of South Africa on their campaign of education. There is not a journal of first-class importance within the United Kingdom that is not *au fait* with the whole British Indian position to-day, and scarcely one that is not favourably inclined to the British Indian cause. For that the thanks of the Asiatic communities of the sub-continent are due in no small degree to Mr. Ritch and the South Africa British Indian Committee in London. But for the labours of the unselfish men who have been proud to become members of that Committee, and the constant stream of authentic information that has been distributed by it, no such article as that which we reproduce from the *Yorkshire Daily Post*, in another column, could possibly have appeared, nor would Mr. Ritch's comments thereon have carried the amount of weight that is given to them by thoughtful and unbiased men and women at Home to-day. Such an organization, paradoxical as may appear the suggestion to the casual reader,

undoubtedly, in our opinion, is deserving of an Imperial subsidy, for its work is mainly confined to the indication of anti-Imperial tendencies in quarters where these are not usually looked for, and the combating of injustice perpetrated against some of the most deserving of the unrepresented races of the Empire.

Mr. Ritch's epithet of "helotage," as applied to the condition of British Indians in South Africa, if the will of the thoughtless, ignorant, and racially-prejudiced majority of colonists be allowed to have its way, would accurately describe that condition as no other epithet of lesser degree possibly could. There is no doubt whatever that, in the minds of the multitude, who always shout the loudest regarding that of which they are least informed, the only status that should be allowed to the Asiatic, not to speak of other coloured people, is that of hewer of wood and drawer of water; that he should be permitted freedom of movement and of action, that he should be allowed fairplay, subject to general restrictions universally applicable, is inconceivable to them. We concede at once that there is a very appreciable minority who refuse in any way to reconcile their consciences to the promotion of such a reactionary policy, but those who have the courage to voice their heterodox views in public are heroes in the strife—and the race of heroes has never been prolific.

One important lesson may be learnt by the South African Governments, from the inferences to be drawn from a perusal of the article to which we have already referred. That is, that, in their present and future relations with the Asiatic communities, they will need to walk extremely warily, lest a worse thing befall them than even that which disturbed the Transvaal less than six months ago. These unrepresented communities have found a powerful and legitimate weapon against which there is no possibility of battling successfully. In a struggle where the religion, the self-respect, or the self-interest of the potential victims of an unjust policy is at stake, "passive resistance" must inevitably prove victorious. And more than that, there will undoubtedly be aroused, in the minds of the increasingly educated public at Home, a sense of growing hostility towards those who show such little respect for the ethical principles involved, so little regard for the Imperial fabric jeopardised, by their impolitic, selfish, and disastrous campaign of repression and confiscation.

WE HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT THAT, IF certain of our contemporaries writing on the Indian question would have a higher regard for facts, and prove themselves less enamoured of the exaggeration of those facts, they might carry conviction where at present they only amuse. The *Natal Witness*, for instance, recently gave vent to its feelings in the following remarkable statement: "Probably nine-tenths of the money earned by Indians in Natal, whether as labourers or traders, is spent in India." Now, according to the Protector's Report for 1907 recently noticed in these columns, the total immigrant population of the Colony was 102,857, apart from some 15,000 Indians who have paid their own passage out here. Of the former 61,441 were free, and 41,416, under indenture. Let us take the indentured people alone, for the moment. Assuming that the average monthly wage of each was, say, nine shillings, we find that their earnings for the year were £223,646. What proportion of this amount leaves the Colony? The Protector shows that the declared savings of the returning immigrants, during 1907, was £22,597 10s. He adds that £2,033 11s. was remitted through his department to India during the year, whilst a total of £69,968 odd was remitted through the Postmaster-General. This last amount, however, covers the sum sent to India by Indians of all classes, whether free or indentured. If we take the amount remitted through this channel by the indentured Indians as one-third of the whole, an absurdly large proportion, we find some £23,323 sent in this manner. Thus, the total sum sent to India by the indentured Indians of the Colony for 1907 was the enormous amount of £48,000, or little more than £1 per head. Contrast this with £201,281, nine-tenths of the total earnings of these frugal folk, and we see at once that the *Witness* has exaggerated the position almost five-fold. And the discrepancy must be even greater when the Indian trader is considered. He has actually brought a great deal of capital into the Colony from India, has sunk it in a more or less remunerative business, into which he puts the greater part of each year's profits, like a wise merchant. Surely the *Witness* does not wish to go to the extreme of denying to the Indian trader that amount of average commonsense without which he would be a tremendous failure as a business man! Our contemporary does not do justice to its own powers of logic. If it would cultivate them more, and forbear to attack inoffensive people so wantonly,

it would, as a matter of course, refrain from perpetrating absurdities like unto that which we have criticised above.

THE Rand Daily Mail CONTAINS THE following note on a **Lesson and a Moral.** not uncommon incident in South Africa:

An object lesson in the effect of coloured competition is provided by the case of the Trocadero Restaurant, where, on Sunday last, six European waiters and two cooks were paid off, their places being taken by Indians. It seems that Indian waiters and cooks were formerly employed at the Trocadero at wages ranging from £7 to £9 per month. About two months ago, however, the manager decided to try an experiment with Europeans. Accordingly he dismissed the Indians, and engaged six European waiters and two cooks, paying them £9 for the first month, rising to £10 per month after the second month, with food. The two months' experiment, however, has not proved encouraging. The manager complains that a very large number of men passed through his hands, and that the majority of them were not satisfactory, although amongst them there were some with excellent credentials. Consequently he has felt himself compelled to revert to Indian servants, and to-day there are eight fewer billets open to Europeans. Some of the men who have been dismissed complain bitterly that they were never given a chance of working at lower wages; but the manager contends that he gets better work and more efficient service from the Indians, who consequently give greater satisfaction to his customers, and thus increase his trade.

The manager can scarcely be blamed for consulting his own interests, but the incident supplies a useful object lesson. It is by no means an isolated example, but it serves as a practical illustration of the fact that, so long as coloured labour is cheap and plentiful, so long will there never exist any inducement to attract Europeans.

The facts are most interesting, but is not the conclusion rather that, so long as coloured labour is efficient and reliable, it will always be preferred by employers of labour, to inefficient and unreliable white labour?

THE REPORT OF MR. MACKENZIE KING, the Canadian representative, who recently visited England to confer with the Imperial authorities on the great problem of Indian immigration into the Dominion, and which Report will be found reproduced elsewhere in this issue, is of consuming interest. Every word of it appears to breathe a sense of responsibility, in regard to Imperial obligations, on the part of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Government, and it is clear that if any Colonial minister is deserving of the high title of Statesman, the cultured French Canadian premier is the man. If the various South African Colonies would but learn from the example set them by the great Dominion, such incidents as the "passive resistance" campaign of the Transvaal could not have happened. But more may be learnt,

even than that primary lesson, from the Report under review. It does not contain a single suggestion as to legislation or regulations restrictive of the liberty of those Indians who are already resident in the Dominion. Reference is made to the restriction of immigration alone. Once the barrier is passed, freedom of action is as much the right of the legitimate Indian immigrant as of his white fellow-colonist. It is that elementary principle of justice that has not been learnt by any of the South African Colonies. The immigration question is sealed in South Africa, except in so far as, from selfish motives alone, the Natal Government aids in the introduction of Indian labourers under contracts amounting, in the ultimate, to conditions of serfdom. The solution of the question of Asiatic immigration is not retarded by any action on the part of the Indian community. Yet the colonists persistently blame that community for the evil wrought by the Natal Government, and of set purpose determine upon a policy devised to harry, persecute, and exterminate those Asiatics who have lawfully entered the country, and who have loyally abided, as a community, by every public obligation to which they have been a party. The contrast between South Africa and Canada is unpleasant enough. Will "closer union" make the sub-continent more amenable to the dictates of reason and conscience?

Natal Indian Congress

Sympathize with Mr. Essop Mia

Substantial Help for Mr. Ritch's Committee.

A meeting of the Natal Indian Congress was held in the Congress Hall, Pine Street, Durban, on Tuesday evening. Among those present were the President (Mr. Dawad Mahomed) in the chair, Messrs. Parsee Rustomjee, Ismail Gora, Abdul Cadir, M. C. Anglia, Dada Osman, Abdulla Haji Adam, S. J. Randeria, Abdul Hack, Hoosen Cassim, Hassim Jooma, P. V. Sanghavel, and others. Mr. S. J. Randeria proposed and Mr. Parsee Rustomjee seconded the following resolution:

"This meeting of the Natal Indian Congress hereby expresses its heartfelt sorrow regarding the cowardly and brutal attack recently made at Johannesburg upon the Chairman of the British Indian Association (Mr. Essop Mia) and authorises the Chairman and the Secretaries of the Congress to send copies of this resolution to the British Indian Association of Johannesburg, the Hamidia Islamic Society, Mr. Essop Mia and INDIAN OPINION."

Mr. Dada Osman introduced the subject of the South Africa British Indian Committee and pointed out the necessity of maintaining that

excellent institution. Mr. Hassim Jooma, Mr. Abdul Cadir, and several others followed and urged the Congress to vote a sum of money towards the up-keep of the Committee.

Mr. Ismail Gora proposed that £300 be sent to Mr. Ritch for the use of the Committee in London.

Mr. Abdul Hack seconded the proposal and it was agreed upon by the members of the Congress.

An Indian's Licence

Licensing Board's Decision Quashed

In the Natal Supreme Court on Wednesday last, before a full Bench, an appeal was brought by Mr. Hillier on behalf of an Indian, M. A. Kajee, against a decision of the Licensing Board for the Mapumulo division, in refusing to confirm a renewal of a trading licence granted by the Licensing Officer. An appeal against the renewal of the licence had been brought before the Board by a Mr. Whittaker, store manager.

The appeal from the decision of the Licensing Board rested upon the ground principally that one of the members of the Board, Mr. Carter, was not a fit and proper person to deal with the application, because he was a storekeeper in the same division.

It was shown that Mr. Carter's store was distant from the appellant's store 18 miles by native track, and 30 miles by road.

Mr. Hillier, who appeared for the appellant, urged that the question of distance did not enter into the question, as it was impossible under the circumstances to free Mr. Carter from suspicion of bias. He claimed also that Mr. Whittaker's objections arose solely from the fact that the appellant was an Indian.

Mr. Hillier also submitted that Mr. Whittaker, being only an employee, had no direct tangible and personal interest and could not therefore oppose the licence.

Mr. Hosking appeared for the objector, Mr. Whittaker, and claimed that his client had a sufficient interest to oppose the granting of the licence.

The Chief Justice held that there was nothing to entitle them to say that Mr. Carter had such an interest in the matter as to disqualify him from sitting on the Board. He, however, thought that storekeepers were undesirable persons to sit on such Licensing Boards. Mr. Carter's business was situated such a distance away that there was nothing to show that he would be a rival storekeeper. If Mr. Whittaker had any interest at all it was speculative or a prospective interest. He did not profess to be acting on behalf of his employers. His interest was not sufficient to justify him in opposing the granting of the licence. No person was entitled to appeal unless he had a direct personal and substantial interest.

Mr. Justice Beaumont and Mr. Justice Broome concurred.

The Court quashed the proceedings of the Licensing Board, but refused an application by the appellant for costs, Mr. Justice Broome, however, dissenting from the decision in respect to costs.—*Times of Natal.*

The Natal Bills

Estcourt Approves

A *Times of Natal* special states that a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the three important Bills relating to Asiatics which are coming before Parliament next session was held in the Agricultural Hall, Estcourt, on the 30th ulto. There was a small attendance, about twenty gentlemen being present, amongst whom were the hon. H. D. Winter, M.L.A., Mr. J. W. Moor, M.L.A., members for Weenen County, and Messrs. R. M. K. Chadwick, C. B. Lloyd, A. Stuart, H. H. Janion, and others.

Mr. A. Stuart, President of the Agricultural Society, who took the chair, said he wished to lay before them the three Bills for consideration, and thought the Government was acting wisely in bringing them forward. Retrenchment was pressing hard on the whites, and still more Indians were being imported into the country. It was said that the tea, wattle, and other industries would suffer if Indian labour were to be withdrawn, but he maintained that the work could be better performed by Europeans.

The coolie competition was unfair to the white population, as instanced by their cultivation of fields on the Sabbath Day, and in other ways. He wished to move: "That this meeting may ask our members to give their support to the Government to enable them to pass the first two of these Indian Bills, and that they will support the Government, and endeavour to make the third Bill a workable law."

Mr. R. H. Magee seconded the resolution.

Mr. Winter said he would prefer that the members should be left with a free hand in dealing with these Bills in Parliament. In 1877 there were only about eight licences held by Indians and Arabs. Now, all over the country, so many of the good positions are taken up by the ubiquitous Asiatics. The second Bill had his full support. With regard to the third Bill, to prohibit the holding of licences by Indians after ten years, he was sorry the limit was not five years instead of ten, as the sooner the question was brought to a head the better. He considered five years would give the Asiatic ample time to sell out his stock, and that compensation should be given, based on an estimate or return of the nett profit during the last two years of the five. He thought the Bill required

a lot of alteration.

Mr. J. W. Moor, speaking of the second of the three Bills, said it was a most important measure, having regard to the fact that it was striking at vested interests, which had been allowed to grow up and be acquired by the Asiatic. He said he had been much impressed by the speech the other day by Mr. Smythe, with whom he thoroughly agreed. The Indian had no representation, and we were, therefore, the guardian of his interests. He (the speaker) would like to see them removed, but in doing so we must be fair almost to a point of generosity. It occurred to him that it would be better, before introducing these measures, that the Government should take steps to ascertain what the cost to the colony of compensation would be, and how the industries would be affected by the Bills, and he would like to see a small Commission appointed to go into these questions. The third Bill he would strongly support, and he also thought the members should be allowed a free hand in dealing with the Bills.

Mr. R. M. K. Chadwick thought that the whole colony was deeply indebted to the Government for their honest endeavour to remedy an evil which was stretching throughout the length and breadth of the Colony.

He moved the following resolution: "That this meeting approves of the principles of the Bills, leaving the details in the hands of the members."

Mr. H. H. Janion, in an able speech, congratulated Estcourt on being the first to hold a public meeting to discuss these most important Bills. He said for many years it had been recognised that the Indian as an inhabitant was a failure, and the question was staring the colony in the face as to how to get rid of the terrible incubus.

Mr. Janion supported the principles of the first Bill, but considered that further indenture should be stopped in eighteen months, and we should not wait until 1911. Speaking in regard to the second Bill, he thought that the Bill which had been introduced some time ago by Mr. Ralph Tatham, and which was thrown out, was a better measure, as it had no regard to colour, and the difficulty of class legislation would be overcome, instead of aiming directly at the Arab. He endorsed Mr. Winter's opinion that the time of the holding of licences by Arabs should be reduced from ten years to five, and considered that compensation should be fixed on a sliding scale based on the turnover. He moved the following amendment:—"That this meeting approves of the principles of the three Bills proposed to be introduced by Government at the coming session of Parliament, and entitled No. 1 "Bill to put an end to the further introduction of indentured Indian immigrants;" No. 2, "Bill to bring to an end the

issue of new trading licences;" No. 3, "Bill to prohibit a certain time the holding of the licences by Indians."

No. 1. That the time for the stoppage of further introduction of indentured Indian immigrants be fixed on as 31st December 1909, instead of the 30th day of June 1911. No. 2 That in lieu of this Bill, the objects will be better attained by confining future licences to persons whose names are on the voters' rolls, as regards boroughs and townships, and, outside boroughs and townships, on the voters' rolls for Parliamentary elections; that women of European descent trading on their own account shall alone be exempted from this clause. No. 3. That as regards compensation, it should be paid on a sliding scale according to the turnover of the business in each particular case, and providing that every existing Indian licence shall be terminable not later than the 31st day of December, 1913. That the attention of Government be drawn to Section 16 of Act No. 43, 1893, which provides that every licence (other than those issued to joint stock companies) shall specify the proper Christian name and surname of the person or persons to whom it is granted, and that the officers appointed to issue trade licences be instructed in future to conform with this provision."

Mr. C. B. Lloyd, seconded Mr. Chadwick's resolution.

Mr. Rhode spoke in support of and seconded Mr. Janion's amendment, which Mr. Janion withdrew in favour of Mr. Chadwick's proposition. The Chairman also withdrew his motion in favour of Mr. Chadwick's, which, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously.

Mr. F. A. R. Johnstone, M.L.A., addressing his constituents at Paddafontein (Dundee) on the 30th ulto, said he was in favour of stopping further importation of Indians, but not at once. Some of our biggest industries were carried on by Indian labour, and from some of these industries we reaped a substantial benefit, especially tea, for he could well recollect, and not so very long ago, when we were paying 3s. and 4s. per lb. for tea.

The Indian merchant had ten years to clear out, and in that time make arrangements to sell his property, and with this he was in full accord and would certainly vote for it. In former times we had as Kaffir storekeepers white men in the locations who purveyed for the needs of the Kaffir, and they were a success, and spent their money in the country. At present what have we carrying on trade and taking money out of the country? Simply the refuse of their own countries, and one-third of them probably not even British subjects. Of course, the Indian born in Natal must remain, but his trading instincts can be considerably curtailed.—

Witness.

Gandhi's Address Before the Y.M.C.A

Full Text

"Are Asiatics and the Coloured Races a Menace to the Empire?"

The following address was given by Mr. M. K. Gandhi, Barr-at-Law, before the Y.M.C.A., Johannesburg, in moving the negative in a debate on the question, "are Asiatics and the coloured races a menace to the Empire?":—

It seems to me somewhat remarkable that a question of this description should arise at all, or that there should be any debate whatsoever as to whether coloured races are a menace to the Empire. I think that a question of that description could arise only in the Colonies, or, better still, only in some of the Colonies. In a well-ordered society industrious and intelligent men can never be a menace. If they have any defects the very order of the society corrects them. At the same time, we, as practical men and women living in this very practical age, have to face facts as they are, and, seeing that questions of this description arise in the Colonies, it is undoubtedly well that we should discuss them and debate upon them; and, to my mind, it is a very happy augury for the future that your humble servant can be called upon to give his views on the question before an audience like this, and I think it is also a happy augury that this hall is so well filled, showing the keen interest taken in the subject.

By the term "coloured people" generally I think we understand only offspring of mixed marriages, but, in connection with the question before us this evening, the term "coloured people" has been taken more comprehensively, and has been made to include the coloured people proper—the Africans and the Asiatics. My own observations and experience, as you know, are confined very largely to British Indians, my own fellow-countrymen, but, in studying the Indian question, I have endeavoured to study the question as it affects the Africans and the Chinese. It seems to me that both the Africans and the Asiatics have advanced the Empire as a whole; we can hardly think of South Africa without the African races. And who can think of the British Empire without India? South Africa would probably be a howling wilderness without the Africans. I do not think that the white man would have come to South Africa at all if there had been no native races.

This brings me to the *White Man's Burden* as Kipling has called it. His writings, to my mind, have been very much misunderstood. We know now also that he himself has very considerably, with extended experience, revised his views, and he no longer thinks that the coloured people are a menace to the Empire, or that the

white man may not co-exist with the coloured man. Be that as it may, he has certainly shown in some of his writings that it was really a responsibility thrown on the white people, more particularly on the British people, to act as trustees for the coloured races. But have the white people acted as trustees? Would you consider that your own wards were a menace to yourselves. The majority of people in South Africa, the majority of people in most of the Colonies, have become impatient of colour, and it behoves every right-minded man and woman to think twice before he or she jumps to the conclusion that the coloured people are a menace and that, therefore, they ought to be got rid of with the greatest possible dispatch.

We hear nowadays a great deal of the segregation policy, as if it were possible to put people in watertight compartments. Captain Cooke has written to the papers and has taken the trouble of discussing the same question with me, and has propounded a policy of segregation. I had no hesitation in telling him that, in my own opinion, based now on 14 years' observation and study, such a scheme, if it was meant to people some portions of East Africa with coloured people only, or, better still, with Asiatics only, was not possible of fulfilment. How are you going to restrict Asiatics to some parts of the earth only. Will they be content to have those portions of the earth which may be apportioned to them and which are unfit for white occupation? I have certainly never been able to find any justification for the colour barrier. In the words of Mr. Chamberlain, it is possible to make distinctions on the ground of want of education, on the ground of criminality, or some such ground. Then there will be no cry of segregation. But from the present civilisation, or, rather, from western civilisation, there flow two propositions, which have almost become maxims to live by—I call them fallacious maxims. They are "might is right" and "survival of the fittest." Those who have propounded these two maxims have given a meaning to them. I am not going into the meaning that might be attached in our minds to them, but they have said undoubtedly by "might is right" that physical might is right, that physical strength is right and supreme. Some of them have also combined intellectual strength with physical strength, but I would replace both these with the heart strength, and I say that nobody with merely physical might and intellectual might can ever enjoy that strength that can proceed from the heart. It never can be that mere intellectual or mere physical strength can ever supersede the heart-strength or, as Ruskin would say, social affections. A quickening and quickened soul responds only to the springs of the heart.

That is the difference between western and eastern civilisation? I know that I am treading on very dangerous and delicate ground. We had the distinction given to us by so great an authority as Lord Selborne only a short time ago, and I have very humbly and very respectfully to differ from His Excellency's views. It appears that western civilisation is destructive, eastern civilisation is constructive. Western civilisation is centrifugal, Eastern civilisation is centripetal. Western civilisation, therefore, is naturally disruptive, whereas eastern civilisation combines. I believe also that western civilisation is without a goal, eastern civilisation has always had the goal before it. I do not mix up or confuse western civilisation with Christian progress. I decline to believe that it is a symbol of Christian progress that we have covered a large part of the globe with the telegraph system, that we have got telephones and ocean greyhounds, and that we have trains running at a velocity of 50 or even 60 miles per hour. I refuse to believe that all this activity connotes Christian progress, but it does connote western civilisation. I think western civilisation also represents tremendous activity, eastern civilisation represents contemplativeness, but it also sometimes represents lethargy. The people in India, the people in China—I leave Japan for the time being,—having been sunk in their contemplative mood, have forgotten the essence of the thing, they have forgotten that in transferring their activity from one sphere of life to another sphere of life, they had not to be idle, they had not to be lazy. The result is that immediately they find an obstacle in their way, they simply sit down. It is necessary that that civilisation should come in contact with that of the west, it is necessary that that civilisation should be quickened with the western spirit. Immediately that fact is accomplished I have no doubt also that the eastern civilisation will become predominant, because it has a goal. I think you will see easily that a civilisation or a condition in which all the forces fly away from the centre must necessarily be without a goal, whereas those which converge to a point have always a goal. It is then necessary for these two civilisations to meet and we shall have a different force altogether, by no means a menacing force, by no means a force that disunites, but a force that unites. The two forces are undoubtedly opposing forces, but perhaps in the economy of nature both are necessary. Only we, as intelligent human beings with heart and soul, have to see what those forces are, and have to use them, not blindly but intelligently, not anyhow and haphazard, but with a goal in view. Immediately that is done there is no difficulty whatsoever in two civilisations meeting and meeting for a good purpose.

(To be continued).

Canada and Indian Immigrants.

Mr. Mackenzie King's Report

The following is from the pen of *The Times* Ottawa correspondent:

According to the report of Mr. Mackenzie King presented to Parliament to-day, there is reason to believe that a satisfactory solution of the vexed problem of immigration from India into the Dominion has been solved as a result of the recent negotiations between Canada and Great Britain without the necessity of enacting any legislation either in Canada or India, and in a manner which is as much in the interests of the native races of India as it is desirable in the interests of the people of the Dominion. The report suggests that, as foreign relations and considerations of high Imperial importance are involved in the question of Oriental immigration, a *minimum* of publicity in the matter of representations bearing on the subject is desirable. Enough is said, however, to afford a satisfactory understanding as to the outcome of the mission.

Referring to his interviews with the British authorities, Mr. Mackenzie King says:—

Of the interest taken in the subject of my mission by the British Ministers and by the officials of several departments with whom, by their direction, I was privileged to confer, I cannot speak too strongly, nor can I lay too great emphasis on the sympathetic manner with which the representations made on behalf of the people of Canada were received, nor on the frankness and fulness with which the whole subject, in its many bearings, was discussed.

The report goes on to say that the question of the immigration of the peoples of the Orient and the problems to which it gives rise are by no means new to the British authorities; that Australia, South Africa, and India have each forced a consideration of the subject upon the attention of British statesmen for years; and that this has afforded England an appreciation of Canada's position.

Local Rights and Imperial Obligations

The report says:—That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural; that Canada should remain a white man's country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons, but highly necessary on political and national grounds; that in matters which so vitally affect her own welfare Canada is the best judge of the course to be adopted, and that as a self-governing Dominion she cannot be expected to refrain from enacting such measures by way of restriction as in the discretion of her people are deemed most expedient, must be admitted. As a corollary to

this right of self-government there is an understanding that British international alliances and British connexions shall place no restriction on the right of the Dominion to legislate as may be most desirable in matters affecting immigration. While Canadian autonomy is thus fully conceded and respected, Canada's position as part of the British Empire is regarded as affording a sufficient guarantee that the exercise of her plenary powers in this particular will not be without due regard to the obligations which citizenship within the Empire entails. The attitude of the Canadian Government, as shown by the present mission, was regarded as affording a most welcome and opportune expression of Canada's recognition of her responsibilities. Nothing could have been more cordial than the appreciation everywhere expressed that in a matter so vitally affecting the interests of British subjects in remote parts of the Empire Canada should have been the first to seek a conference with the parts affected, so that the several policies might be brought into harmony and wiser counsels of conciliation made to prevail in dealing with the problem of Oriental immigration within the Empire. While new obligations are encountered, opportunities for arrangement and concession are afforded which are often impossible as between countries under distinct sovereignties, and it is upon this basis evidently that a solution of the question outlined in the report has been reached.

An Unsuitable Class of Labour

Mr. King says it is clearly recognized that the native of India is not a person suited to this country; that, accustomed as many are to a tropical climate, and possessing manners and customs unlike those of the Canadian people, their inability readily to adapt themselves to surroundings entirely different could not do other than entail an amount of privation and suffering which render the discontinuance of such immigration most desirable in the interest of the Indians themselves. It is recognized, too, that the competition of this class of labour, though not likely to prove effective if left to itself, might none the less, were the numbers to become considerable, occasion considerable unrest among working men whose standard of comfort is of a higher order, and who, as citizens with family and civic obligations, have expenditures to meet and a *status* to maintain which the coolie immigrant is in a position wholly to ignore.

Mr. King says that his inquiry in British Columbia last year into the methods by which Oriental labourers were induced to come to Canada revealed that, as far as India was concerned, immigration had not been spontaneous, but owed its existence, among other influences, to the distribution throughout certain rural districts of India of glowing accounts of

opportunities for fortune ²⁴⁵ British Columbia, which caused Indian peasants and farmers to engage their homesteads at rates of interest varying from 15 to 20 per cent., and that the activity of certain steamship agents desirous of selling transportation and profiting by the commission, as well as the activity of certain individuals in British Columbia, among the number one or two Brahmins who were desirous of exploiting their fellow-subjects, and of industrial concerns anxious to obtain unskilled labour at a price below the current rate, has been in the main responsible for this. A few natives may, he says, have emigrated to Canada of their own accord, or because of the desire of their relatives, but if the aforementioned influences had not been exerted it is doubtful if the number would have been appreciable.

Mr. King's report on Oriental immigration to Canada showed that over 2,000 Indians came to Canada last year through the port of Vancouver.

Deterrent Measures

There is no suggestion in Mr. King's report that British subjects in India should not be allowed freedom of entry and residence in Canada, and the arrangement effected does not appear to go further than is calculated to counteract the influences which have been at work to foster immigration prompted by commercial reasons solely and without regard to the welfare and well-being of the emigrants themselves. These several influences have been counteracted, and an effective restriction has been obtained by administrative measures. The misleading effects of the distribution by interested parties of literature to the classes described have been offset by warnings which the Government of India has issued whereby the natives have become informed of the risks involved in emigration to Canada and of the actual conditions to be expected. The steamship companies responsible for recruiting emigrants have been given to understand that the Governments of Great Britain and Canada and the authorities in India do not view with favour action on their part calculated to foster further emigration. The power of steamship companies to ignore the wishes of the Government is rendered largely inoperative by the application to immigration from India of a regulation of the Dominion Government prohibiting the landing in Canada of immigrants who come otherwise than by continuous journey from the country of which they are natives or citizens and upon through tickets purchased in that country.

The Indian Emigration Act of 1883 is shown to have been framed with a view to affording protection to natives of India who at the instance of private individuals or corporations may be induced to leave to work under indenture of agreement for hire in other

of the Empire or in foreign lands, so as to prevent injustice as well as hardship and privation to the natives. The Act provides that emigration under agreement to labour for hire is not lawful except to countries the Governments of which have made such laws and other provisions as the Governor-General of India in Council thinks sufficient to protect emigrants. Canada not having enacted such laws, it is pointed out that emigration from India to Canada under agreement to labour for hire is unlawful under the Indian Emigration Act, and it is suggested that in order to render the law wholly effective as far as Canada is concerned, it would be sufficient to prohibit the landing in Canada of immigrants who come in violation of the laws of their own country.

As to emigrants who may come without any agreement for hire, it is stated that the general regulation at present in force requiring all emigrants to have in their possession a sum of \$25 (£5), constitutes a requirement which is an obvious necessity for their protection, and in the case of Indians is especially needful, seeing that they come to Canada without knowledge of the conditions, with manners and customs wholly different from those they find here, and in ignorance of the language of the country. It is suggested that, should this amount prove inadequate to prevent their falling into a condition of mendicancy or becoming a public charge, it should be increased.

The report concludes as follows:—

Whilst an effective means of restricting a class of immigration unsuited to Canada, it will be apparent that the arrangement set forth is one which finds justification on grounds of humanity, strong as are the economic reasons by which it is also supported. The liberty of British subjects of India is safeguarded rather than curtailed; the traditional policy of Great Britain in respect to the native races of India has been kept in mind, and the necessity of enacting legislation either in India or in Canada which might appear to reflect on our fellow-British subjects in another part of the Empire has been wholly avoided. Nothing could be more unfortunate or misleading than that an impression should go forth that Canada, in seeking to regulate a matter of domestic concern, is not deeply sensible of the obligations which citizenship within the Empire entails. It is the recognition of this obligation which has caused her to adopt a course which, by removing possibilities of injustice and friction, is best calculated to strengthen the bounds of association with the several parts and to promote the greater harmony of the whole. In this, as was to be expected, Canada has had not

only the sympathy and understanding, but the hearty co-operation of the authorities in Great Britain and India as well.

In accordance with Mr. King's suggestion, an Order in Council has been passed prohibiting the landing in the Dominion, and rendering liable to deportation, immigrants who come to this country in violation of the laws of their own.

His Majesty's Asiatic Subjects

Their Treatment in the Colonies

A British Newspaper's Comments

The *Yorkshire Daily Post* of the 2nd ulto., writes on the above subject as follows:—

The Earl of Crewe will not be long at the Colonial Office before he is called upon to deal with some difficult questions arising out of the treatment of His Majesty's Asiatic subjects in British Colonies. The new Gold Law proposed in the Transvaal contains some provisions against which strong protest is being made by the Indians there, and the Natal Government have foreshadowed the early introduction of measures affecting very drastically the Indians in that Colony. The root of the trouble in each case is the same. The whites in both Colonies are willing enough to make use of cheap Asiatic labour, but they object to the competition of the cheap Asiatic trader. It was in order that the one might be obtained without the other following that the Chinese Labour Ordinance provided for the compulsory repatriation of the coolies on the termination of their indentures. The Government of India declined to permit this condition to be imposed in recruiting labourers there for the Rand mines, and they have declined also to allow Indians to be indentured in Natal on these terms. The effect is that thousands of men who have terminated their contracts in the latter Colony—as well as others who have been "free" immigrants—have entered upon trade. Most of them occupy small stores, but many have built up concerns almost as important as those of the white merchants. It is now being urged that if the Indian Government adhere to their determination that the indenture shall not be terminable in India itself, the flow of Indian labour to Natal must stop, because whatever its value to the industries of the Colony it is accompanied by the evil of the Asiatic trader. The Natal Government propose to deal with the matter in two ways. The Colonial Secretary (Dr. Gubbins) announced recently that during the present session of the Natal Parliament a measure will be introduced fixing a date after which it will be illegal to introduce Indians into the Colony; also a measure prohibiting the issue of any more trading

licences to Arabs (understood to mean all Asiatics), and enacting that at the end of ten years all such licences shall cease, those holding them at that time receiving compensation from the State. It is significant to note that Dr. Gubbins describes this Bill as being "on the lines of the Licensing Bill at present before the House of Commons." The *Natal Mercury* states that in deciding to end all further Indian immigration after a specified period the Government will have the support of the great majority of the inhabitants of the Colony—coloured as well as white—the rate of importation in recent years having been excessive, with the result that the Asiatic population now considerably outnumbers the European. The *Times of Natal* also approves the policy of stopping further immigration, maintaining that it is futile to impose rigid restrictions under the Immigration Act against the influx of Asiatics, and simultaneously to bring them in by the thousand under the indenture system.

There is a good deal of doubt, however, about the possibility of carrying out the proposal to place a "time limit" on Asiatic trading. The *Times of Natal* says it is a very moot question whether the Imperial Government would sanction "race legislation of so extreme a character." The journal concurs with a good deal what has been said of the economic and commercial evils of Asiatic trading, "but it is a very extreme step to propose to close down old-established businesses, built up by the energy and industry of Asiatics who have been allowed to settle in the country." Moreover, the writer asks whether it is seriously contended that the 130,000 Asiatics in the Colony are not to be permitted even to trade among themselves. The *Natal Mercury* likewise perceives much difficulty in the carrying out of the Government proposals, and suggests that "there is all the difference in the world between the principle embodied in the Licensing Bill at home for the acquirement by the State of the monopoly value of liquor licences and that mentioned by Dr. Gubbins for the elimination of Asiatic trading." —

The question will probably be raised as to why an Indian should not be allowed to keep a store, and be permitted to take up any other occupation. If the white storekeeper is to be protected against Asiatic competition, it will be claimed that the white artisan, the white market gardener, the white fisherman, the white farmer, and others should also be similarly protected, and, if compensation is to be paid by the State to benefit the white storekeeper, why should not compensation be paid to Indians who earn their livelihood in other ways, in order that they may be compelled to leave the fields of industry entirely open to the white man? —

It is not easy to see what answer can reasonably be made to these objections. As may well be imagined, INDIAN OPINION, the organ of the Asiatics in Natal, is in arms against the suggestion. It says such legis-

lation would simply develop a community of paupers and hangers-on, and asks whether Mr. Moor and his Colonial Secretary are trying to play a bad practical joke upon the Indian community.

There is room for doubt, indeed, whether the Natal Government, when they "come to grips" with their policy, will venture to introduce such a measure—at least in the bald form suggested by Dr. Gubbins. Should they do so, and succeed in getting it through the Natal Parliament, one may hope that Lord Crewe will justify the opinion of the *Natal Mercury* that there will be great difficulty in getting the Home Government to sanction this "class legislation of a very exceptional nature." In the meantime, the new Gold Law of the Transvaal presents some important points for consideration. Under this law no coloured person may acquire any right in a mining area, or deal in any way with unwrought precious metal, and no coloured person (except in-door servants) are to be permitted to reside in a mining district, "except in bazaars, locations, mining compounds, and such other places as the Mining Commissioner may permit." INDIAN OPINION thinks that "the spirit underlying this law means nothing less than that the Transvaal Government intend to carry on a war of extermination against coloured people, unless these be content to remain in the Transvaal as serfs"—an ominous word, which should give pause to Lord Crewe when he comes to consider whether the approval of His Majesty's Government shall be given to the new law. INDIAN OPINION expresses the hope that in the event of the Government persisting in carrying out the policy, "Lord Elgin, with the better knowledge that he has gained, will do justice." The matter now rests in other hands than those of Lord Elgin, and we shall look with interest to see whether Lord Crewe is any more resolute than his predecessor has been in protecting the King's Indian subjects in South Africa from laws more oppressive than those against which we protested on their behalf when they were under the rule of the Boer Republic.

The following letter on the above articles is from the pen of Mr. L. W. Ritch:—

You will not, I trust, regard it an impertinence if I venture to congratulate you upon the review of the "Asiatic" position in South Africa contained in your issue of the 2nd inst.

When the news of Dr. Gubbins's proposed Bill to stop the further importation of Indentured Indians into Natal reached my Committee, a month ago, I ventured the opinion to Reuter's Agency that the proposal, however sincerely made, would not be seriously pressed forward. Barely a week later the *Daily Telegraph's* own correspondent, whose trustworthiness I know to be beyond question,

cabled to his journal that the Agricultural Union, representing the farmers of the Colony, had declared that Indian labour is necessary for maintenance of Natal's industries; that this constituted a protest against the proposed stoppage of Indian immigration, and that Parliament was consequently unlikely to more than legislate for the termination of indentures in India. Personally, I share the view held by thoughtful British Indians in South Africa, that the importation of indentured labour from India should be discontinued. It can hardly be regarded as consonant with the Empire's best traditions to deny any class of His Majesty's subjects an opportunity to improve themselves either morally, intellectually, or materially. The reason why the Colony of Natal is desirous of compulsorily repatriating the indentured Indian upon the conclusion of his five or ten years of service is, that past experience has proved the Indian's capacity for rapid growth on all three planes; in other words, because the erstwhile coolie and the coolie's children develop commercial and professional abilities which, in conjunction with their natural qualities of industry, temperance, and peacefulness, make them formidable competitors with the politically dominant white colonist.

It is an open secret that the Colony's weapons are really directed against the Indian trader and such other Asiatics as are not satisfied permanently to endure a condition of helotage. Dr. Gubbins's Bill proposes to repatriate all such "free" Asiatics within a period of ten years, and provides for compensation in cases of expropriation. As a considerable percentage of the Indian trading community has been established for many years, in some cases as many as thirty and forty, it would almost seem that the term "expatriate" more correctly describes Dr. Gubbins's proposal. It certainly does so as applied to the thousands of British Indian children born in the Colony, many of whom have grown up there, now follow businesses and professions, and have no personal acquaintance with India at all.

A very significant side-light is thrown, moreover, upon the proposed compensation in cases where established business and other property will be expropriated, by the administration of the Dealers' Licences Act. As I had, I believe, the privilege of pointing out to you on a previous occasion, this Act (Law No. 18 of 1897) creates Licensing Boards in the various districts of the Colony for the granting or refusal of applications for new trading licences and the periodical renewal of such as already exist. From the decision of these bodies there is no appeal to the Courts of the Colony. The Licensing Boards in question are, as might be expected, largely composed of white store-keepers in the different districts. Last

year the powers with which they been invested were employed scandalously to deprive established and reputable Indian traders of their trading licences as to arouse considerable comment from both the judiciary and the European Press of the Colony. This year there are indications that the precedent will be followed, and, if such a policy continues to be pursued for another ten years, the duty of the Colonial Government to compensate any Indian traders whose businesses may have been left to them, will have become light indeed.

The Assault on Mr Essop Mia

Shahji and Maula Bagas before the Court

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM]

Johannesburg, June 4.

Shahji and Maula Bagas were brought before Mr. Jordan, the Magistrate in "B" Court, to-day, on remand. The former was charged with inciting to commit bodily harm; the latter with assaulting Mr. Essop Mia, Chairman of the British Indian Association.

The Magistrate took the preliminary examination preparatory to sending the case to the High Court for trial.

Mr. Essop Mia gave evidence regarding the assault, which was corroborated by Mr. Moosa Ebrahim Patel and Mr. A. M. Cachalia, who accompanied him at the time.

Dr. Gilchrist, District Surgeon, gave evidence regarding the severity of the injuries.

Ebrahim Down (?) testified to overhearing Shahji instruct Bagas to assault Mr. Essop Mia.

Moulvi Ahmed Mukhtiar, Priest at the Hamidia Mosque, testified to hearing Shahji utter threats of violence towards Mr. Essop Mia and other leaders.

The Police gave evidence as to the arrests.

The cases were remanded to Friday, the 12th instant, the evidence for the prosecution not having been concluded.

EXCLUDING THE BLACK. The policy of South Africa, as one country, scheduling certain industries and saying that no man of colour shall work in them is at all events clear and understandable. We do not say it is possible.—*Transvaal Leader.*

A WRONG IDEAL. Our business class as a whole is still governed largely by the principles of humanitarian morality. The disadvantage is obvious if they are to take active part in the commerce of the world. They should make every effort to cultivate the principles which the heartless commercial morality of the West dictates.—*Japan Times, Tokio.*

Oriental Immigration**A Letter to "The Times"**

We take the following from the columns of the *Times*:

Sir,—We and some other Liberals who are interested in colonial subjects desire to put in a plea that the Imperial Government should take the initiative in securing a thorough discussion, in which all parts of the Empire should take part, of the whole question of Oriental immigration.

So far this country has stood by in a critical mood, while now one colony, now another, deals as it best can with this question, whereas we at home who have the greatest responsibility for Indian and foreign relations should have been the first to seek some common solution. The Transvaal have learned a bitter lesson in attempting to settle their Oriental problem without first carefully inquiring how least to hurt Oriental susceptibilities in carrying out a policy which they feel to be necessary.

Canada has happily taken the better course, both in regard to Japan and to India, in making sure of her ground before taking action. But it is essentially a matter which calls for a common undertaking among all members of the Empire. The question is one which in its various aspects affects, or may affect, Australasia, South Africa, Canada, East Africa, and possibly other colonies; it is of the highest importance to India as well as to ourselves in our conduct of negotiations with Japan and China. Hitherto it has only been treated in a piecemeal fashion as the immediate necessity has arisen; it is one to be dealt with in the most comprehensive fashion by consultation among all concerned. Here would seem to be one of the occasions for which the Imperial Secretariat was called into existence. It might most profitably institute an inquiry, whether by a joint commission or otherwise, to thresh out the whole subject.

There is doubtless an apprehension current in certain colonies that, by entering into discussion on the matter, they thereby commit themselves to a re-opening of the question on which they have definitely made up their minds, whether their country is to be a white man's country. This is not necessarily so. The chief danger in the present circumstances is not so much the exclusion of our Indian fellow-subjects or of our Oriental allies and friends from some of our colonies as the uncertainty which exists on the subject.

We proclaim in India that all are equal under the British rule, and then our subjects find, on going to certain colonies, that is not so; it may be best that the distinction of colour should be drawn, but it requires definite statement, so that we may not seem parties to a deception, and that all concerned may know it. Or we and some of our colonies may become parties to a treaty with a foreign

power, giving free access to each other's countries, and we may find afterwards that full opportunity is not given for the exercise of this privilege. On such matters it is essential that facts should be faced, and that after full consultation between all parties concerned in the British Empire these facts should be made known. Again, if there are parts of the Empire where the objections to Oriental immigration do not hold, it is advisable that these also should be publicly designated by common consent of all concerned. Thirdly, if Orientals are to be excluded or their immigration limited in any part of the Empire, it is all important that the methods adopted to enforce this limitation or exclusion should be carefully considered and arranged to cause the least possible friction or sense of arbitrary dealing. Finally, it is well that by means of a common exchange of view all parts of the Empire should be enabled to count the cost, not to themselves alone, but also to all the other parts, resulting from any policy which each may adopt.

We are all Imperialists in the sense that we desire to keep an Empire united by far closer bonds than even the closest alliance can knit. But to make this possible our world-wide interests and responsibilities require that all cause of misunderstanding should from the first be removed. The great Dominions rightly wish to be masters of their domestic concerns, of which one of the greatest is immigration, but they also desire, as we do, that their domestic policy should harmonize as much as possible with the engagements which the Mother Country may have entered into in the discharge of her Imperial duties.

A joint conference would enable them to grasp our difficulties and us to understand theirs. If no better result than that of clearly stating the problem is attained that will be something gained, for a clear statement of a difficulty is often the best road to a solution. It is, therefore, much to be hoped that the Government, taking courage from Canada's example, may find it possible to institute such an inquiry as we have suggested—an inquiry to which representatives from our own Colonial, Foreign, and India Offices, from India, and from all the Colonies and Dominions concerned should be parties.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

R. MUNRO FERGUSON.
E. T. COOK.
JULIAN S. CORBETT.
H. A. L. FISHER.
BASIL WILLIAMS.

Lord Ampthill's Letter

Sir,—May I be allowed to express the satisfaction which I felt, and which must have been felt by many others, on reading the letter signed

by Mr. Munro Ferguson and four other prominent Liberals which you published yesterday?

With the terms of that letter I desire to express my complete agreement, for the course so reasonably advocated by the writers is one which I have constantly urged both in and out of Parliament during the past two years and which has the advantage of your own weighty approval.

It is something that the importance of the question of Oriental immigration as an Imperial problem of the first magnitude should at last begin to meet with recognition, and Mr. Munro Ferguson and his friends have very clearly and convincingly demonstrated the reasons why that question should be discussed with all the formality and authority of an Imperial Conference.

There are two or three reasons which I should like to emphasize; the first is that general ignorance prevails on the subject, and the second is that the question, so far from having been closed by the independent action on the part of the colonies concerned, is re-opened in a new form by the increased comprehension of the issues and growing resentment displayed by the people of India. That comprehension is in advance of the understanding of our own democracy, and that resentment is justified by the whole course of our administration of India. That the Colonies are not blind to the danger of Imperial unity is amply proved by the spontaneous action of the Transvaal Government in the matter of the Asiatic Registration Act and by the still more spontaneous and gratifying action on the part of the Canadian Government in sending Mr. MacKenzie King to confer with the Imperial Government. There could surely be no better proof that the Colonies recognize the need for discussion and are willing to discuss the question anew. It is only the Imperial Government which fears and shuns discussion, and that attitude is not likely to command respect in the Colonies where our fellow-citizens look to us for a lead in matters of Imperial policy.

The Colonies are obviously right in leaving it to the Imperial Government to take the initiative in a matter which concerns the Empire as a whole, and which particularly concerns the largest and most important part of the Empire, the India for which we are primarily responsible. But it cannot be doubted that if the invitation, which was so deplorably neglected at the Imperial Conference of last year, were to be given, the Colonies would welcome the opportunity of renewing the effort to "systematize the practice of the Empire" which was initiated by Mr. Chamberlain at the Colonial Conference of 1897. The question was not ripe for a further effort at the time of the Colonial Conference of 1902, but it was ripe at the time of the Imperial

Conference of 1907. It is over-ripe at the present time. Imagine the feelings of the thoughtful men of India when they heard that a question concerning the honour and dignity of India as well as the unity of the Empire would only be discussed at a conference assembled for the consideration of Imperial problems "if opportunity should offer and time permit." That is the answer which I received from Lord Elgin in reply to my question in the House of Lords, and that answer, no doubt, represented the capacity of the Colonial Office to appreciate an Imperial problem under the *régime* which has just come to an end. Time and opportunity are usually supposed to be the servants and not the masters of statesmen when national and Imperial affairs of the first importance are concerned. Some of those who object to further discussion say that there is nothing to discuss, and this attitude is the most striking proof of the general ignorance on the subject. Others again urge that the question is one which concerns only the domestic interests of the Colonies; but this, as already shown, is not the view of the Colonies themselves.

The advantage of a discussion "by conference or otherwise" would be that principles would be enunciated and explanations promulgated with an authority to which the isolated utterances or writings of individual statesmen cannot possibly attain. From such a starting point, from principles which would become as authoritative as those of the British Constitution, it would be possible "to translate the wishes of the people into the language of statesmanship" (if I may borrow a pregnant phrase of your own) and to persuade the Colonists, no less than the people of India and other Asiatics, that economic necessity and not racial prejudice is at the root of the difficulty. When that is done, animosity and resentment on both sides will be reduced, for economic competition is indigenous in all countries and understood of all peoples; it is part of the natural order of human society and is capable of regulation. Racial prejudice, on the other hand, cannot be regulated by law or custom, but inevitably leads to bloody strife.

I am, Sir, your obedient
servant,

AMPTHILL.

Milton Ernest-hall, Bedford, April 14.

MR. CHURCHILL AND THE TRANSVAAL. At the annual South African Dinner held in London on the 25th ulto., Mr. Churchill, M.P., is reported to have said that he considered that the Transvaal, in connexion with its Indian policy, had shown a regard for Imperial interests which were unsurpassed by any other Colony. He must have been unaware of the new phase of that policy.

The Transvaal Crisis

We are still awaiting definite news of the Transvaal Government's intentions in regard to the Indian question. In the meantime we publish the following items.

London, May 27.—The British Indian Committee are energetically taking up the cause of the Transvaal Indians. Mr. Ritch, Secretary to the Committee, declares that it will be a gigantic mistake if the Transvaal now departs from the spirit of the agreement, and points out the intense feeling on the subject in India. He declares, with emphasis, that the unjust and clumsy treatment of the Indians will endanger the integrity of the Empire.

London, June 1st.—In the House of Commons to-day Col. Seely promised to ask the Transvaal Government for particulars as to the position of Indians in that Colony.

London, June 3.—South Africa was prominent at question time, in the House of Commons, to-day.

Sir W. Bull (Hammersmith) and Mr. Cox (Preston) urged intervention by the Imperial Government in connection with the threatened breach of agreement between the Transvaal Government and the Indians.

Col. Seely said he was awaiting Lord Selborne's reply. He pointed out that the settlement arrived at in January was without Lord Elgin's intervention.—*Reuter*.

Press Comments

The news that the British Indians have again entered in upon a campaign of passive resistance against the registration regulations is serious and the public will have some considerable difficulty in deciding upon the merits of the case between Mr. Gandhi and the Colonial Secretary, particularly as no one but Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts knows what took place at the famous interview when a compromise was agreed upon. In the meantime it is our hope, a hope which we think will be pretty generally endorsed by the public, that something may yet be done to avert an active resumption of hostilities.—*Pretoria News*.

It would appear that the intention of the Transvaal Government now is to simply introduce a Bill legalising voluntary registration, but Mr. Gandhi and his followers say they understood the whole of the "objectionable" Act was to be repealed when they agreed to register themselves voluntarily. Mr. Smuts is said to have distinctly repudiated the idea of repeal at the time of the settlement. The case for the Government is that the basis of the compromise was that the Act should not be enforced against those who complied with it voluntarily. Neither side seems disposed to give in, and it remains to be seen

whether the Government will comply with the demand for the return of the registration papers that have already been filled in. Either the Asiatics did not clearly understand what was expected of them at the time they agreed to the compromise, in which case their leaders, who acted as their interpreters, are to blame for not making the terms sufficiently plain, or the Transvaal Government has broken faith as alleged. In any case a serious misunderstanding has arisen, and we do not envy Mr. Botha's Government the task that lies in front of them.—*Natal Witness*.

Commenting further upon the new phase of the Registration question in the Transvaal, the *Pretoria News* says:

The renewal of the British Indian campaign is from every point of view to be deplored, and we still hope that hostilities may be prevented by a discreet concession on the part of the Government to the Indians. Reading the letter which embodied the terms of the compromise, there can be no doubt that the understanding at the time between both parties was that the Registration Act should not be applied to those who registered voluntarily. It is now understood that the Government intend to introduce legislation into the new Parliament legalising "under the Act" the position of those Indians who have registered during the three months allowed to volunteers. If this were done, it would, of course, be a breach of the terms of the contract, and the Indians would be perfectly entitled to resist it by every means in their power. We have reason, however, to believe that the Government is adopting a fair and reasonable attitude, and that they are prepared to abandon their intention of bringing the voluntary registrations under the Act and will content themselves by passing a measure legalising the position of the British Indians who have registered without compulsion, and providing for the registration in the future of all newcomers. In the meantime, we notice that our morning contemporary is assuring the Government of "the undivided and determined support of the people in every measure that may be taken to checkmate the ambitious designs which we firmly believe the Asiatics and their leaders have in view." We advise our contemporary not to be rash. A certain enthusiastic meeting in Pretoria Town Hall, at which the leading citizens of Pretoria enunciated with much enthusiasm and eloquence pretty well the same sentiments as our contemporary professes to-day, and dared the Government to surrender while they were upon its side, is still within public recollection—a few days later General Smuts accepted the demands of the Indians in their entirety, and the promoters of the meeting were left looking just a little foolish.

At the Heart of the Empire

A Monthly Survey

London, May 1, 1908.

(Concluded)

The Reconstructed Ministry

The one point in the reconstructed Ministry which has aroused the greatest surprise is Mr. Morley's acceptance of a peerage. Truly it is a case of the unexpected happening! Long ago Mr. Morley declared that the Upper House required to be mended or ended, and his whole political life has been not simply unsympathetic, but positively hostile, to legislation by inheritance. But now "honest John" finds it advisable to take his seat on the red benches. Perchance he thinks that it is one way of "mending" the House of Lords. Of course, the ostensible reason is that his health will not stand the strain of the work at the India Office and duty in the House of Commons. This is greatly to be regretted, for the new Viscount, while retaining his position as Secretary of State for India, leaves the House of Commons with only an Under-Secretary as representative; and as long as the arrangement lasts, it will be an Under-Secretary who will have to make the official annual statement concerning India in the Commons. Mr. Morley will be relieved of the bombardment of questions to which he has been subjected, but these questions have often elicited valuable information. Lord Curzon lamented lately that the House of Lords was badly served with regard to India; he will now be satisfied, one hopes, in having the Secretary of State among the Peers. Some of the papers, acclaiming Mr. Morley's decisions, have declared that the Lords possess greater sense of the fitness of things than to ask inconvenient questions, but Indians in South Africa have a notable champion in that assembly, who is not easily deterred from the search after truth in matters concerning them. There is, however, probably another reason underlying Mr. Morley's "elevation." He has not been without claims to the premiership, but Mr. Asquith has been chosen, and a peerage is a way out of the necessity of playing second fiddle to the new Premier. As to the retention of the Indian Secretaryship, there are personal and private reasons, apart from public ones, which weigh strongly at present. So now India's interests, as represented by the Secretary of State, are centred in the Upper Chamber; *Punch* gave a forecast last week of Mr. Morley putting on his robes as a peer; it will not be easy to adjust one's estimate of "honest John" to those robes; as yet we do not even know definitely by what title he will henceforward be known; and, as to India, it remains to be seen, how she can gain by the transference of the Secretary of State from

the popular Chamber. There are many who sincerely regret the change.

Mr. T. R. Buchanan, the new Under-Secretary in the place of Mr. Hobhouse—whom, by the way, one would have thought more than ever useful after his recent experiences in India—is a man of ideals although he is one who revels in figures. He was one of Lord Welby's Commission on the adjustment of expenditure between England and India, and though he did not sign the minority report with Sir W. Wedderburn, Mr. Caine, and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, expressed the opinion that the recommendations, if carried into effect, would hardly meet India's just claims. What power he will be able to exercise cannot be foretold, but the resignation of Mr. John Ellis, some little time ago, does not augur well for any remarkable achievement.

As to Mr. Asquith, there is general agreement concerning his ability and intellectual power; he has head enough for his new position; whether he has heart enough may be open to doubt. But the touching tenderness of his tribute to his late Chief revealed the Prime Minister in a somewhat new light, and perhaps the heart which has shown itself only in the inner family circle will now be more manifest in public life and come to his aid, as is most needful, in his leadership of the House of Commons. For the first time for many years the State will have a Prime Minister whose wife is specially fitted by mental and physical endowments to play the social rôle well. Mrs. Asquith, formerly Miss Margot Tennant, is however, keenly interested in politics, and of her personal charms the following verses by Mr. Gladstone, published in the current *National Review*, give a vivid picture:

When Parliament ceases, and comes the recess,
And we seek, in the country, rest after distress,
As a rule, upon visitors place an embargo,
But make an exception in favour of Margot.

After a tribute to "Margot's" youth, good spirits, and other qualities, Mr. Gladstone suggests that the one objection to her name is that it rhymes to "Argot," but concludes:

Never mind, never mind: we will give it the slip;
Tis not *Argot* the language, but *Argo* the ship;
And, by sea or by land, I will swear you may far go,
Before you can hit on a double for Margot.

W.G. Dec. 17. 1889.

Up to the present the defeat of Mr. Churchill in Manchester last Friday has been the most disappointing event of the reconstruction and all that it involves; but, probably, the young statesman will not suffer very seriously thereby. Dundee has asked him to contend its vacant seat, and he has consented. But the new President of the Board of Trade is not the first Cabinet Minister to find himself rejected on an appeal to his con-

stituents. Mr. Gladstone suffered in the same way, and Manchester once refused John Bright.

Other Matters

The month of April has distinguished itself by phenomenal changes of weather. Just when the trees were putting on their spring green and many people were holiday-making at Easter, we were plunged into mid-winter, and the country was covered with a thick mantle of snow. But the fall was not soft and gentle; it was accompanied by fierce storms and blizzards, and the damage to agricultural produce has been serious. This is not the only damage, however, for in a blinding snow storm there have been sad naval disasters, with a formidable death roll. An American liner ran down a cruiser which turned turtle; fortunately the accident happened near to the shore of the Isle of White, and among the brave rescuers of the drowning men were not a few women, who waded into the icy waters and saved many lives.

The Shakespeare Festival has been duly celebrated during April both at Stratford and in London; his plays have been given in the Elizabethan manner as well as in the most up-to-date modern fashion. Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who has done so much to popularise the festival in London, has just celebrated his coming of age as actor-manager. The mention of plays reminds me that a committee of Indians in London, with Sir M. M. Bhownaggee as president, has arranged a series of historic Indian tableaux, which will be given at the Caxton Hall on May 9, in aid of the Indian Famine Local Relief Fund. The evening deserves, and promises, to be a great success.

OBSERVER.

INDIAN MAIL. For Colombo, Calcutta and Madras, per *S.S. Umlazi*, on or about the 18th June.

RETURNING TO INDIA. Messrs A. F. C. Beg and Goolam Mahomed Raschid, of Pretoria, passive resisters who suffered imprisonment for the sake of conscience, have left for India, Mr. Beg, we regret to say, having received a cable with reference to his mother's illness. A reception was held in honour of both passive resisters, and a purse was presented by the British Indian Community of Pretoria. Mr. Beg, in giving thanks, exhorted his audience to take up passive resistance again, should it be necessary.

MARITZBURG INDIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION. The annual general meeting was held on the 19th instant when the officers were elected. Clubs should communicate with Mr. M. S. Reidy, the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, c/o Box 304.