

# REPORT

ON

## EAST AFRICA

SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI.

*By*

Mr. Dawood 'Hajee Nasser

*President,*

Africa & Overseas Merchants' Chamber.

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After his tour in  
KENYA, UGANDA & TANGANYIKA

*in connection with*

Union of East Africa, Indian High  
and position of Indians in various  
spheres etc.

A CHAMBER - 1st MARINE STREET,  
BOMBAY, 2.

May 1947.

REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
By Mr. DAWOOD HAJEE NASSER, *President*,  
Africa & Overseas Merchants Chamber on his  
East African tour with Particular Reference  
to Political, Commercial and Economic  
Position of Indians.

To,

- (1) The Hon'ble Mr. R. N. Banerjee, C. I. E., I. C. S.,  
Secretary to the Government of India,  
Commonwealth Relations Department,  
New Delhi.
- (2) The Hon'ble Mr. Y. N. Sukhtanker, C. I. E., I. C. S.,  
Secretary to the Government of India,  
Commerce Department,  
New Delhi.

Sirs,

I have just returned from a tour of East Africa and have much pleasure to submit my Report to the Departments of Commonwealth Relations and Commerce of my impressions I have gathered there during my tour in connection with political and commercial problems of our countrymen there.

Having last visited my branch offices in Mombasa and Daressalaam in 1937, my people there were very anxious that I should pay them a visit now. I decided therefore to sail from here on 13-3-1947 per s. s. "Rizwani" for East Africa.

The Africa & Overseas Merchants Chamber having come to know of same, requested me as its President that I should utilise the opportunity to visit other important centres in the interior and acquaint myself with the conditions of our compatriots so as to acquire first-hand information on very vital problems. I had written about my proposed visit to the Government of

India in the Commonwealth Relations and the Commerce Departments and had received replies to study the outstanding questions and to acquaint Government with my impressions. With that end in view I decided to undertake a tour of the interior though I have no business interests there.

### **My Chamber as a Link with East Africa.**

From the accompanying notes on my public activities in East Africa you will see that my stay there was crowded with varied programmes and my visit was hailed as most opportune by our countrymen in all the three territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika as the Indian community was face to face with the two-fold menace to their very existence in the form of Immigration restrictions on the one hand and in the form of the Colonial Paper No. 210 on the other hand. They appreciated my visit the more as I was the first commercial man to visit East Africa who had taken keen and consistent interest in their affairs as President of an organisation which has rendered meritorious services in the furtherance of India's overseas trade and political rights since last seven years. I could soon perceive that the entire Indian community had a soft corner for my Chamber in their heart and I was consequently overwhelmed with kindness and courtesy on all sides. Thus I had the unique opportunity of becoming conversant with both political and economic sides of the Indian question as all present and past members of the Legislative Councils of the three territories enlightened me with all the aspects of the Indian question. I was invited by all the Indian Associations (Political) and Indian Chambers (Commercial) as also by the East African Indian Congress as well as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. "On behalf of 14,000 Indians" of Zanzibar which has been considered to be the mother of Indian settlement, I was telegraphically requested by the Indian Association there to at least set apart two days for them and be their guest. But I am sorry to note that in spite of best efforts on my part to charter a plane from Nairobi, I could not pay a visit to the ancient town of Zanzibar owing to

heavy rains. Ultimately the Indian Association of Zanzibar desired that I should make it a point to break my journey from Dar-es-Salaam to Mombasa specially on account of the fact that Raja Sir Maharaj Singh could not visit Zanzibar owing to the very short time at his disposal. Apart from the European Chamber of Commerce of Zanzibar having extended me a warm welcome by telegram as the Zanzibar Indian community are now-a-days feeling that Indian leaders from the mother country neglect them, I had proposed to visit that beautiful island for the sake of our own people, but it was not to be due to circumstances beyond my control.

### **East Africa a Natural outlet for India.**

East Africa has rightly been termed the America of India by Sir John Kirk, the first Resident of the Government of India at the Court of the Sultan of Zanzibar for about 20 years from 1867 to 1887. Sir John in his evidence before a royal Commission observed that but for the presence of Indian merchants the British would have never been in East Africa. Because of pioneering work done by the Indians during the last century, East Africa has been a natural outlet for India in view of her geographical proximity coupled with historic connections. East Africa is one-third the size of India with millions of acres of uncultivated virgin soil with agreeable climate for Indians. Hence East Africa has been considered morally an Indian Colony on account of spade work to the credit of Indians since centuries past and in building the famous Kenya-Uganda Railways which opened up East Africa to civilisation.

### **The issue of Immigration.**

Now I come to the issue of immigration which is uppermost in the minds of our people at both the ends, since an open door to East Africa is vitally necessary if India is to maintain her connection with East Africa.

The powerful British settler community have therefore made it a corner-stone of their anti-Indian policy to attack Indian

Immigration. They had just after the close of the first world war demanded stringent Immigration regulations against Indians but the Government of India took up a vigorous attitude and foiled their attempt.

When the second world war was nearing a victorious conclusion, the East African Government in a great hurry promulgated an Immigration Ordinance by invoking the deference powers under the plea of food and housing shortages. My Chamber made vigorous protests to the Government of India in this connection in 1944 by waiting in a Deputation on the Hon'ble Dr. Khare, Member for Commonwealth Relations, and later on we were assured by the Government of India that the Secretary of State for India had been promised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the Immigration restrictions would automatically lapse after the war. This solemn pledge has been unceremoniously broken. In spite of war being over the East African Governments attempted to replace the war measure with a new Immigration Ordinance before the latter was due to lapse. My Chamber thereupon again waited on Sir Gurunath Bewoor, Member for Commerce and Commonwealth Relations during the regime of the Caretaker Government in a deputation at New Delhi, urging the Government of India to send a delegation to East Africa to investigate the position created by the continuance of harsh Immigration restrictions on the spot. We also suggested that Raja Sir Maharaj Singh who had helped the Indian community at the time of the political crisis in 1927 should be sent to East Africa. Our proposal was acceptable to the Government of India and as a consequence a delegation under the leadership of Raja Sir Maharaj Singh was sent to East Africa and the detailed report is already before you. The said report has unequivocally stated that there is no case for an Immigration Ordinance.

After seeing things for myself I am also more than convinced that there is no earthly reason why any Immigration restrictions, either from political or economic points of view, should be imposed. I believe that with the huge projects about to be lau-

nched by the East African Governments new contingents of Indian artisans and technical and skilled Indian personnel will be immediately required if the ambitious schemes now in the offing are at all to materialise.

Apart from contemplated programmes, even normal activities of Trade and Industry at present stand in need of efficient staff as no suitable staff for factories were available in view of trade and industry having already expanded during the war. Not only is there no question whatsoever of unemployment but every trade and industry is at present crying for experienced workers as there is a definite dearth of such staff under the growing needs of trade and industry. I understand that European firms are also feeling the shortage of intelligent and capable Indian staff. However, irrespective of commercial requirements Indian artisans and mechanics are nowhere to be found. I fear the Africans will suffer in the end if Immigration restrictions are allowed to continue.

It is well-known that the Indians are invariably prepared to freely invite the African workers to participate in their concerns. Unemployment among African artisans and petty shopkeepers is altogether unknown. They are eager to work in Indian enterprises as there they are treated with kindness and consideration. It is a passion with Indian carpenters and masons and tailors to teach their own handicrafts to the sons of the soil as they never apprehend that their stewardship of Africans will deprive them of their bread and salt. On the other hand the Indians are profound believers in the uplift of the Africans and are spiritually happy when African apprentices show some diligence and perseverance. This charitable outlook on the part of Indians which is in marked contrast with the European attitude has earned the Indians the gratitude of the African artisans. There is such a shortage of artisans now-a-days that an African gets billets with Indian concerns at shillings six to eight as carpenters and masons, while experienced Indians can hardly get shillings fifteen to twenty per day. Hence there is no question of unemployment at all. I have been informed by a prominent Indian leader of Tanganyika that for the local civil

service requirements the Government have to rely on Indian newcomers mainly as only a small number of local recruits for civil service purposes is forthcoming.

### Colonial Paper No. 210.

It will be recalled that the present Socialist Government in England, soon after assuming office, issued the Colonial Paper No. 191 with a view to create a sort of Central Government for the common, economic administration of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika under the initiative of the ex-Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr. George Hall.

An essential feature of the said Paper was the acceptance of the principle of parity for the three major communities. This idea of equal representation being an index to the bonafides of the British Government in bringing about a Central Government for East Africa appealed to the Indian leaders who accepted Paper No. 191 specifically mentioning that the proposal for parity was fundamental to their acceptance. However, this idea of equal representation proved too much for the white settlers of Kenya who raised a storm over it and ultimately the British Government was forced to send the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech Jones to study the situation on the spot as the settlers threatened non-acceptance of this new policy. Mr. Creech Jones stayed for some time in East Africa and returned a convert to the settler point of view. This conversion is probably accountable for his promotion to be the Secretary of State for the Colonies replacing his chief, Mr. George Hall. The new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech Jones has recently issued his Colonial Paper No. 210 wherefrom the idea of parity has morally vanished and consequently both the Indian and African communities have categorically rejected the paper, as the non-European communities fear that the dreaded political Union of East Africa is inherent in the present scheme.

I have been convinced from my personal talks with all important Indian leaders that the Colonial Paper No. 210 will

prove to be the thin end of the wedge and will pave the way for the creation of a political union at no distant date.

Mr. Creech Jone's scheme is nothing short of his submission at the point of the bayonet as it were to renewed attempts on the part of the British settlers to save Tanganyika for the British Empire.

In this connection I would quote a former Governor of Tanganyika, Sir Donald Cameron, who said that Tanganyika was an integral part of the British Empire. May I remind you that my Chamber has written a letter dated 18-9-46 by way of confirmation of our telegram dated 16-9-46 in this connection against certain objectionable terms in the Trusteeship Documents whereunder the Trustee is empowered to use the Trust territory as a military base and is also free to federate with the adjoining territories on an economic basis. You are aware that the Union of South Africa now demands the former mandated territory of South-West Africa. Similarly, if the Paper No. 210 forces an economic union with Kenya and Uganda, the territory of Tanganyika might be claimed for incorporation into a political union of East Africa in due course of time. I, therefore, urge on you to view the paper No. 210 in a wider perspective at this juncture when the fate of East Africa is hanging in the balance because this is probably the last attempt on the part of the Kenya settlers to consolidate their position on the eve of imminent transfer of power in India.

The Indians in East Africa feel a little nervous in as much as the present onslaught on their rights might mean the liquidation of their fight for good. The racialistic philosophy of South Africa inspires the white community in Kenya to emulate their white brethren of the South as they are convinced that if the Indian is allowed to flourish politically and economically in East Africa the Indian, because of his superior merit and intrinsic worth will defeat the dream of a white dominion from Cairo to the Cape.



### National Unity.

In your letter dated the 12th March, you (Mr. Banerjee) suggested to me that I should do something to arrest deterioration of communal relations among the various sections of the Indian community in East Africa. With a view to continuing the very good work done by Raja Sir Maharaj Singh in this respect I paid my earnest attention soon after my arrival in Mombasa to the recent draft of proposals suggested by unofficial members of the Kenya Legislative Council with particular reference to distribution of seats to preserve Indian national unity. However, I could see after my efforts in Mombasa where the communal atmosphere was not so tense, that Nairobi being the storm centre the final work for me lay there. Therefore, as soon as I reached Nairobi, I contacted the veteran Indian leader, Mr. Shamsuddin, whom I had seen at my office in Bombay while he had been on a special mission to the Mother Country on behalf of the East African Indians as the President of the East African Indian Congress.

I have to admit that the fresh events in India particularly in the Punjab had upset our people in Nairobi to such an extent that no genial atmosphere existed for the handling of the unfortunate communal question. All the same, I prosecuted my efforts with some vigour, and Mr. Puri, the Deputy President of the Congress arranged an informal conference of all non-Muslim elements at the Congress Headquarters at the Desai Memorial Hall. The Hon'ble Mr. Cocker (a Muslim) who had been recently elected to the Legislative Council was also present at the said meeting. After frank discussions with them, including some of the Hindu leaders as also the Sikh spokesmen, I proposed that the Congress should nominate five gentlemen to sit at a Round Table Conference with an equal number of the Central Muslim Association nominees to consider the proposals of the unofficial members which was agreed to. As some of the Muslim leaders were away from Nairobi owing to the Easter holidays I arranged to see them on my way back to Nairobi from Kampala en route to Daressalaam.

After my return to Nairobi at a dinner given to me on April 13th by Dr. \*Nathoo, Acting President of the Central Muslim Association, I proposed to the Muslim leaders who were present there that they should send five representatives to negotiate an understanding with the Congress at the time of the session of the Muslim Conference due to be held at Mombasa by the end of the month as the Congress had already assured me that they would be prepared to attend a Conference with the Muslim leaders with a view to hammering out an agreement. I am glad to say that after much discussion, the Muslim members accepted my suggestion and promised to seek a mandate from the Muslim Conference to be held under the auspices of the Central Muslim Association at Mombasa. They hoped that the required authority would be forthcoming.

Unfortunately s. s. "Amra" by which I sailed from Mombasa for Bombay left Mombasa on Friday the 25th April, only one day prior to the meeting of the Muslim Conference. I have, however, arranged with the Muslim leaders to get in touch with the Congress people to discuss the matter in my absence and I hope to hear from them in due course. I believe that the task of national unity is not so serious as is imagined from this distance. Excepting Nairobi in Kenya, all the major towns are comparatively free from communal spirit in an acute form and particularly Kampala and Jinja I have found happy and normal. I may add that even Nairobi is getting less acute to an appreciable degree and I think that tension will lessen with the passage of time.

### **Anti-Indian Trade Policy.**

Throughout my tour I have found that all the three administrations are universally anti-Indian in outlook and their general trade policy as far as Indians are concerned is based on racialistic lines. While every patronage is extended to European ventures the Indian enterprise lacks goodwill on the part of the authorities and Indian trades and industries have to rely on their

own merits. Some of the District Officers are even hostile and in the name of African welfare try to administer the law in such a way as to actually prejudice Indian efforts in the fields of commerce and economics.

Owing to natural expansion of trade and industry after the war and opening up of new avenues for the activities of our traders, more applications for trade licences are being made to the Trade Licensing Board, but I regret to say that they are not generally favourably responded to. This attitude is more marked in Kenya where it is very difficult to secure any new trade license. This constitutes a great hindrance in the development of Indian enterprise and has a very detrimental and adverse effect on the prosperity of the Indian community nearly comparable to the obstacles put in our way by the Immigration restrictions.

### **Indian Industries.**

In spite of anti-Indian measures and unsympathetic attitude of the authorities since the last three decades the Indians have been able to develop the following industries, which is most creditable for them. The fact is that Indians have spent considerably more money in industry than the Europeans.

### **Sisal Industry.**

There are several sisal Estates spread out in Tanganyika on a large scale and on a smaller scale in Kenya. It will be of interest to mention that nearly 30 percent of these are owned by Indians. They have invested millions of pounds in this industry. The exports of Sisal in 1945 amounted to 1,40,000 tons valued at 5 crores of Rupees approximately. Thousands of Africans are employed by Indians in these Sisal estates.

### **Sugar Industry**

There are two very large and three small sugar mills in East Africa. Two of the smaller ones are owned by the Europ

eans while two big and one small are owned by Indians. The Indian mills manufacture some 70,000 tons of sugar representing about four-fifths of the total production of sugar in East Africa. Sugarcane is grown on Indian owned freehold lands amounting to thousands of acres. The sugar industry under Indian auspices employ thousands of African wage-earners and also engage native artisans and fitters and labour supervisors.

### Oil Industry

Practically all oil factories numbering more than thirty are owned by Indians. Raw materials for this industry, viz, copra, simsim and groundnuts, although abundant are under Government control. Distribution and prices are fixed by Government, who supply raw materials in a limited quantity as bulk of these is exported to U. K. to the detriment of the local industry, which cannot make any headway owing to lack of raw materials.

### Groundnuts.

Owing to great shortage of oilseeds in U. K. the Governments of East Africa have schemes under instructions from the Colonial Office, to cultivate groundnuts on vacant lands on a large scale with the object of producing more than three lakh tons of groundnuts. Subsequently, there is a scheme to crush the seeds into oil, refine it and then ship to U. K. In this connection it appears that from beginning till end Governmental organisation together with the services of Europeans will be utilised in the project. I have also been given to understand that European crushers will have a lion's share in operating the oil industry. Even the transport service will be predominantly conducted by the Europeans with African drivers. Indians will be given very little opportunity in this huge project. I have also been given to understand that recently a land admeasuring about 25 acres has been allotted to Messrs. Lever Brothers near Kampala with a view to erecting an oil mill, soap factory with allied products. Hence, it appears that Indians are purposely kept behind in the development of oil industry in future.

### Transport.

Indians have invested a very large amount in the organisation of transport services by means of lorries generally and buses to a certain extent. This service is spread out on a large scale throughout the three East African territories except in the highlands of Kenya, where the European settlers have been running these transport services generally owing to their advantageous positions of being land-owners and mutual support amongst themselves. It is evident that a huge amount has been invested by the Indians in this important transport service.

### Mining.

Europeans have generally interested themselves in the various mining industries, such as gold, tin, mica, etc. But lately Indians have also begun taking interest in mining industry in the production of gold.

### Insurance.

I am glad to say that in the field of insurance, Indians have made substantial progress and many Indian Insurance Companies are operating there with their own offices or agencies.

### Banking.

Recently the offices of the Exchange Bank of India and Africa Ltd. have been opened in Mombasa and Daressalaam with a view to do banking business there. It has been able to secure good support of Indians. But it was with great difficulty that the bank was able to secure licence for opening branches. It appears that it is now experiencing difficulties in the way of securing licences for foreign business, particularly in connection with dollar and other hard currencies.

### Shipping.

It is to be regretted that no Indian service is operating between the two shores, although bulk of the import and export

trade is in the hands of the Indians. A very large part of passenger traffic is also composed of Indians. It is satisfactory to note that the Commerce Department at present has announced its support to the development of this important industry and it is now hoped that at no distant date a regular service between India and East Africa will be operating in these waters.

### **Soap Industry**

There are more than a dozen soap factories all owned by Indians who manufacture soap from the limited oil supplies allowed by Government, but these are also handicapped for short supply of oil.

### **Tanning Industry**

Indians own two large factories while two are under European ownership. Here too Government's peculiar policy of exporting raw hides to U. K. comes in the way and the industry gets only a limited quota for its requirements with the result that the factories are not running to their full capacities.

### **Wattlebark Extract Industry**

There are two factories of this valuable industry, one of which is owned by an Indian with an up-to-date and latest scientific machinery. The Indian factory employs European experts and its producing capacity is larger than the factory under European ownership.

### **Coffee Industry**

It is satisfactory to note that Indians possess coffee estates where they grow same on their own lands in thousands of acres and produce thousands of tons of coffee with coffee curing plants and after grading coffee according to required standards these are exported to foreign markets where they have earned a good name.

### Tea Industry

Similarly, Indians have taken active interest in growing tea and have erected blending plants by which lakhs of lbs. of tea is prepared and marketed.

### Cotton Ginning Industry

Out of nearly 200 Gineries more than 90% are under Indian control. Indian financiers have made huge investments amounting to millions of sterling and the prosperity of Uganda is derived mostly from this Indian enterprise giving good jobs to African fitters and workers as also to Indian technicians and engineers.

From the foregoing references to Indian enterprise and initiative in the fields of commerce and trade on the one hand and industry and agriculture on the other, it is evident that Indians occupy an indispensable position practically unassailable in point of merit and worth and have invested crores of rupees in various industries.

### Indian Professionals.

There are a pretty good number of Indian Barristers, Advocates, Doctors, spread out in the three territories. Practically all of them are doing remunerative business. There is a very great scope for Indians in these lines.

### Education.

Upto now most of the Indian educational Institutions are being conducted by private enterprise. The Government do give some grant-in-aid, but the bulk of the expenses are being borne by the Indians themselves in imparting education to both the sexes. In this connection there are a great number of teachers who impart education to their own pupils. It appears that there is a dearth of good teachers at present, specially lady teachers.

### Hospitals.

Indians there are under a very great handicap in connection with hospitals, maternity homes, etc. Although separate hospitals for Europeans are provided by the Government it is regretted and it is a pity that they have criminally neglected providing these amenities for Indians. Government have of course provided some hospitals for Africans where only some effort has been made for accommodating Indian patients in some wards. This is a very great grievance of the Indian community which is of a more serious form than educational facilities. This legitimate grievance of the Indian community must be removed forthwith, especially when Indians contribute a lion's share in the Government revenues.

### Indian Trade Mission.

All the Indian Merchants Chambers in the principal towns of East Africa arranged special general meetings of their members to acquaint me with the difficulties and grievances encountered by them in their trade activities with India particularly in matters of poor packing, inferior quality of goods and negligence to furnish the required goods by Indian manufacturers in piecegoods and other lines. I have studied the trade reports issued by the East African Governments and am shocked to find that India's trade has already begun to deteriorate considerably.

The following figures of Indian imports in the East African countries, as mentioned below compared with their total imports show how far India is losing ground in East Africa:—

#### Kenya-Uganda.

1944.	...	25%
1945.	...	16%

#### Tanganyika.

1943.	...	47%
1945.	...	25%



I am afraid still further decrease in exports from India has taken place since 1945.

My Chamber has been representing to the Commerce Department consistently and insistently for the last three successive years that a Trade Delegation should be sent to study the potential markets in East Africa with a view to developing Indo-East African trade. In as many as seven Memoranda submitted to the Commerce Department, we have stressed the necessity of sending such a delegation. I hereunder quote the actual dates of the Memoranda :—

Memorandum No.	To whom presented.	On what date
1	Hon. Mr. Pillai	29- 6-1944
2	Sir Aziz-ul Haque	13- 6-1944
3	Mr. Aminuddin	14-11-1944
4	Hon. Mr. Pillai	8- 6-1945
5	Mr. Aminuddin	1-11-1945
9	Hon. Mr. Bhabha	14-10-1946
7	Hon. Mr. Chundrigar	6-12-1946

But so far no action has been taken by the Government of India to our great disappointment. In this connection let me quote the words of the President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who demanded an early despatch of a Trade delegation from India supporting our point of view in that matter.

Mr. R. B. Pandya, the President of the Federation in 1945 Session observed :—

“That India is alive to her trade interests in Africa is evident from the keen interest which the Africa and Overseas Merchants Chamber of Bombay is taking in this matter. They are already beginning to realise the need for closer personal contacts and have suggested the Government of India to despatch to East Africa a goodwill mission composed of

officials and unofficials. The mission will study market conditions and requirements of these territories. The Indian commercial communities of East Africa will surely welcome any such mission from the Mothercountry: Let us hope the suggestion will be accepted and acted upon without delay by the India Government.

This idea of a Trade Delegation was welcomed by His Excellency the Governor of Kenya who inaugurated the above session of the Federation in the following terms:—

"I was much interested that the Africa and Overseas Merchants Chamber of Bombay has suggested that a goodwill mission should be sent to East Africa in the near future. This is the first information I have received on the subject and no doubt it is a matter that is primarily one for the Government of India to decide for themselves but I would like to take this opportunity to say how important I consider it to be that our relations with the trading communities in India should be as happy as possible and I feel sure that the more personal contacts that can be made in that way the better it could be for all concerned".

It is therefore high time for the Government of India to move in the matter at an early date to maintain and preserve markets in Indian hands. If an immediate action is not taken by the Government of India, the trade activities of Indians in East Africa will suffer a great deal in view of the fact that they have lately been offered some considerable quantities of Japanese piecegoods and there is every likelihood that Germany also will be allowed to send her piecegoods as acute shortage is experienced here owing to the curtailment of quota by the Indian Government. Besides American and British goods are pushed into East African markets which Indian merchants have got to purchase to maintain their establishments.

### **High Commissioner in East Africa.**

Now I come to a very important subject of the appointment of the Government of India's High Commissioner in East Africa. Owing to various disabilities and hardships which the Indian Community, politically and commercially suffers at the hands of the bureaucracy in Kenya owing to the latter's unhelpful attitude it is very essential that an Indian High Commissioner must be immediately appointed at this grave crisis in East Africa. The daily administrative difficulties which our people have to surmount are too numerous to be enumerated. Besides in view of new diplomatic connections which the Government of India are establishing at present, it is another reason why a highly placed Indian statesman should be stationed in East Africa during this transitional period. It is satisfactory to note that the Indian community who objected to the appointment of an Indian High Commissioner sometime back, are now prepared to hail the appointment on account of the fact that the appointment will be made by the Interim National Government. I suggest that the Headquarters of the High Commissioner should be located in Nairobi in an independent and spacious building, preferably owned by the Government of India, as without excellent quarters befitting the representative of the Government of India the other communities will not be impressed. The arrival of an eminent Indian diplomat will help to improve racial atmosphere in East Africa to a very great extent. In this connection I may be allowed to quote the opinion of a responsible European gentleman in Uganda who recently confessed that the visit of Raja Sir Maharaj Singh impressed the European community including himself to such an extent that he himself had to admit, that he would like to be tutored by Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, in the English tongue. The High Commissioner will thus be a great asset in bringing about harmony between India and East Africa.

### **Indian Trade Commissioner**

During my stay in Mombasa I called at the Indian Trade Commissioner's Office. I was utterly disappointed to find the

the premises occupied by our Trade Commissioner were not at all in consonance with the Government of India's prestige. There were three rooms; one for the Trade Commissioner himself, the other for his staff and the third for samples and commercial literature, all promiscuously heaped together. In view of shortage of housing accommodation in Mombasa, it is no surprise that a suitable building was not available. However, any businessman happening to visit the Indian Trade Commissioner's Office, particularly a European businessman would at once form a very poor opinion for the miserable show. The expenditure, in my opinion, is practically being wasted in the present way. Therefore, some spacious accommodation should be provided for him. The Trade Commissioner's Office should have as a part of it an emporium on a large scale together with a museum of latest manufactures from India. India is making progress in various industrial lines by leaps and bounds. The Trade Commissioner's office should be attached to the office of the High Commissioner, as it would be in the fitness of things from many points of view. The office of the Trade Commissioner should be removed to Nairobi. I am sure that Nairobi being not only the Capital of Kenya but also because of the Governor's Conference Secretariat being there, the Trade Commissioner will be able to serve Indian Commercial communities of the three territories to a far greater extent. Besides Nairobi is such a central place that it is easily accessible to Mombasa, Dar-es-salaam and Kampala, which are the main centres of commerce and industry and trade in East Africa. At present the Trade Commissioner cannot contact the high Government officials, as Mombasa being only the Headquarters of a provincial Commissioner, the Colonial Secretariat is a little too far away from him. At present Uganda and Tanganyika which control a lion's share of trade and industry are not getting any benefit from the Trade Commissioner being far away at the coast.

#### **Indians in Belgian Congo**

At Daressalaam I had raised with the Indian Merchants Chamber the question of disabilities of Indian traders in the far

off territory of the Belgian Congo in the very heart of Central Africa, Daressalaam being the principal port for the Congo. I tried to study the hardships of the Congo Indians and found that their main grievances with the Belgian authorities are with regard to the right to enter the Congo and imposition of segregation. In the Congo the Governor-General can act according to his sweet free will in the matter of Immigration. I have been told that the Congo authorities never condescend to send replies to the Indian applicants either in the negative or in the affirmative for months and months together. They simply ignore all correspondence for entry permits in the case of Indians. I understand that an entry permit is issued in very exceptional circumstances only. Thus Indian trade in the Congo notwithstanding big possibilities can make no headway under the virtual ban on Indian Immigration operating as at present. The second important grievance which the Indian traders in Congo have to undergo is that they have to reside and trade in separate locations as in the case of South African Indians. This insulting treatment ought to cease as it is galling to the self respect of India. No racialistic segregation should be tolerated by the Government of India and immediate steps must be taken to redress these grievances by approaching the Belgian Government.

#### **The Congo Basin Treaty**

In the above connection I must draw the attention of the Government of India to the fact that the Congo Basin Treaty under which Central Africa and East Africa have agreed to allow the nationals of the nine signatories to the Treaty (including of course India as part of the British Empire) is shortly coming up for revision and India will get a fresh opportunity to enter into that treaty as an independent and a sovereign nation. Thus, the territory of the Belgian Congo which is most thinly populated and is most fertile may have to adjust its relations with India inasmuch as the balance of trade for Belgium is in Belgium's favour as India is that tiny country's great customer. The Government of India in the External Affairs Department

should take up therefore the question of Indian commercial and other rights with the Belgian Foreign Office forthwith and help the Congo Indian traders who are very eager to push Indian manufactures in that vast territory. As India at present stands in need of foreign markets for our newly established industries it is very desirable that the Congo market be tapped by the Trade Commissioner in East Africa.

### Italian East Africa

I cannot help referring to the Indians in Italian East Africa which is situated just in the neighbourhood of the British East Africa. As the entire Italian territory in Africa has been occupied by the British with the help of the Indian forces, it is appropriate that the present Indian interest should be allowed to be strengthened by fresh Indian Immigration which is prohibited at the present. So far the ex-Italian Colonies are militarily governed and the Indian representatives at the Peace Conference at Paris have already voiced the feeling of the Government of India in this matter. After the first world War India could not assume the mandatory powers over Tanganyika as India was herself a subject nation. But now the Government of India can certainly approach the U. N. O. and can demand some of the empty spaces for colonisation by her own people. The Italian East Africa constitutes such an area to be placed under the Trusteeship administration. Sometime back the Bengal Famine Commission observed that there was too much pressure on agricultural land in India and to lessen such pressure, some way must be found out for the surplus population of India to settle somewhere beyond the shores of India. The Italian East Africa is an ideal country for colonisation by the Indians being nearer India and even from a military point of view Indian influence there will be a contributory factor for the preservation of world peace.

### INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

I have discovered during my tour that our countrymen are in a fix as to their probable status after the emergence of India

as an independent nation by June 1948. All senior leaders of the Indian community discussed this question with me as they were of opinion that if they retained Indian nationality they would be treated as foreigners or aliens and would be deprived of their political rights. Some of them are of opinion that in the event of their accepting British citizenship they will be able to maintain their present political status. I could understand their anxiety as their children have been born and bred in East Africa. I, however, explained to them that the Government of India would not be able to protect their interests in a vigorous way when they cease to be Indian nationals. I added that in spite of some of the Indians choosing to retain British citizenship the policy of racial discrimination was not likely to disappear overnight and in that case India will not be able to help them. The Mother Country could only assist them if they are prepared to remain Indian nationals. I, therefore, suggested to the Indian leaders that the Indian community should retain their Indian nationality. Otherwise, they will be placed in the unenviable position of political orphans despised on the one hand by racial administrators of East Africa and on the other hand the Government of India will not be able to advocate their case.

It is essential for the Constituent Assembly to invite leaders of Indians abroad including Indian spokesmen from East Africa so as to insert in the contemplated Indo-British treaty specific clauses with a view to safeguard the interest and status of Indians abroad on the basis of a most favoured nation principle. To allay the fears entertained in East Africa in the event of India becoming a sovereign Republic, the Interim Government should issue assurances to the Indian nationals abroad that they will have same rights as British Nationals in India will enjoy under the reciprocal arrangement hammered out by the Constituent Assembly with the representatives of the British Government at the time of the impending treaty between the two countries.

### A Comparison with West Africa

I have to add that the British authorities do not recognise the valuable services which our people are rendering at present to the uplift of the African communities apart from the past services the Indian community has rendered in opening up East Africa to civilisation. However, some able Colonial authors have testified that the rapid progress which East Africa is making is due to the presence of Indians. These authorities hold that the progress made by the West African natives after centuries has been made by the East African natives within as many decades only because of the presence of Indian traders in East Africa. Even in South Africa and in South-West Africa the natives have failed to reach the standard to which East African natives have attained simply owing to the fact that excepting Natal, the Union of South Africa has no considerable Indian population in the Transvaal, the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State. A high official who has been transferred to West Africa after a long stay in East Africa has lately confessed that the East African prosperity of the native peoples is attributable to the presence of Indians. In my own opinion the Indians as a race are not competitors of the natives but they are the real people who truly co-operate with the natives as they are imbued with the spirit of the dictum that commerce is a great pioneer of civilisation. It is the Indian who is humanising the African by his activities as a true trader.

### East Africa and India

Before concluding this letter I take this opportunity of making a strong appeal to the Government to adopt every means by which the trade between the two countries should be developed further. I would go even to the extent of treating East Africa as a part of India and thus giving special preference by granting more licences, permits, quotas etc, to East Africa. In this connection India must consider herself fortunate in having at her disposal a large number of her countrymen whose services must be utilised to develop Indian trade and industry for which the



people and the Government naturally aspire. In view of geographical proximity and historical connections East Africa should be considered by the Government of India as an overseas extension of India herself.

I would now request you to bring this Report with my best respects to the notice of the Honourable Members in charge of your respective Departments.

I beg to remain, Sir,

Yours truly,

(Sd.) DAWOOD HAJEE NASSER,  
PRESIDENT

Notes regarding public activities of Mr. Dawood Hajee Nasser, President, The Africa & Overseas Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, while on Tour in East African territories from 24-3-47 to 25-4-47.

**13-3-47**

1.00 p.m. Sailed by s. s. "Rizwani" from Bombay and made statement to the press copy of which attached herewith.

**24-3-47**

5.00 p.m. Reached Mombasa. Received by the Hon. Mr. A. B. Patel, the Hon. Dr. Rana, also Presidents of the Indian Association and Indian Merchants' Chamber and many leading Indian citizens of Mombasa.

**25-3-47**

6.00 p.m. Invited to attend the meeting of the Indian Association in connection with discussion on Paper No. 210. The meeting passed a resolution against its acceptance.

8.00 p.m. At a lunch given to me at Manor Hotel, where leading Europeans, Arabs and Indians were present, I spoke on the progress that India was making in the field of Commerce, Industries and Politics and assured the audience that independence would be secured before June 1948.

**26-3-47**

11.00 a.m. Had a conference with the Hon. Mr. Patel and the Hon. Dr. Rana lasting for two hours and discussed the general situation regarding immigration, segregation, agriculture, Hindu-Muslim unity and Paper No. 210.

4.00 p.m. Discussions with the Hon. Dr. Rana on the above points.

**27-3-47**

11.00 a.m. Discussed with the Hon. Mr. Patel the general situation of the country.

5.00 p.m. Invited by Mombasa Chamber of Commerce (European) where I spoke on the cotton textile position of India and the sacrifice that India was making in allowing exports of cotton piecegoods. Last year about forty Indian merchants resigned en bloc in connection with fixing of ratio of European and non-European members, and I drew the attention of the President the necessity of inviting them back, and settling the disputed points also to the satisfaction of all.

5.30 p.m. Attended meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber and spoke to them with regard to Industrial, Commercial and Export position of India, particularly with regard to cotton piecegoods and other controlled articles.

### 28-3-47

5.15 p.m. Entertained to tea party by Indian Merchants of Mombasa where in a cosmopolitan and influential gathering of Europeans, Indians, Arabs and Africans I stressed the need of a cordial relationship between India and Great Britain in the interest of both and the world peace and the necessity of harmony amongst different communities in East Africa.

### 30-3-47

10.00 a.m. Attended public meeting at Regal Theatre of the Indian citizens of Mombasa to protest against Paper No. 210 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Yusufali E. Jivanjee where both the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, Hon. Mr. Patel and Hon. Dr. Rana spoke in details on the various drawbacks of the Paper. I also spoke on the subject advising the East African Government to take serious consideration of the march of events that are taking place in India and warned them against embarking on measures affecting Indians adversely.

31-3-47

4.00 p.m. Before proceeding to the upcountry I had a conference of Indian leaders, viz. the Hon. Mr. Patel, the Hon. Dr. Rana, Mr. R. B. Pandya, Editor of Kenya Daily Mail and Mr. A. H. Noormahomed, President, Indian Association at my office for one hour.

1-4-47

7.00 a.m. Started for Moshi by car and reached there at 6.00 p. m.

2-4-47

3.00 p.m. At a meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber I delivered a speech for 45 minutes on Indian Politics, Commerce and Industry, explaining to the audience the Indian situation. Later discussed the supply position of India. Left for Arusha at 7 p.m. which was reached at 9 p.m.

3-4-47

10.00 a.m. At a meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber spoke for 30 minutes on the Indian situation generally and later discussed with them Indian supply position, left for Nairobi at 1 p.m. by car and reached there at 8 p.m.

4-4-47

9.00 a.m. Mr. Chunilal Kirparam, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Bachulal Gathani, President of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Nairobi. Mr. Vidyarhi, Editor "Colonial Times", Mr. Ajitsingh, Editor of "Forward" called on me at my residence and discussed political and economic situation for one hour.

- 1.00 p.m. Entertained to lunch by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, where I spoke with great force on the absolute necessity of the Indian united front at all costs at the critical time and on Immigration and Paper No. 210.
- 3.00 p.m. Discussed the present situation with Mr. Gauttam (Bar-at-Law), Mr. Ramesh (Advocate), and Mr. Nazerath, Secretary of the Indian National Congress.
- 8.00 p.m. My Nairobi host Dr. Dhanji invited Mr. Shamsuddin the veteran Indian leader to dine with us where we discussed for two hours the political situation of the Colony.

#### 5-4-47

- 9.00 a.m. Had talks with Mr. Bachulal Gathani and Mr. Chuni-lal Kirparam.
- 10.00 a.m. Talks with Mr. Shamsuddin for one and half hours.
- 4.30 p.m. Informal meeting called by the Congress at Desai Memorial Hall where Hindus of different shades of opinion, some Muslims and Sikhs were assembled; the principal Muslim element being absent—discussed with them the political problems and the proposal of the unofficial members in connection with Indian communal representation in Legislative Council and Nairobi Municipality. It lasted till 7 p.m. My proposal was that the Congress should appoint five representatives by way of a Round Table Conference, provided this proposal of mine was acceptable to the Muslim leaders whom I was to approach later on as some of the Muslim leaders were away from the town on my return from Uganda. Sir Maharaj Singh had practically succeeded in bridging the differences between the two major communities but owing to shortage of time he could not complete the task. Hence, I thought it worth while to make an attempt in that direction.

8.00 p.m. Dinner by Mr. Dattoo where Indians of all communities and shades of opinion were present. I took the opportunity of again appealing to those present to unite in the name of India which had a favourable effect on the audience.

6-4-47

11.00 a.m. Mr. Malik, Mr. Jamaluddin, Mr. Bhaiji and Mr. Jivraj Meherally members of Central Muslim Association called on me and put before me the Muslim point of view in connection with representation in Legislative Council and the Municipality.

5.00 p.m. Invited to tea by Dr. Hassan Nathoo, acting President of the Central Muslim Association which is a powerful and respectable Muslim body, where other Muslims also were present. It was decided to discuss this question with representatives of Muslims at a dinner by Dr. Hassan on 13th April on my return from Uganda.

7-4-47

10.30 a.m. Left for Kampala by train.

8-4-47

5.00 p.m. Arrived at Kampala where representatives of all the communities received me on the station.

9-4-47

3.30 p.m. Invited by Kampala Chamber of Commerce (European) where I spoke on the Industrial, Commercial, Supply and Export position as at present in India.

9.30 p.m. Attended a general meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber where I spoke for an hour on the Political, Commercial, Export and Supply position of India in details and appealed to the members to maintain unity among the various communities which was happily in a satisfactory state and to do their best for the uplift of Africans who were going to be important factor shortly.

10-4-47

1-00 p.m. Entertained to lunch where in a house of 100 nearly 40 were European Officers and 10 leading Africans including Prime Minister of H. H. the Kabaka of Buganda. Utilizing this unique opportunity I made a forceful speech appreciating the harmony which existed in Uganda between various communities and appealing to all to foster goodwill towards India which was going to perform a very important role in International affairs after having attained independence, owing to its great manufacturing and consuming power, putting various figures in support of my statement. This had a remarkable effect on the audience who appreciated my remarks very much.

5-00 p.m. Entertained to a largely attended tea party by Indian Merchants' Chamber, Kampala, where I addressed, congratulating them for their unity and asking them to be prepared for any eventuality that might arise in connection with the East African Government continuing anti-Indian measures.

1-14-47

12-30 p.m. Invited to lunch by H. E. the Governor of Uganda at Entebbe with the Hon. Mr. Jaffer where I discussed political and economic questions with the Governor. With regard to the Immigration Bill, I requested his Excellency to drop the contemplated Bill entirely or in the alternative to postpone the Bill for a year or so when India attained independence, to which he did not agree and told me that a new bill would be introduced on the lines suggested by Raja Sir Maharajsingh. He also justified the necessity of Paper No. 210. Discrimination against Indians was not so marked in Uganda as in the adjoining Colony of Kenya. However, even here Government was trying to eliminate Indian middlemen as much as possible under the plea of helping the Africans.

5-45 p.m. Reached Jinja. where I attended a tea party organised by Indian Merchants there and spoke for 45 minutes on political and economic problems.

### 12-4-47

9-00 a.m. Visited Kakira Sugar Works at the invitation of Mr. Muljibhai Madhavani, the Proprietor, which produces 150 tons of sugar per day.

### 13-4-47

4-45 p.m. Arrived in Nairobi and straightaway drove to the tea party organised by the Indian National Congress where I met a large cosmopolitan gathering.

8-00 p.m. Attended dinner by Dr. Hassan Nathoo, where representatives of the Central Muslim Association had been invited. I had rather a delicate duty to perform, yet I was successful in inspiring confidence with regard to my object and after much discussion they agreed to meet representatives of the Congress at Mombasa after having secured the necessary mandate from the Conference of Central Muslim Association which was to hold its session in Mombasa about ten days hence. I was satisfied with the preliminary acceptance of my proposal and informed Mr. Nazarath, Secretary of the Congress, accordingly at 10 p. m.

### 14-4-47

5-00 p.m. Left Nairobi for Mombasa by train as could not secure air accommodation for Daressalaam.

### 15-4-47

Arrived in Mombasa by train at 8-30 a.m.

### 16-4-47

Flew to Daressalaam which was reached in the evening after experiencing adverse weather at Tanga and Zanzibar



where we had to make emergency landings. I was received by Indian leaders of all communities numbering about 100 at the Daressalaam aerodrome.

### 17-4-47

11-00 a.m. Mr. Anjaria, President Hindu Mandal met me and explained the position of his mandal. This mandal has separated from the Indian Association since last three years and I wanted to see that it is merged with the present body.

3-00 p.m. Mr. D. K. Patel, President Indian Association and Dr. Malik both ex-M. L. Cs called on me and explained the position of the Association in connection with the Hindu Mandal.

5-00 p.m. Entertained to tea by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, where four ex-M. L. Cs and one sitting M. L. C. spoke seeking my advice in connection with important problems. The principal complaint they made was with regard to compulsory association with Kenya under the pretext of common economic administrative services violating Tanganyika's status as a Trust Territory to be governed according to the charter of the UNO. I spoke for an hour on the points raised by them. With regard to the alleged breach of the principle of trusteeship I promised to place the matter before the Government of India. The position of the Indians after India having attained independence was agitating their mind very seriously. They were under the impression that if they agreed to accept Indian nationality they would lose their political rights. While advising them to stick to Indian citizenship I assured them that the Government of India would protect their rights at all costs.

### 18-4-47

4-00 p.m. Entertained to tea by the Exchange Bank of India and Africa Ltd. Being one of their Directors I took the

opportunity of the presence of many commercial and industrial interests to impress on them the advance that India was making in the fields of Commerce, Trade and Industry including Insurance, Banking and Shipping, and appealed to them to follow her example in East Africa.

6-00 p.m. Mr. Anjaria, President Hindu Mandal and two Sikh gentlemen called on me in connection with my efforts of merging the Hindu Mandal with the Indian Association. Raja Sir Maharajsingh made a heroic effort in this connection but owing to limited time at his disposal he could not succeed. The same situation faced me as Mr. Anjaria wanted to take mandate from his Managing Committee for which there was no time as I was to leave Daressalaam within two days, but I requested these gentlemen to always support the Indian Association which represented the Indians for the political and economic rights. It appeared that Hindu Mandal is carrying a little weight in the official circles.

8-30 p.m. At a dinner by Mr. Khimjee ex-M. L. C. where prominent European officials and businessmen and all leading Indians were present, I spoke on the great importance of an Independent India who would be a powerful ally of Britain in the East. Quoted facts and figures of cotton textile production, iron and steel, wheat, tea, jute and other industrial activities and described India's great potentialities on account of her immense resources.

19-4-47

9-30 a.m. I met the head of the Economic Control Board and discussed import and export questions with particular reference to Indian Cotton Piecegoods.

10-00 a.m. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Tanganyika extended me an invitation to interview him at the Secretariat. Thus I had the opportunity to discuss questions with a Colonial Official next only to H. E. the Governor. He seemed to be much pleased with the informative speech made by me the previous night. He inquired of me how I arrived at the future figure of India's population growing into 1000 millions within 50 years when India was suffering from malaria, famines, epidemics and other diseases. I informed him that an increase of 17% in every census per decade as at present would bring the increase to the figure mentioned by me. He was rather pessimistic about India's independence in view of communal position. I, however, told him that it was only a passing phase in the life of India.

11-00 a.m. The Indian Merchants' Chamber convened a special general meeting to acquaint me with their difficulties. Some of their grievances deserve the immediate attention of the Government of India with regard to packing and quality of goods. Daressalaam being the principal port of the Belgian Congo, I raised the question of the disabilities of the Indian traders there and wanted the Chamber to enlighten me by sending me a separate memorandum which could be forwarded to the Government of India.

20-4-47

10-00 a.m. The Youth League of Daressalaam who mainly devote their energies to cultural activities and aim at cosmopolitan amity invited me to give a discourse on "The duties of the youth". I congratulated them on their objective and advised them to concentrate on social and educational endeavours with particular reference to the African welfare as also Indian National unity. The membership of the Youth League is open to both the

sexes as their ideal is equality between man and woman.

12-00 a.m. The principal oil interests of Daressalaam invited me to hear their grievances due to Government interference whereby a very little margin was left for them.

21-4-47

10-00 a.m. Mr. D. K. Patel and Dr. Malik (both ex-M. L. Cs) were received by me. They explained to me the implications of the big groundnuts scheme launched by the Tanganyika Government wherein Indians will have no interest as the entire conception of the scheme is pro-European.

3-00 p.m. Sailed for Mombasa by s. s. "Amra".

23-4-47

1-00 p.m. Dinner at Majestic Hotel where I stressed the necessity of establishing an Indo-African Club so as to enable the African intelligentsia to mix with us on an equal footing in the field of sports and other activities.

5-00 p.m. Mass meeting under the auspices of Indian Association and Indian Merchants' Chamber at Kaderbhoy Hall. I made here a comprehensive speech as the audience was a very big one. Also appealed to the Government to drop the Immigration measures as well as the Colonial Paper No. 210. and sounded a note of warning to the Government that nationalist and independent India cannot tolerate further encroachments on Indian rights.

24-4-47

9-00 a.m. Met the Provincial Commissioner and had talk with him on the general situation.

10-00 a.m. Representative of the Mombasa Times (European paper) called on me and sought enlightenment on Indian

situation. I gave him details regarding Political and Economic position of India as at present as also in the near future with facts and figures.

25-4-47

9-00 a.m. Sailed by s. s. "Amra" for Bombay Many leaders and merchants bade farewell on board the steamer. Made the accompanying statement to the press before leaving the beautiful shores of Mombasa. I was impressed with the great reception that I met everywhere in appreciation of the little services that I rendered as President of Africa and Overseas Merchants' Chamber.

28-4-47

From my enquiries to the local Indian merchants in Seychelles, I could gather that stringent immigration rules are enforced in this island and substitute staff is seldom allowed after repeated representations.

30-4-47

Had friendly discussions with Capt. Ainson, on board s. s. "Amra" with regard to lack of facilities for deck passengers generally, and impressed upon him the necessity for some of the B. I. ships touching Mogadishu en route to Mombasa.

5-5-47

Reached Bombay. Made the accompanying statement to the press. My only regret is that I could not pay a visit to Zanzibar although I was eager to visit the ancient town in view of pressing telegraphic invitations from the Indian National Association and the Chamber of Commerce (European) as it was impossible to secure air accommodation and no ship was scheduled to call at Zanzibar.

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Press Statement No. 1.

## Mr. Nasser on a visit to East Africa:

Will study Immigration issue on the spot.

Bombay. 13-3-47

The President of Africa & Overseas Merchants' Chamber, Mr. Dawood Hajee Nasser, left Bombay for East Africa by s. s. "Rizwani" on Thursday morning on a business trip. He will also study the economic situation of the Indians. Mr. Nasser in his interview with a representative of the Associated Press of India said :

"I am leaving for East Africa after a full decade. However, this time, my intention in undertaking a short journey to East Africa where I have business interest since last fifty years is to respond to repeated invitations from friends and organisations alike who consider that a crisis is fast approaching jeopardising the fate of Indian settlement both present and prospective. Having already studied the report of Raja Sir Maharaj Singh recently submitted to the Interim Government of India, I can testify to the gravity of the situation created by the impending Immigration Bill. East Africa is not only within the economic orbit of India being a near outlet for India but was destined to be a natural colony for the surplus population of India in as much as it was developed by the sons of India in the past. But imperialism has deprived India of her sole overseas moral "possession" by reserving the Kenya Highlands for the exploitation by the European (not only British) races to the exclusion of even the African natives. The South African policy of Segregation or colour bar is slowly but surely taking root in East Africa. All this is sufficient to startle a person like myself who has taken upon himself the task of serving Indians abroad generally and East African Indians particularly. It is therefore that I propose to tour all the four territories of East Africa viz. the Colony of Kenya, the Protectorate of Uganda, the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika and the

Sultanate of Zanzibar. I shall be back in Bombay by the beginning of May and shall certainly acquaint the people and Government of India with my impressions of the conditions of our compatriots in East Africa.

I still think that the Socialist Government in England who are trying to solve great problems like the problems of Egypt, Palestine, India and Burma, will do justice to the Indian community in East Africa. In my opinion, Indians are at least entitled to equality with other immigrant races if not to priority in view of special historical and geographical connection with East Africa.

Given equal opportunities, Indians will be an asset to East Africa and I believe that both the Congress and the League as also the Princes will save East Africa for India, since even the Bengal Famine Commission has the other day seriously suggested that India must have a place in the Sun to lessen abnormal pressure on the land. I therefore appeal to the conscience of the British people to see that the contemplated immigration restrictions be withdrawn forthwith. It is a hopeful sign that the Bill has been withheld for the time being after the first reading in the Legislature."

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Press Statement No. 2.

### Anti-Indian Measures in East Africa.

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**Dawood Hajee Nasser Urges Drastic Steps By Interim Govt.**

From "Bombay Chronicle" 7-5-47,

Bombay Tuesday.

Mr. Dawood Hajee Nasser, President of the Africa and Overseas Merchants' Chamber who returned to Bombay on Monday morning from East Africa, in an interview with a "Chronicle" representative said: "East Africa is a vast country nearly one third the size of India with fertile soil, agreeable climate, full of immense

potentialities and having a long connection with India owing to geographical proximity. Indians have played a predominant part in the development of the country in the past and even at present East Africa owes its industrial and economic progress and prosperity to Indian initiative and enterprise to a substantial extent. It is, therefore, unfortunate that since the last three decades systematic anti-Indian measures have been adopted by the British Colonial authorities who could never have been there but for the presence of Indians who had established themselves there prior to the advent of the first British officer sent there by the Government of India some 80 years ago under the plea of extending protection to Indian merchants as British subjects.

### Indians' Hardships

"However, throughout my tour in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika where I met the Governor of Uganda, High Government officials and Indian and African leaders, I found the Indian community to be in a state of great anxiety owing to present harsh Immigration regulations to be reinforced by prospective drastic Immigration restrictions coupled with the announcement of Colonial Paper by which common economic administration of the three territories is proposed under a Central Assembly with a European majority and thus simultaneously dragging the Trust Territory of Tanganyika and Protectorate of Uganda under the influence of Kenya white settlers although this economic union is bitterly resented and is strongly opposed by Indians, Africans and Arabs. It is significant that such measures are hurriedly announced on the eve of Indian independence simply with a view to achieving imperialistic dream before India becomes a sovereign and Independent power.

"The Government of India must take a vigorous attitude and immediately approach the British Government to call a Round Table Conference between its representatives and the representatives of the British Government before India is obliged to take the question of East Africa like that of South Africa to the U. N. O.



It will be a disaster of first magnitude for our countrymen if the Interim Government of India fail to help the Indian community at this critical juncture owing to its pre-occupation at home.

### **Anti-Indian Policy**

“Owing to the continued anti-Indian policy of the East African Governments as also owing to the absolute and immediate necessity of protecting huge Indian interests which at present are at stake and with a view to creating smooth atmosphere, it is essential that a High Commissioner with an all-India status and with diplomatic experience should be immediately appointed by the Government of India. Otherwise I am afraid the Indo-East African relations are sure to deteriorate further and the Indian interests will suffer immensely without the presence on the spot of an able representative of the Government of India at this grave juncture.

“With regard to commercial relations between India and East Africa I find with great disappointment that the volume of trade developed with great difficulty and sacrifice during the war is definitely deteriorating. The East African Indian commercial organisations are unanimous that the Government of India should despatch an influential Trade Delegation without the least delay and my Chamber has been persistently pleading to send such a delegation since last three years to East Africa and the Middle East countries. To the latter a Trade Delegation has already been sent but so far East Africa has been neglected, even though the Governor of Kenya has welcomed this idea in his speech before the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry some time ago. East Africa constitutes a natural and near market for Indian manufactures which must be maintained and developed with special efforts by the Government of India.”

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Press Statement No. 3.

From "Daily Chronicle" Nairobi, Kenya.

Dated, 16-4-1947—Mombasa, Monday.

Sheth Dawoodbhai Hajee Nasser, President, Africa & Overseas Merchants' Chamber Bombay, having been approached by the press representatives on board S. S. Amra before he left this country, said :

"During my full one month's stay in East Africa I have already given my advice to my countrymen in East Africa through at least two scores of speeches delivered by me in various towns such as Mombasa, Nairobi, Moshi, Arusha, Kampala and Dares-salaam. I therefore should like to address a piece of counsel to the East African Governments at the time of leaving these beautiful shores.

"I look upon East Africa as a sacred trust for the civilised nations of the world and as such East Africa should constitute a model region where the principles of Internationalism are allowed to have a chance to prove their worth. In other words, East Africa has got to be administered not in old Imperialistic ways but must be governed according to the best traditions of the labour party who profess to be Socialistic. Hence the cult of Colour Bar ought to be scrupulously eschewed in all shapes and forms.

"There are two immediate questions to be decided by the East African Governments in consultation with the Secretary of State for Colonies: The first question is in connection with Immigration while the second issue is with regard to the Colonial Paper No. 210. Both these problems will require statesmanship. Otherwise, I fear, East Africa will cease to be an International Territory at least in spirit if not in letter. It behoves therefore the European Community as well as the East African Governments to choose between Imperialism and Internationalism. I have tried to

study the Colonial History of this Continent. The great Cecil Rhodes with his vision could see during the early stages of Colonisation in this dark Continent that unless his dictum of 'A vote for every civilised man could be accepted, the natives of Africa could never be uplifted.'

"I therefore urge all concerned to at least make beginning in that direction on howsoever moderate a scale, since it will be impossible later on to dethrone racialism once it is allowed to poison public life in this Continent.

In my considered opinion the East African Governments should immediately seek some measure of agreement between Europeans and non-Europeans by Round Table Conference on both the questions of Immigration and Closer Union."

Press Cutting No. 1.  
**Interview with Reuter in London**  
 From 'The Bharat Jyoti, Bombay.

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**East Africa Ruled on Racial Bias**

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London, July 5.

"An open door to East Africa is vitally necessary if India is to maintain her convections with East Africa", Dawood Haji Nassar, one of the Indian delegates to the International Labour Conference at Geneva told Reuter on arrival here today.

Haji Nassar is the President of the African and Overseas Merchants' Chamber, the Indian Silk Merchants' Chamber, the Oil Merchants' Chamber and also holds banking, textile, industrial and other directorships.

Haji Nassar visited East Africa in March this year on behalf of the Government of India as a member of the India Government's Export Advisory Council, the Textile Control Board and the Piecegoods and Yarns Advisory Committees.

"The powerful British settler community," Nassar said, "have made East Africa a corner-stone of their anti-Indian policy to attack the Indian immigrant.

"We were promised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the immigration restrictions would automatically lapse after the war," he said. This solemn pledge has been unceremoniously broken. The East African Government attempted to replace the war measure with a new immigration ordinance before the latter was due to lapse.

"After seeing things for myself, I am more than convinced that there is no earthly reason why any immigration restrictions should be imposed. I believe that with the huge construction programmes about to be launched by East African Government,

new contingents of Indian artisans and technical and skilled Indian personnel will be immediately required if the ambitious schemes now in the offing are at all to materialise."

Referring to the policy of the Labour Government towards the question of parity between the three major communities of East Africa, Haji Nassar strongly attacked the attitude and policy of the British Colonial Secretary, saying, "It is a new attempt on the part of the British settlers to save Tanganyika for the British Empire at the point of the British bayonet."

Haji Nassar said that the general trade policy of the East African administration was based on racial bias. "While every patronage," he added, "is extended to European ventures, the Indian enterprises have to fight their way on their own merits. Some of the district officers are openly hostile and in the name of African welfare try to administer the law in a way which hinders at every step the Indian efforts in the fields of commerce and economics. This attitude is more marked in Kenya where it is very difficult to secure any new trade licence."—Reuter.

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Press Cutting No. 2.

### **Sheth Dawoodbhai's Advice Appreciated**

From the Daily Chronicle, June 20, Nairobi.

### **Indian Status In East Africa.**

The efforts of Seth Dawood Haji Nassar in the interests of the Indians residing outside India, and particularly in the interest of the Indian Community in the East African territories, appear to us to be as well directed as they are sincere and persistent. Within the brief space of time that has elapsed between that gallant gentleman's return to India from this country and now, he has already spoken eloquently and written voluminously in the Mother Country on our behalf and through a diligently prepared Report regarding us, has striven

emphatically to focuss the attention of the Indian Government on the more glaring of our disabilities here. The commercial community has in particular been in his thoughts.

In his latest Press statement made in New Delhi, Mr. Nasser treats of a subject of exceptional importance. The question of the status of East African Indians, once India has achieved complete independence, has exercised the minds of almost all of us at one time or another. Sometime ago Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as Member for External Affairs, made a passing reference to this vital problem, but did not deal with the subject at sufficient length. Mr. Nasser has now pressed for an early decision in the matter.

The Indian community here is, as has been so aptly pointed out by Mr. Nasser, faced with a dual dilemma. There are two obvious choices; but none of them are easy of choosing. Should the East African Indians elect to remain Indian citizens, they become aliens in this country. Should they, however, decide in favour of East African citizenship, they expose themselves to the almost certain danger of for ever remaining second-class citizens. The disabilities under which they now suffer, would become permanent.

Mr. Nasser suggests an excellent way out. The question, he proposes, should be submitted to the Indian Constituent Assembly with a view to making arrangements for a special treaty with the British Government, by means of which "favoured nation" status be conferred on all Indians domiciled in British territory throughout the world. In simpler language this means that the Indian people outside India should enjoy citizenship on the same basis on which Britishers did till now in India. It would thus be a kind of reciprocity treaty. This seems to be a very practicable solution to what had till now been considered a very complex problem. This solution will, of course, meet with deep resentment from the local whites; but, then, what can you expect?

Press Cutting No: 3

From the Mombasa Times, Mombasa

BOMBAY MAGNATE'S E. A. TOUR

India and Britain Should get Together

Criticisms of Anti-Indian Laws and Uncultivated Land

25th Friday April 1947.

"INDIA is now on the verge of attaining independence, and it is essential that Great Britain, in the larger interest of world peace and in the interest of herself, should enter into a full and free alliance with India, thus securing a very powerful ally."

This statement was made by Sheth Dawood Haji Nasser, an Indian commercial magnate, in an interview with the 'Mombasa Times' yesterday, on the eve of his return to Bombay aboard the Amra, following a month's tour of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, when he visited Mombasa, Moshi, Arusha, Nairobi, Kampala, Jinja, Entebbe, Tanga and Dar es Salaam.

Mr. Nasser is a man with wide-spread business interests. He is a member of the Indian Government's Export Advisory Council, the Textile Control Board and the Piecegoods and Yarn Advisory Committee. In addition he is President of the Indian Silk Merchants' Chamber, the Oil Merchants' Chamber and African and Overseas Merchants' Chamber, and also holds banking, textile, industrial and other directorships.

While in East Africa Mr. Nasser received a cable from the Government of India stating that he had been appointed to represent his country at the International Labour Conference to be held at Geneva in June.

#### Business and Politics

Having had business connections with East Africa for the past 50 years, Mr. Nasser decided to come and study the economic and political problems of Indians on the spot. Although at pains

to make clear that he was a businessman and not a politician, he explained that the two were so closely interwoven that it was impossible to separate them.

After meeting Government officials and various Indian leaders in the three territories, and having studied the situation at first hand, Mr. Nasser says he will be in a position to put his impressions before the Government of India and the Indian public on his return home.

Dealing first with the economic question, he declared:—

“So far as the potentialities and prospects of these territories are concerned, I think they have a very bright future, but the industrial position is not satisfactory. In that respect these territories are in their infancy. The only industry worth noting—with the possible exception of oil—is sugar, and that has developed to a fairly large extent. It is a land of vast potentialities, waiting for development.”

Drawing attention to the large areas of uncultivated land, Mr. Nasser said: “The world today is suffering from a terrible food shortage and it is the duty of the Government, as well as the landowners, to cultivate the land and do everything in their power to contribute their fair share to the hungry peoples of the world.”

### The Indian Problem

On the political aspect Mr. Nasser contended that slowly but steadily anti-Indian laws, many of which were not apparent but which hit Indians very hard, were being introduced with a view to eliminating Indian trade and influence as much as possible.

“I am a very staunch believer in Anglo-Indian friendship,” he declared, “and in my opinion the Government here should view the Indian problem with a long vision, India is now on the verge of attaining independence and it is essential that Great Britain, in the larger interest of world peace and in the interest of herself, should enter into a full and free alliance with India, thus securing a very powerful ally.”



"In this connection I would like to mention the progress and potentialities of India. At her present birthrate India's 400,000,000 population will, in the next 50 years, increase to a thousand million. India's numerical strength, with the resulting manpower, played an important part in the last war—a valuable asset for any country, particularly as India is one of the greatest producing, manufacturing and consuming countries in the world.

"I would like to quote some figures in support of my contention. In a year India produces the following: 6,000,000 bales of cotton—the second largest in the world; 3,500,000 tons of ground-nuts—the biggest of its kind in the world; 1,500,000 tons of jute—practically a world monopoly; 650,000,000 lbs. of tea—the world's highest, from which 400,000,000 lbs. is exported, the bulk to Great Britain and 1,500,000 tons of sugar.

### India's Immense Wealth

"In addition iron and steel is manufactured on a very large scale, Messrs. Tata's concern being the biggest of its kind in the British Empire, producing between two and three million tons a year. Apart from that, a plant has recently been installed for manufacturing locomotives and rolling stock. It will be in full production within a year.

"This shows the country's immense wealth, and it would be in the interest of England and India as well to enter into a treaty which would be of great advantage to both.

Concluding, Mr. Nasser appealed to both the Government and the European settlers to adopt a long-sighted policy, especially as the countries of the world appeared to be dragging themselves towards World War III.

"It is such a pity," he said, "that our differences cannot be settled in a fair and reasonable way, when there are so many wider issues at stake."

A farewell luncheon party, given by Messrs. A. H. Kaderbhoy, A. H. Nurmohamed and M. R. Abdulla Kanji, in honour of Mr. Nasser, was held at the Majestic Hotel on Wednesday.

Mr. Nasser spoke of the importance of increasing trade relations with India and advised the Indian community to maintain a more friendly and close contact with the African community.

At night, under the auspices of the Indian Association and the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Mr. Nasser addressed a public meeting in the Kaderbhoy Hall, describing his African tour.