

1. LETTER TO M. M. BHOWNAGGREE¹

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 23, 1904

TO
SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE, M.P.
196 CROMWELL ROAD
LONDON, ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Arthur Lawley, while passing through Heidelberg, in reply to an Indian deputation which presented His Excellency last week with an address,² said in effect that the liberty of the Indian to trade unrestricted in virtue of the decision in the test case will not be tolerated and that Mr. Lyttelton has already been approached with a view to sanctioning legislation in the desired direction.

The position of the Indian as defined in Law 3 of 1885 as amended in 1886 and interpreted in the light of the test case is this:

- (1) An Indian can immigrate into the Colony without restriction.
- (2) He can trade anywhere he likes in the Colony. Locations may be set apart for him but the law cannot force him to reside only in Locations, as there is no sanction provided in the law for it.
- (3) He cannot become a burgher.
- (4) He cannot own landed property except in Locations.
- (5) He must pay a registration fee of £3 on entering the Colony.

With the exception, therefore, of the prohibition as to holding landed property, even in virtue of the above law the condition of the Indian is now not altogether precarious.

Freedom to immigrate, however, has been almost absolutely taken away by making what is, after all, an unjust use of the Peace

¹ A copy of the letter was forwarded to the Colonial Office by Bhownaggree. *India*, in its issue of 1-7-1904, published the text as from its correspondent.

² *Vide* "Address to Lieutenant-Governor" May 18, 1904.

Preservation Ordinance which was passed to restrict rebels and other disloyal people but not law-abiding British subjects.

In what form it is now intended to introduce legislation, it is difficult to say, but seeing that before it can even be introduced Mr. Lyttelton's consent is necessary, I trust that you will approach him and discuss the question with him, for, after he has given his sanction to a particular course, it would be very difficult to get redress.

What I venture to suggest is that the law 3 of 1885 should be entirely repealed as also the town regulations regarding foot-paths and other laws specially disqualifying Asiatics; that an Immigration Act on the Cape lines should be introduced but so as not to taboo, in the educational test the Indian languages and; [that] a Dealers' Licenses Act should be introduced on the Natal lines provided that the right of appeal to the Supreme Court be granted against decisions of the local authorities on licensing applications and provided that the existing licenses are not touched by it except in so far as the shops may not be in accordance with sanitary or ornamental requirements.

Thus, the great bogey of immigration will be set at rest once and for all, and there would be no question of undue competition in trade. The local authorities will be able to regulate the number of licenses.

All that the Indians claim is that they should have the right, under the general laws of the Colony and so long as they conform to Western requirements, to trade and to hold landed property and to enjoy other rights of citizenship.

I would also remind you that Lord Milner has committed himself to some such legislation and not legislation specially disqualifying British Indians, and also that British Indians of education or standing should be entirely exempted from any restrictive legislation.

Colonial Office Records: C.O. 291, Volume 78, Individuals—B.

2. BRITISH INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

The British Indians at Heidelberg did well in presenting a loyal address to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal, and in doing so to draw His Excellency's attention to the recently decided test case. It drew from His Excellency an important pronouncement on Government policy. The answer given by Sir Arthur Lawley to the deputation was elaborated in his speech at Volksrust at the banquet given in his honour by the people of Volksrust. His

Excellency paid a well-deserved compliment to the loyalty of the Indian people and their industrious habits. Dealing with the[ir] status in the Transvaal, His Excellency was very guarded. He said that nothing could be done by the Government until sanction was received from the Colonial Secretary. But he had no hesitation in saying that he sympathised very much with the desire of the white inhabitants not to be nonplussed by the Asiatic traders, and he promised the Volksrust people that he would do his best to further the desire of his fellow-countrymen, though the promise was qualified by statement that the Government would have to act with strict justice; that it would have to protect vested interests and accurately define the position of those who are already settled in the Colony, and would also have to state what disqualifications those who might enter the country in future would labour under. All this is eminently satisfactory. Anything would be welcome to replace the present uncertainty, and if a just interpretation is given to the term "vested interests", those who are already carrying on business in the Transvaal need not have any anxiety. Unfortunately, however, the past does not inspire hope for the future. The ill-fated Asiatics Traders' Commission has made it clear as to what the Government means by "vested interests." It would only respect the trade of those British Indians who were actually carrying on trade outside Locations in the Transvaal "at, and immediately before, the outbreak of war". We know what this means, and we know how the Commissioners interpreted the expression. It would only protect a dozen Asiatics who, leaving their trade intact at the time of war, went away from the country owing to fear. And if such is the interpretation to be placed upon the term "vested interests", in the expressive words of the Chief Justice of the Transvaal, the Government would again be taking away with the other hand what it professed to give with the one hand. The danger has been foreshadowed by His Excellency himself in stating that the Government would protect the trade of British Indians only during the lifetime of the present licence-holders. A man engaged in trade knows what this means. Certainty is very essential in all commercial transactions and seeing that life is very fickle, would there be merchants found who would give any credit whatsoever to British Indian traders when the law informs them that the traders who ask for credit have no security of tenure, and that on their deaths their businesses would be abruptly closed? How such a doctrine can be reconciled with strict justice which His Excellency would dole out to the Indians, it is difficult to understand. We have, therefore, reluctantly to take the intentions of the Government to do justice with a great deal of reserve and caution. Nor do the opinions His Excellency has formed regarding the effect of Indian trade on the

white trade afford any ground for consolation. We respectfully protest against His Excellency talking of the great influx of Asiatics when he must be well aware with what rigidity the Peace Preservation Ordinance is being used as a handle to keep out of the Colony even British Indians. When the Chinese Importation Ordinance was passing through the Legislative Council, it became necessary for the Government to shew that the Peace Preservation Ordinance was being effectively used in order to keep out all but *bona-fide* Asiatic refugees. A report was prepared by the Chief Secretary for Permits which shewed that hardly any new-comer was allowed to enter the Colony, and that permits were only sparingly granted even to refugees. It, therefore, seems rather hard and inconsistent that His Excellency should now talk about the great influx of Asiatics. His Excellency said that

only those who had seen for themselves realised that Indians were able to live here they could not live in a colder climate, such as England—and to compete with white men and oust them from many fields of trade and commerce.

Now this is a very damaging statement if it were true, coming as it does from the Lieutenant-Governor; but is it true? Is there any department of trade or commerce in which the Asiatic has ousted the white man? There are only two branches in which there is any competition between the two, namely hawking and petty shop-keeping. Now, the facts as to hawking are that white men, except of a particular class, simply would not condescend to do the onerous work. As has been shown by our contemporary *The Star*, many an attempt has been made by the white hawkers, but each time they have given it up, not because of the Indian competition, but because they do not care for it. But there is a class of white men who are carrying it on successfully and against the Indians. We refer to the Syrians and Russian Jews. They are industrious, do not mind walking great distances with a heavy load on them, and we see them doing that business successfully. Moreover it should not be forgotten that, in hawking about towns, the Indians supplies a felt want and does a double good. He brings to the very door of the householder vegetables and other things, and enables the wholesale merchants to make easy profits out of the Indians. It is because he has been found to be so profitable that wholesale European houses have invariably supplied him. If they suspended credit to the Indian, he would be thoroughly impossible in South Africa as a hawker. And what we have said with reference to the hawker applies more strongly to the petty shop-keeper. In fact, beyond Johannes-

burg, Pretoria, and a few other towns, the petty Indian shop-keeper is not to be found. And there is a keen competition between the European petty shop-keeper and the Indian in which the former invariably has advantage over the latter. But when these two trades are excepted, there is absolutely no competition whatsoever between the two races. In the Cape Colony, for instance, where competition is absolutely free and the Indian has almost all the rights, he has not been able to oust any white store-keepers. Nor has he been able to do so in Natal, where there is such a large Indian population. The statements, therefore, that the Indian ousts the white man in trade, with due deference to His Excellency, is hardly fair, except to an extremely limited extent. And even where the Indian may seem to oust the white man, he only raises him a step above himself (the Indian) by becoming a middleman and making him a wholesale dealer instead of a retail trader.

But the speech made by His Excellency just shows how much work there is yet to be done before the Indians in the Transvaal will be in a position to retain any hold of the trade which ought to be theirs as a matter of right by reason of the decision in the test case.

Indian Opinion, 28-5-1904

3. “*THE EAST RAND EXPRESS*” ON THE TEST CASE

There has been so much said with reference to the licensing test case in the Transvaal and we, on our part, have had so much to say regarding it, that we have not been able to overtake and deal with the different cuttings which lie before us. One, however, from among them we must hasten to single out, for it is very typical of the temper of the East Randites. It grieves us, however, to find that our contemporary, *The East Rand Express*, has associated itself with a most dangerous doctrine, and, although it is very cautiously stated in the issue of the 14th instant, reading between the lines, the conclusion is irresistible that veiled advice has been given to the East Rand people to take the law into their own hands and prevent by force the opening of any Indian stores within that district, should such an attempt be made. Such tactics and such methods are unworthy of people who call themselves British and of British journalism. Our contemporary would be selling for a mess of pottage all that is held sacred by British communities if, in a moment of irritation, it descends to a level so low. We would allow our contemporary to speak for itself and leave the

reader to judge whether our remarks are at all exaggerated. After dealing with the judgment, which it has misinterpreted, it goes on:

It may be taken for granted that the Asiatics will endeavour to avail themselves of the opportunity. Hitherto, East Rand townships have kept the coolies at a distance, but it would appear that legally they can in future offer no resistance. What is to be done? We are as determined as ever to allow no Asiatic trading outside bazaars. the bazaars are fixed at a reasonable distance from the towns. Can voluntary action replace the protection hitherto generally offered by the State? As regards the East Rand, we believe the judgment of the Supreme Court will be of none effect. When the law fails to protect any community, history shows that [the] community as a rule finds some way of protecting itself. We should, however, deplore the public taking the law into their own hands, but it is to be feared *that if Indians or Chinese attempt to start trading in this district among whites under the decision, what would be termed by a general 'a regrettable incident' would occur. At Barberton, prior to the Asiatic Law being made as stringent as it was of late years under the Boers, some Asiatics attempted to trade in that town. The day after opening they evaded hanging by escaping in the early hours of the morning, leaving their goods behind them. This action on the part of Barbertonians should, of course, be strongly condemned, but it points a moral to our Asiatic friends of what despite every effort of the municipalities and police, might conceivably occur elsewhere. It would not be fair to local authorities to place on them the onus of maintaining order in such circumstances, and we therefore trust that government will lose no time in passing a law to suit the wishes of the public.*

Either writing such as this conveys an empty threat, in which case our contemporary has misjudged the Indian entirely, or it is seriously meant. In the latter event, for the sake of the Indians, apart from any Imperial considerations, we would welcome a hanging or two by the people in the East Rand, should an Indian open a store. It would at once bring up the whole question to the surface and enable the Indians to know whether the flag which has hitherto been found to afford perfect protection for physical liberty is still sufficient or not. It would also shew whether the Indian is cowardly enough to be staggered by any such proceedings, and skulk away from the country. So far, therefore, as the Indian himself is concerned, his position, we doubt not, will be infinitely strengthened if the East Rand community accept the advice of our contemporary. We may, however, remind it of a parallel that happened at Umtali some years ago¹. An Indian was granted a license to trade there. The whole of the European

¹ Vide "Indian Traders in Rhodesia", 22-1-1899

population turned out and threatened to burn down the store and to wreak dire vengeance on the Indian himself, if he would not close his store. Fortunately, single-handed as he was, he defied the crowd, refused to close the store or to run away. In the meanwhile, police assistance came, and the crowd, finding itself checkmated, withdrew, leaving the Indian to carry on his trade peacefully. We present this incident to our contemporary for reflection, and ask once more whether the office of respectable journalism is to provoke breaches of law or to inculcate order and good behaviour in the community in whose interest it is published.

Indian Opinion, 28-5-1904

4. MR. DAN TAYLOR

At the same time that Mr. McLarty's motion was carried, Mr. Dan Taylor, to the astonishment of all, made a very energetic speech, notifying that he would move heaven and earth to see that Chinamen were introduced into Natal in lieu of the Indians. Mr. Dan Taylor of 1896¹ was quite different from Mr. Dan Taylor of today. He was then an arch agitator against Coloured labour in any shape or form. He inveighed against the planters and was determined to throw the Indians, who had then just arrived from India, overboard if they claimed the right to land on the Natal shore. All this is history.² But manners change with the times and so do men, and Mr. Dan Taylor now thinks that some Coloured labour is absolutely essential for the prosperity of the Colony. And if he can carry his proposal, we would certainly suggest that a vote of thanks be given to him by the Indian community. He is against Indian labour because he finds that the Indian Government will not allow the Indian to be worked as a slave to the extent that would satisfy him. We are against Indian labour under indenture because we consider that the form under which the Indian is imported into the Colony is, in the words of the late Sir William Wilson Hunter, perilously near to slavery. We can never reconcile ourselves to the Capitation Tax of £ 3 annually which is the price that the law exacts from the Indian for his freedom, a freedom which, in the words of the late Mr. Escombe, is granted to him after he has given the best five years of his life to the Colony for a paltry wage.

¹ *Vide* "memorial to secretary of state for the colonies", 24-12-1896

² The episode is described in detail in the "Memorial to Chamberlain", *ibid.*, p. 184 *et seq.*

Though, therefore, it is from different points of view, it is great satisfaction to us that we find ourselves in perfect agreement with Mr. Dan Taylor, and we shall certainly hail the day when Indian indentured labour under present circumstances is stopped. It would, moreover, open the eyes of the Colonists to the real benefit that the presence even of the free Indian has contributed to the prosperity of the Colony. It is all very well to inveigh against the Indians getting a bit of freehold land, but the gentlemen who cry out against this entirely forget that every bit of land that passes into Indian hands is turned into a veritable garden. What possible objection there could be to the Indian turning to good purpose the land that the European would not touch, we cannot understand. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and if Mr. Dan Taylor succeeds in stopping Indian immigration, what we have now been stating as an opinion will become a realised fact in a very short time after the prohibition of indentured labour from India.

Indian Opinion, 28-5-1904

5. THE LATE SIR JOHN ROBINSON¹

A cablegram from London announces that a committee has been formed in London, as it has been formed in the Colony, to collect subscriptions for a memorial for the late Sir John. This is as it should be if only because he was the first Prime Minister of the Colony under responsible Government, and because he was the prime mover in bringing about responsible Government for the Colony. His claim, however, to public recognition is far greater because of his devotion and self-sacrifice towards the promotion of the public weal. The late Sir John was entirely a self-made man. His work as a journalist is well known to everyone and as an educationist, he was probably second to none in South Africa. With him, journalism was not a matter of pounds, shillings and pence; he used it as a vehicle for educating public opinion, imparting a healthy tone to the community. In fact, he used his great talents not for intellectual pleasure but for the sake of the country. As a public speaker, too, he was second only perhaps to the late Mr. Escombe in eloquence, though perhaps his style was more polished than that of the latter. We hope that the Indian community will associate itself with the movement to perpetuate the memory of the deceased statesman. He has a claim on the attention of the Indians from a special point of view, and here we may

¹ *Vide* "The late Sir John Robinson", 12-11-1903.

gratefully recall the occasion when the late Sir John undertook, at much inconvenience to himself owing to his ill-health, to preside at the meeting held by the Indians to celebrate the relief of Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley. His speech delivered at the time¹ was full of encouragement and generous recognition of the work of the Indians at the time of the war. It shewed on his part a large-hearted sympathy. It also shewed that he, for one, was not infected with the current prejudice.

Indian Opinion, 28-5-1904

6. INDENTURED INDIANS

We have received from the Protector of Indian Immigrants a copy of his annual report for the year ended 31st December 1903. The indentured Indian population of the Colony, including the descendants of such Indians, at the end of the year, was 81,390 as against 31,712 in the year 1896, and 78,004 in the year 1902. The birth rate for the past year was 32.11, and the death rate 20.78. The lowest death rate was in the year 1898, namely, 14.30, and, curiously enough, the same year shews the lowest birth rate, namely, 19.09. Plague claimed 52 victims during the year under review; pneumonia and other lung complaints 328 and phthisis 262. These figures are rather disquieting and require careful investigation. As has been remarked in the report, in the Coal Mines the death rate among the Indians has been rather high. Of 40 deaths occurring among the small number of Indians within the mining circle, 16 died from phthisis and 8 from pneumonia, and it is to be hoped that the Protector will not rest content until the mortality has been considerably reduced. 1,053 marriages were registered at the Protector's office last year of which 2 were polygamous. The savings of the 2,029 Indians who returned to India last year amounted, in cash and jewellery, to £ 34,690, that is to say, a little over £ 17 per head. Herein there is a conclusive argument against the notion often put forth that the Indians could very well return to India and live on their earnings for the rest of their lives without having to do anything, or could utilise the savings otherwise so as to enable them to earn a decent living. Now, even in a poverty-stricken place like India, it could not seriously be contended that £17 could go a great length in supporting a man. Of the 2,029 returned Indians, 1,542 were Madrasees and 487 Calcutta men. The savings of

¹ *Vide* "The late Sir John Robinson", 12-11-1903.

the Madrasees amounted to £27,417 that is, £18 per head and those of the Calcutta men amounted to £ 7,273 that is, £15 per head. There is an interesting classification given by the Protector of the savings of the Immigrants. 47 Madrasees had above 2,000 rupees each as against 5 Calcutta men. 25 Madrasees had under 2,000 as against 6 Calcutta men. 22 Madrasees had under 50 rupees as against 11 Calcutta men. And so, throughout, the Calcutta man has come out extremely badly. It shows that he is not so industrious or so thrifty as the Madrassee, and it would be well if our Calcutta friends would take note of this important fact, and those who have influence inculcate among them the necessity for greater prudence. Of the 81,390 Indians, 30,131 were under indenture; the balance had become free. Under the heading "Employer and Employees", we are told that the relations, generally speaking, between employer and indentured Indians have been good, and as a consequence the Indians are well treated.

New rules have been framed with reference to the Indians who may be desirous of going to the Protector for making complaints; whereas, formerly, the Indian was free from arrest if he could shew that he was proceeding to the Protector for the sake of laying a complaint before him, under the new rules, he would not be free unless he possessed a pass to that effect from the Magistrate of his division which may or may not be granted. Thus, really speaking, he has to establish a *prima facie* case before the Magistrate in order to enable him to proceed to the Protector's office. We cannot help remarking that this is an innovation which was hardly necessary. It would have been far better if the freedom of the Indian had been unrestricted with reference to any complaints he might have to make. No doubt there would be a few frivolous complaints, but we think it is better to overlook them than that those who have *bonafide* complaints should have any difficulties placed in their way.

The demand for Indian labour seems to be increasing at an alarming rate. There were, at the end of the year, 15,033 applications undealt with. The agent in India is utterly unable to cope with this extraordinary demand. It shews that the Colony simply cannot do without indentured Indian Labour, and yet we hear men crying out against it, and arguing that the Colony has been ruined by indentured Indian labour.

The following is what the Protector has to say on the suicides:

Suicides, who are not included in these figures, during the year numbered 31. Of these, 20 were indentured men, and 3 women, while 6 men and 1 woman and 1 boy were free Indians. A Magisterial enquiry is made into the

circumstances attending each case of suicide, and whenever the evidence tends to shew that the fatality in any way resulted from ill-treatment received from an employer or employee, I make a personal visit to the estate and enquire myself into the circumstances. In one instance and one only, did the evidence tend in this direction, but my own enquiry did not confirm this suspicion, which was created by the ship-mates of the deceased, who was a shop assistant in India and kept the books of the proprietor, and it appeared to me that he really committed suicide because the work of a sugar estate was not congenial to him. One woman, married to a well-to-do man who had finished his first term of indenture and was well treated, committed suicide because she regretted her union to a man of lower caste after nine months. One man was deserted by his wife. Another attempted to kill his wife and, thinking he had done so, hanged himself. Why a free Indian boy of nine years of age, while tending cattle belonging to his father's Indian employer, should kill himself is a mystery yet to be explained. Generally speaking, witnesses state that they can give no reason for the suicide, and if those who are supposed to know decline to give any information, it is impossible in many cases to arrive at even a probable cause.

We have given the remarks of the Protector on this painful subject in full, and we cannot help expressing our surprise that it has been dismissed so light-heartedly. Suicides among the indentured Indians have become a feature year after year, and we think that the cause ought to be probed to the bottom. And it is hardly an answer coming from the Protector of Indians that he cannot arrive at even a probable cause if those who are supposed to know decline to give any information. There is a homely English proverb, "Where there's a will, there's a way," and if the Protector would only feel as we feel, having the powers of an autocrat, he should have not the slightest difficulty in tracing the cause. There is enough in the Protector's statement to shew that there must be something wrong. Out of the free Indian population 51,259, there were 8 suicides. Out of 30,131 indentured Indians, there were 23. Why this great disproportion? Now, the highest rate is to be found in Paris namely, 422 per million and Paris is considered to be most notorious in this respect. But the rate among the indentured Indians comes to 741 per million. These figures are sufficient to give cause for very serious reflection. We think that the information given in the report on the subject is exceedingly meagre. There should be a statement shewing which estate shews the highest number, and there should be a summary at least as to the nature of evidence given, etc., at the Magisterial enquiries. We do not wish to draw any conclusions against the employers from these staggering figures, but we do plead for a thorough enquiry, alike in the interests of the Indians as of the employers, and we consider that nothing short of an impartial commission to investigate the cause would meet the ends of justice. And an ideal commission ought to include a medical

gentleman of good standing, a nominee of the Immigration Board, the Protector, and, if it is not a sacrilege to make the suggestion, an Indian of standing in the Colony. Such a commission cannot but result in arriving at the truth. The greater the light thrown on the subject, the better it would be for all concerned, and we hope that the remarks we have ventured to offer will be favourably considered by the authorities¹.

Indian Opinion, 4-6-1904

7. PRETORIA TOWN COUNCIL AND THE GOVERNMENT

It seems that the Government and the Pretoria Town Council have the knack of disagreeing on all important matters, in each case the Council being hopelessly in the wrong. Then latest instance is in connection with its very constitution. The Council is powerless to do much work for the rate-payers unless it allows itself to come under Ordinance 58 of 1903, regulating Municipal Corporations, but the Council is unwilling to do so unless, in the words of Mr. Van Boeschoten, a Councillor, "it receives the power to force Coloured people to keep off the foot-paths", which power is not reserved by the Ordinance in question. The Government, therefore, has notified the Council that it must either decide to come under the Ordinance or not at all, as the matter has been hanging fire now for several months, pointing out to the Council that,

unless it comes within the scope of the Ordinance, it has no power to work tram-ways, to expend money on a fire brigade, or upon many other things which it is necessary for the Council to do or carry on. In particular, they have no power to raise money on loan from persons other than the Government, and the Government is not in a position to advance money on loan to the Municipality.

This communication from the Government has been resented by the Council, and it has again shelved the question by passing a

¹ Gandhiji communicated with Dababhai Naoroji in this matter, as is evident from what the latter wrote to the Secretary of State for India on June 29: ". . . my correspondent in the Transvaal refers to the abnormal number of suicides among indentured Indians on the plantations in Natal which, he says, 'have been keeping up a very high average from year to year', and suggests that an enquiry should be instituted. He also refers to the drastic anti-Asiatic laws still remaining in force in the Orange River Colony". (India Office: Judicial and Public Records, 1567). The full text of Gandhiji's letter is not available.

resolution that “the Council will be prepared to come under Ordinance 58 of 1903 after the Traffic Bye-Laws regarding sidewalks have been passed”. This is nothing less than a challenge thrown down by the Council. If it were not for the fact that the party opposing is the Council of the Metropolis of the Transvaal, the action would be considered to be very churlish. On the one hand, there is the question of the legal existence of the Council, and as the Assistant Colonial Secretary to the local Government states, a loss to the extent of several thousands of pounds per annum to the rate-payers; on the other, that of excluding Coloured persons from using the foot-paths. An ordinary business Corporation would have, at any rate, first of all secured the ample powers in virtue of the Ordinance and then, if it was considered necessary, set about insisting on getting its Foot-path Bye-Laws. The Pretoria Town Council has, however, reversed the order, and like the baby in the tub, it would not be happy till it has got the power to prohibit Coloured people from using the foot-paths. We shall watch with interest the development of the struggle between the Government and the Council.

Indian Opinion, 4-6-1904

8. MR LOVEDAY AND THE BRITISH INDIANS

Mr. Loveday has been again fulminating against the British Indians at the Mayoral Banquet given in Pretoria. The honourable member seems to be quite unable to shake off the Indian fever from his brain. He spoke as follows on the question:

He held that the conditions which existed as regarded them in pre-war days should remain unchanged, inviolable, and sacred (applause.) until the advent of responsible government. (Renewed applause.) That was the cry of the whole people, and it was a cry of self-preservation. Whatever representations might come from India, there could only be one reply. There was no more room in South Africa for any more black people. (Loud applause.) What did the Indian bring to this country in exchange for the drain upon the money of the country? So far, he had brought nothing but disease, which periodically cost them some hundreds of thousands of pounds, not to eradicate but to stop for the time being. Such was the position of the Indian in this country, and yet they were calmly asked by those sentimental gentlemen across the water to accept that condition of affairs. For his own part he might say for the whole country it was impossible for them to have a thorough white South Africa, with the supremacy of the white man, if South Africa was going to be thrown open to an invasion from the East. (Applause.) There was in this country

a great fear that they were being used, and would be used, for the purposes of party politics across the water. He had lived many years in this country, and his memory went back to 1881, when they passed through the same state of things, and when a certain school of politicians he could not call them statesmen used South African matters for the purposes of party politics in England, and this country was sacrificed to those purposes. (Applause.) They did not wish to have their domestic affairs made a shuttle-cock of for party politics in England. (Applause.)

He would thus have the conditions which existed as regarded the Indians in pre-war days remain “unchanged, inviolable and sacred”. Will he, therefore, be kind enough to ask the Government to allow the Indians to trade anywhere they like without licenses as they did before war and to enter the Colony absolutely without restriction? We would also ask him to quote figures to shew how much drain has been caused by the Indians in the country, and if we may take the liberty of informing him, it may be stated that most of the takings of the Indian have gone into the hands of the wholesale European houses and European landlords. To say that he has brought nothing but disease to the country in the face of the revelations about the neglect of the Johannesburg Town Council is very much like “perambulating around the suburbs of veracity”, and, after all, barring the plague, Mr. Loveday point out any other disease with which the Indian is at all connected? Take, for instance, the enteric fever which is, according to Dr. Turner, far more deadly and far more infectious than the plague. Is it not a fact that the Indian is particularly free from this disease and that the mortality and the infection are mostly restricted to the Europeans? Would the honourable member, therefore, shut out European immigration from Europe? However, it is no use arguing with a person who simply does not want to be convinced, and if we have taken the trouble to discuss Mr. Loveday’s views on the Indian question, it is because we are anxious that those who may see his speech may not be misled by what he has stated with reference to the economic drain and the plague.

Indian Opinion, 4-6-1904

9. VOLKSRUST AND BRITISH INDIANS

The people of Volksrust are very much agitated over the decision of the Supreme Court in the Indian Licensing test case. We are told that they met on the 27th May last, at Abnerthy Hall, that “the meeting was a gigantic success, and that the hall was crowded”. They have passed a string of resolutions, very drastic in their nature,

one of which calls upon “the whole country to establish a referendum to the people, giving them the opportunity to assert their opposition to the introduction and settlement of the Indian trade in this country”, and calls upon the people of Volksrust not to, either directly or indirectly, encourage Indian trade. With all this we cannot quarrel; it is perfectly constitutional, and if there is a general boycott instituted, the Indians cannot complain. The agitation, however, seems to be utterly insincere in that the agitators have absolutely no confidence in their ability to carry out the programme, for in the same breath as they propose a wholesale boycott, they also call upon the Government to introduce legislation depriving the Indians of the right which the Supreme Court had decided they have under the law of the country. Mr. Fisher, the chairman of the Urban Board, suggested that, “pending legislation, by hook or by crook, they must tide over the next few months”. We do not know what the phrase means, but we can only say that, if it implies departure from constitutional methods, with all deference, it is unworthy of the gentleman occupying the responsible position that Mr. Fisher does, and we hope that the Government will take note of the undeserved difficulties that surround the position of the Indian in the Transvaal.

Indian Opinion, 4-6-1904

10. THE JOHANNESBURG TOWN COUNCIL AND BRITISH INDIANS

The Town Council of Johannesburg has given notice of its intention to introduce a Private Bill in the Legislative Council whereby, among other things, it would ask for authority to the Council to

establish locations for Natives and Coloured Persons, and bazaars for Asiatics, beyond the limits of the municipality, and to render any such locations or bazaars subject to by-laws made by Council. To erect buildings for the occupation of Natives, Asiatics, or Coloured Persons in any location or bazaar.

This evidently shews that the Town Council has at present no intention whatsoever of complying with the requirements of the Expropriation Ordinance, whereby it is bound to provide for the men dispossessed from the expropriation area, accommodation in the neighbourhood thereof. The sixteen hundred Indians who were sent from the Indian Location to Klipspruit are still without suitable

residences. Some of them are still living under canvas in Klipspruit and have to be satisfied with enforced idleness. Those have been allowed to return to town are obliged to pay enormous rents for the privilege of living in Johan-nesburg, simply because the Town Council has failed to carry out its legal duty. But apart from this consideration, if the powers above mentioned are granted to the Town Council by the Legislative Cou-ncil, it would mean a very serious matter for the British Indians, and it would also be a very great step in advance of the old Republican legislation against the Indians, for, as matters stand at present, the Town Councils have no control whatsoever, except in matters of sani-tation, over Indian Bazaars or Locations. The power of fixing these sites rests in the Government and the Government alone, and the people have the right, at any rate within the restricted area, to own fixed property and to build their own dwellings. If the intention of the Town Council is carried out, Indians will be placed on the same level with the Natives, and will be totally at the mercy of the Town Council. They would be merely tenants-at-will and be subject to cons-tant removal. There would be an end then to any ownership of land in the Locations. Such a state of things is too dreadful to contemplate, and were it not for the fact that the local Government has shown itself unable to protect the weaker party, we would decline to believe that it is at all possible for the Town Council to get the powers it would like to possess in connection with the British Indians. We can only hope that the members of the Council will remember the pre-war days, their promises when they were Uitlanders to the British Indians, and as honourable men do their duty by fulfilling them.

Indian Opinion, 11-6-1904

11. PROPOSED NEW ASIATIC LEGISLATION

IN THE TRANSVAAL

Mr. Moor, the Assistant Colonial Secretary, has replied to the East Rand Vigilants Association, saying that the Government is seriously considering a change in the existing legislation affecting the Asiatics, namely, Law 3 of 1885, as amended in 1886. We are aware that the Government has been doing this whether seriously or not is a moot point now for the last eighteen months, but we can quite understand why, now that its policy and interpretation of Law 3 of 1885 have been judicially condemned, it has become serious about

the matter. Mr. Lyttelton has shown himself to be strong-willed in more matters than one. He has not hesitated to disregard the demand of the mining people in Rhodesia for introduction of Chinese labour until the Legislative Council of that portion of South Africa has declared its view in the matter. Again, he has not hesitated to defy the strong public opinion in England, as well as in other parts of British Dominions, against such introduction in the Transvaal because, rightly or wrongly, he has made up his mind that it is good for the country, and that it is favoured by the people in the Transvaal. Will he hold his own with regard to the Indian legislation in the Transvaal? He has assured Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggee that he will give the matter his most careful consideration. The question of Chinese introduction is hardly an Imperial question. It does not affect the status of British subjects. But the Indian question has been acknowledged to be an Imperial one, and also very important. Much has been said and much has been written on it. The opinion outside South Africa is overwhelmingly in favour of the British Indian claim. The Imperial Government is, moreover, tied down to a policy favourable to the British Indians since the time of the Republican regime. It fought the Indians' battle when Mr. Kruger reigned in Pretoria. Its representatives deliberately stated that the grievances of the British Indians in the Transvaal were one of the causes of war. There is in all this much to guide Mr. Lyttelton aright. He is bound as an Imperialist to protect Indian interests. He is further bound by the promises made to the British Indians by his predecessors, and we can only hope that any new legislation that is framed to replace Law 3 of 1885 will be in consonance with the Imperial spirit and the promises.

Indian Opinion, 11-6-1904

12. IMITATING EAST LONDON

In going through the Acts of the Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope gazetted on the 31st May last, we find in the Act, entitled the Act to amend, consolidate, and add to the Laws regulating the Municipal Corporation and Government of Uitenhage, in Section 125, certain powers given to the Town Council, among which is included the power to make Bye-laws

for allotting and setting apart, and from time to time changing, portions of the Municipality as Locations for the residence of Natives and Asiatics and for abolishing such Locations; for regulating the conditions upon which Natives and Asiatics may reside in such Locations and the fees, rents,

and hut tax to be paid by them in respect of such residence, and any horses, cattle, oxen, sheep, or goats belonging to them, and for regulating or prohibiting the use of the commonage by the same. For regulating, permitting or prohibiting of shops, trading stations, and trade within such Locations. For fixing and from time to time altering the limits within which it shall not be lawful for Asiatics and Natives to reside.

These restrictions are not to apply to

any Native or Asiatic who may be the registered owner or occupier of landed property within the Municipality, valued for Municipal purposes at not less than £ 75.

Now these powers are very much on the same lines as those vested in the Municipality of East London. The British Indians at the Cape do not seem to have noticed them, and we fear that they have, therefore, passed unchallenged. Nor need such an omission excite any surprise, because it is too much to expect a trading community to wade through Government Gazettes. And we are not aware of the whole of the Bill in its passage through the Cape Parliament having been published in any of the important local newspapers. But what shall we say of the Government which gives such drastic powers to a Municipality, or of the Colonial Office which advises His Majesty the King to sanction such legislation, for, being class legislation, it evidently required the Royal assent before being proclaimed Law of the Country? We have said so much in dealing with similar legislation for East London that we do not consider it necessary to offer any comments upon its application to the Uitenhage Municipality. We, however, hope that our remarks will attract the attention of the friends of British Indians in London as well as in India and the authorities, and that some relief will be granted.

We note also that the Chinese Ordinance has been reserved for special assent. We do not know why this Bill should not have been likewise reserved, especially as it applies to all Asiatics, whether British subjects or not. Or, is it that the sections we have referred to escaped the Governor's notice as well as that of the Colonial Office? And if so, it shews that there is a necessity for some power in the Letters Patent whereby all class legislation would be invalid unless it is embodied in a separate Act dealing with such differential legislation and that alone.

Indian Opinion, 11-6-1904

13. THE INDIAN INTERPRETERS

Mr. Hyslop asked the Colonial Secretary whether he would not replace Indian Interpreters by European, as he had been informed that the former did not give satisfaction. The Colonial Secretary agreed with the honourable member but said that there were difficulties in obtaining Europeans, and added that at the Umgeni Court an Indian was superseded because a European was found.

This incident teaches a moral. The Indian Interpreters are tolerated only because Europeans are not be found in the Colony having even a smattering of the Indian languages, and it will be as well if the Indian Interpreters throughout the Colony will take note of the fact. The Government evidently would have no hesitation in summarily dismissing them if non-Indians could be found to take their place. We cannot, however, help protesting against the charge brought against a body of most industrious civil servants by Mr. Hyslop, namely, that they do not give satisfaction. On the contrary, we would very much like the honourable member, in justice to the men he has maligned, to give the source of his information. We have no hesitation in saying that, if they do not give satisfaction, it is a scandal which the Government should remove at the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, if they are competent, industrious and honest, the fact should be recognised and they should be absolved from the charge. As a matter of fact, we have seen the testimonials of not a few of these Interpreters who have simply made themselves indispensable to their superiors, not only by giving complete satisfaction in the discharge of their own work, but by taking over the clerical and other work which they are not in any way obliged to do. Mr. Hyslop could hardly know that the Indian Interpreters labour under a very great disadvantage in that they are called upon not only to interpret in one of the Indian languages but, as a rule, in three, and it is a well known fact that, if you want first-class Interpreters, you cannot combine a knowledge of four languages in one. It is also notorious how badly paid the Interpreters are. To say the least of it, therefore, it would have been graceful if Mr. Hyslop had not brought the charge against them, but simply contented himself by advancing the interests of his clients, against which we should have had nothing to say.

Indian Opinion, 11-6-1904

14. "MERCURY" AND INDENTURED LABOUR

Our contemporary, *The Natal Mercury*, which as a rule is well informed in all it has to say, has been misinformed with reference to its comparison between the Chinese Ordinance of the Transvaal and the Ordinance in force in Trinidad and British Guiana, regulating the introduction of indentured labour. Our contemporary is perhaps led into making the mistake, because, for political reasons, Mr. Balfour has seen fit to draw a parallel between the British Guiana Ordinance and the Chinese Ordinance, and we may state, for the information of those that argue so, that there is as much difference between the two as there is between black and white. The British Guiana Ordinance does not deprive the indentured man of the use of his intelligence. It does not insist upon the indentured labourer leaving the country on the termination of his indenture, nor does it reduce the immigrant merely to the status of an unskilled labourer by prohibiting him from doing anything else, or by prohibiting others from making use of him as anything else than an unskilled labourer. There is, moreover, no Compound System¹ as is to be enforced against the Chinese, and the labourer in British Guiana is free to settle in the country after the termination of his indenture and work as an independent man. Not so the Chinese. We wonder whether, in spite of all these fundamental differences between the two, our contemporary would still hold that the only difference is "that some political partisans denounce as slavery in the Transvaal a system which is regarded complacently as indentured labour in other Colonies".

Indian Opinion, 11-6-1904

15. CONSISTENT ORANGE RIVER COLONY

The Government *Gazette* of the Orange River Colony, dated the 3rd June, contains amended and new regulations for the town of Winburg. From them we extract the following:

No coloured person shall be allowed to reside anywhere within the Municipality, except with permission of the Council.

Any coloured person residing within the Municipality must be able and is obliged, when requested thereto by the Town Clerk or other Municipal

¹ According to this, the Chinese were perforce to live on the premises in which they worked and their movements were to be restricted, through a system of passes, within a mile's radius of their places of work.

Official, to give an account and supply proof of his means of existence, and if it should appear to the Town Clerk or such other official that no satisfactory proof of an honest means of existence can be given, such coloured person shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of chapter 133, section 2 of the Law Book. The law referred to provides that any such coloured person, being found without a pass from a white master or some official, may be fined £5, or in default, imprisoned with or without hard labour for a period not exceeding three months, or (at the option of the Magistrate) be placed under contract as a servant with a white inhabitant of the State for a period not exceeding one year, the offender being entitled to select his master within the district where the offence was committed.

After having received twenty-four hours' notice from the Town Clerk, any coloured person found without work, either as daily or monthly servant, shall leave the town commonage and may not return without permission from the Council.

No coloured person shall be allowed in any public place or street in Winburg ten minutes after the ringing of the bell at nine o'clock, unless provided for the occasion with a pass of his or her master.

No coloured license-holder shall have the right to employ more than two coloured persons under the license.

No dance parties, tea meetings, or other assemblages will be allowed in the location after 10 p.m., without written permission from the Town Clerk.

All coloured persons above the estimated age of sixteen years, who have obtained leave from the Council to reside within the Municipality, shall be liable for service, and shall be obliged to have themselves registered monthly at the office of the Town Clerk, and there receive a residential pass on payment of 6d for each pass.

The expression 'coloured person' or 'coloured persons' must be distinctly interpreted, unless the reading or text prohibits or hinders such, and be taken to be applicable to, and include the male or the males as well as the female or the females of all natives of South Africa, and also of all coloured persons and all those who, according to law or custom, are called coloured [person] or coloured persons, or are treated as such, of whatever race or nationality they may be.

Here, then, there is an unblushing distinction drawn based absolutely on colour and that of a most drastic character. It goes, we make bold to say, even so far as to admit of temporary slavery, if enforced service be accepted as such. The price of staying in the Municipality of Winburg is service under a white master. The regulations, it will be noticed, make no exception in favour of British subjects or in favour of Coloured persons of standing. Indeed, they recognise no standing for Coloured persons. We have more than once reproduced in these columns similar regulations for the Municipalities of the

Orange River Colony. We have protested in vain against them, and somehow or other nothing has been done even in London. The Letters Patent have provided against any such legislation, except with the consent of the Colonial Office, but although one would have thought that the greater would include the less, there appears to be no safeguard against municipal legislation of the character above described, and it seems to be hopeless to expect the local Government to veto such legislation. We hope the regulations will attract the attention of the Colonial Office, and that at any rate a pronouncement will be made on the anti-Coloured policy that is being followed under the British flag and in the name of the King-Emperor in the Orange River Colony.

Indian Opinion, 18-6-1904

16. THE PERMIT OFFICE IN THE TRANSVAAL

Lord Milner, in his capacity as President of the Inter-Colonial Council that recently sat at Pretoria, remarked as follows on the vote for the Permit Department:

The President, referring to the vote of £ 9,500 for the Permit Office, said his own impression was that this department would be required for another year. The machinery of the Permit Office had turned out to be used for purposes somewhat different to what was originally contemplated, but which were, nevertheless, of great benefit to the community. In the first instance, no doubt, the permit system was a political one; but the number of people to whom permits had been refused on political grounds had been exceedingly small. The Permit Office, however, had been their only means of defence against the immigration of floods of undesirables, some of them European, but most of them Asiatic. If they were to give up that weapon before they had a permanent law of a satisfactory character, he did not know what the lives of any of them would be worth. (Laughter.) Of course, it was a transitory system, but he did not think it likely that it could be done away with immediately. If the vote was not necessary, they would not spend the money.

We have here a corroboration from the highest authority in the Transvaal of what we have all along been saying, namely, that the Peace Preservation Ordinance is being used for purposes for which it was never intended. And His Excellency is evidently delighted that he has got such an instrument in his hands for preventing the immigration of “floods of undesirables, some of them European, but most of them Asiatic”, and His Lordship does not know what the lives of the people in the Colony would be worth if the weapon were to be given up. If such remarks had proceeded from a demagogue, we would have understood them, but coming as they do from the head of the State, and one, moreover, who is believed to be one of the

foremost states-men in the British Empire and an out-and-out Imperialist, they fill one with pain and dismay. In the first instance, to talk of floods of under-sirables is an exaggeration unworthy of His Lordship, and, in the second place, to state that, in the absence of the weapon, the lives of the people in the Colony would not be worth anything is to make a confession of utter weakness. And, after all, is the country so much over-populated? Have the lives of the people at the Cape or Natal, or any other British Dominion for that matter, become worthless because they do not possess the engine which has been used by His Lordship in the Transvaal? True, for a few years in Natal, and for one year at the Cape, an Immigration Restriction Law has been in force, but it is nothing compared to the Peace Preservation Ordinance of the Transvaal, under which even *bonafide* refugees find it most difficult to gain entrance into the Colony, though they may be British subjects, men of standing, and having large stakes in the Transvaal. And if the remarks which fell from His Lordship represent his sober views on immigration, it foreshadows an exceedingly poor outlook for the British Indians in the Transvaal. We hope, however, that His Lordship has permitted himself to make the above remarks in order to enliven the very prosaic proceedings of the Council and to put the refractory members, who have been handling the different departments rather roughly, in good humour, for we notice that His Lordship's remarks about the weapon were received with laughter.

Indian Opinion, 18-6-1904

17. SEPOY BRAVERY

We have much pleasure in copying from the *Transvaal Leader* the following graphic account of a skirmish in Tibet.

The attack, says Reuter's Special to the 'Leader', began at dawn. To the accompaniment of blood-curdling yells, two solid masses of the foe rushed down the hill leading to our position. The British, with the exception of a solitary Sepoy who refused to budge, quickly retired behind the fortifications. The surging mass of fanatics they were 100 strong then swept down upon the devoted Sepoy, who, with heroic courage, stuck to his post, calmly aiming at the Tibetans. He had succeeded in shooting five of the enemy when he was cut down by the swordsmen. The attacking horde next attempted to clamber over the walls protecting the British force, impotently hacking with their swords at the loop-holes from which belched forth an incessant hail of bullets.

What Victoria Cross would commemorate the bravery of the solitary Sepoy, and how many such deeds often remain unrecorded? It must have been bravery of this description which evoked, time

after time, from Lord Roberts unstinted recognition. There has been hardly during the last sixty years a British war in which the Indian soldier has not taken an honourable part, whether as an armed man or whether merely as a *dooly*-bearer or *bhisti*, as in the late Boer War. In the words of Lord Tennyson:

 Their's not to make reply,

 Their's not to reason why,

 Their's but to do and die.

These memorable words were written in connection with the famous *Charge of the Light Brigade*, but we venture to think that they apply equally to the Indian Sepoy.

Indian Opinion, 18-6-1904

18. AN APPEAL TO THE NATAL CONTEMPORARIES

We make no apology for reverting to the question of suicides among the indentured Indians in Natal, which we raised in our issue of the 4th instant¹. We feel sorry that, with the exception of *The Natal Mercury*, the other dailies have not taken the matter up, which is purely and simply one of humanity in which they, as public journals, cannot but be interested. Our desire in asking for a commission is simply to elicit the truth, and we cannot help feeling that even the employers themselves, if they would look at the matter dispassionately, should welcome the appointment of a commission of enquiry. If an impartial commission comes to the conclusion that they (the employers) are in no way responsible for the terrible number of suicides that are committed annually among the indentured Indians, it would be a great relief to them and to the public generally. If, on the other hand, there is anything that they can do which would prevent the unnatural mortality, it would be an advance in the right direction as well for themselves as for the unfortunate men who are working under indenture. This is not a subject which, in a British Colony, can be dismissed with a few lines of lame explanation betraying an attitude of hopelessness. We have not the slightest doubt that there must be a remedy for the evil, if only it is sought after earnestly and in the right spirit. We,

¹ *Vide* "Indentured Indians", 4-6-1904.

therefore, hope that our contemporaries will strengthen our humble efforts in the search after truth.

Indian Opinion, 18-6-1904

19. SIR MANCHERJEE'S SERVICES

We give in another column *in extenso* several questions asked by Sir Mancherjee¹ in the House of Commons and replies given by Mr. Brodrick or Mr. Lyttelton. They shew what inestimable service the honourable member has been rendering to his countrymen, whether in South Africa or in other distant possessions, or in India itself. And it shews also with what tenacity the worthy Knight has been following the British Indian position in South Africa. He never misses an opportunity of making a point whenever one is to be made, and the manner in which he goes about his business has so recommended itself to the ministers concerned that they give him, as a rule, as ample information as is possible under the circumstances, and often meet his questions in a sympathetic spirit. May he have a long life and may he continue to honour the House of Commons by his presence and to serve his countrymen is the earnest prayer of every Indian in South Africa.

Indian Opinion, 18-6-1904

20. INDIAN TRADE OUTSIDE LOCATIONS²

To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that Sir Arthur Lawley stated, in reply to an address presented him at Heidelberg by a deputation of British Indian residents on May 18 last³, that the liberty of licensed traders to carry on business outside Locations, declared by the Supreme Court in the Test Case of *Habib Motan v. The Transvaal Government* to be legal, will not be tolerated, and that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had already been approached with a view to sanctioning legislation to annul the decision; and, if so, whether, in case he is so approached, he will refuse to

¹ Bhownaggee.

² The text of a question forwarded to Sir M. M. Bhownaggee by Gandhiji on behalf of the British Indian Association, Johannesburg.

³ *Vide* "Address to Lieutenant-Governor", May 18, 1904.

countenance any such legislation in view of the pledges repeatedly given by Lord Milner that existing rights will not be interfered with.

India, 24-6-1904

21. LETTER TO RAND PLAGUE COMMITTEE

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 6522,
25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,
June 24, 1904

TO
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
RAND PLAGUE COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 1049
JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

I have the honour to invite your attention to my letter of the 29th April¹ with reference to the Plague Regulations in the Orange River Colony and Delagoa Bay. As you are aware, British Indians are not even allowed to pass through the former in a train on their way to the Cape Colony, although they may be in possession of the usual certificates from the Permit Office, and they are not allowed to enter Delagoa Bay at all in spite of possession of such permits.

My Association will be obliged if you will kindly secure relief with reference to both these places.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDUL GANI

CHAIRMAN,

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Pretoria Archives: L.G. 92/2132.

¹ This is not available.

22. NATAL IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT AND ITS WORKING¹

Two cases of considerable importance have been tried lately in Martizburg under this Act, and both of them were against British Indians. We give the full report of the proceedings in another column. The case of Dayal Ooka appears to us to be very hard. We would not offer any lengthy remarks, seeing that an appeal has been noted. The facts, however, so far as the evidence enables us to see, are that the defendant has lived in the Colony over five years, and that he paid £8 to somebody on board the steamer before he could land on his return from India. Against this evidence, there was nothing produced by the prosecution, but the Magistrate would not believe the testimony given by the accused and sentenced him to imprisonment for two months, unless the deportation of the accused could be arranged to take place before. If, therefore, the decision of the Magistrate is upheld, it would appear that every British Indian will be presumed to be a new-comer, unless he can prove, not only on oath himself, but by some other testimony, that he has been in the Colony before the passing of the Act. If such a view is taken, no Indian's position in the Colony will be secure. However, we must postpone further remarks on these extraordinary prosecutions until the appeal is decided. For the present, we would content ourselves with appealing to the Government to stay these prosecutions, because it is its duty to prevent the surreptitious entry of prohibited immigrants into the Colony, but, in our humble opinion, it would be going altogether too far to molest the people who are already in the Colony, and who have landed in spite of the precautions taken by the officers appointed under the Immigration Restriction Act, even though they may labour under the restriction as to former domicile.

Indian Opinion, 2-7-1904

¹ *Indian Opinion* dated 25-6-1904 is not available and hence it has not been possible to include Gandhiji's Contributions therein.

23. THE PRETORIA MUNICIPALITY ON COLOUR

We produce elsewhere further correspondence between the Government and the Pretoria Municipality on the question of the foot-path bye-laws. The Government is to be congratulated upon the firm stand it has taken in the matter, and it is impossible not to admire the tenacity with which the Pretoria Municipality is also fighting the Government. The pity of it is that the tenacity is being shown by the Municipality of the metropolis of the Transvaal in what would appear to any common-sense man to be a discredited and unworthy cause. It could not seriously be argued that any question of principle is at stake in allowing Coloured people to walk on the foot-paths. The Municipality surely would not thereby be assenting to the principle of equality between the two races in other respects. That is a big question and could be kept absolutely separate from the foot-path question. The Mayor of Pretoria evidently now sees that the Municipality is making itself a laughing-stock by persisting in its opposition to the Government, but the other Councillors, led by Mr. Loveday, would not listen to his arguments, and have sent a letter to the Government asking it to give them a special ordinance like the Johannesburg Municipality. It is an interesting duel that is going on between the Government and the Council. We can only hope that the Government will stick to the principle laid down by it and not yield at the eleventh hour to the dictation of the Municipality.

Indian Opinion, 2-7-1904

24. INDIAN PROMISSORY NOTES

We sincerely congratulate the Government on bringing in the Bill to regulate the signing of negotiable instruments by Indians. It is an earnest of their solicitude for their well-being. Within our experience, there have been cases of gross fraud, not necessarily between Indians and Indians, but even on the part of some Europeans, perpetrated owing to the inability of the Indians to sign such promissory notes in English characters. Very often, such notes are made without the contents being known to the maker; and the Bill in question is undoubtedly calculated to be a great relief to innocent people. To put the finishing touch to the Bill, may we suggest that it would be better if the thumb-impression were also insisted upon? It has been found

that it is impossible to forge a thumb-mark, and the thumb-impression would be the surest safeguard against impersonation, for it may happen that the man who may put his mark before a Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace may not at all be the person intended to be charged with the debt. Promissory notes will derive very great weight being made before a Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace, and if there has been any impersonation, it will be very difficult to prove it. Nor will it be fair to expect the Magistrates or Justices of the Peace always to scrutinise the identity of the persons appearing before them to make promissory notes. We hope, therefore, that the Government would be pleased to embody our suggestion in their Bill and make it complete and really effective.

Indian Opinion, 2-7-1904

25. FOOT-PATHS IN THE TRANSVAAL

The Boksburg Town Council has addressed the following circular letter to the Town Councils and Municipalities in the Transvaal:

Gentlemen,

No doubt you are fully aware that a clause exists in the 'Traffic By-laws', providing that no native shall walk on the footpath, save when crossing any street and the entrance to any private property, *vide* clause 19, chapter 2.

It will be noticed under "Definitions" in same code of by-laws, clause 20, the term "native" shall mean "any person whose parents belong to any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa".

In submitting this letter to you, I am instructed to point out that it is the desire of my Council to solicit the co-operation and assistance of the various Municipal Councils and Urban District Boards to have the present law amended in such a manner as to include all coloured races without distinction of nationality.

It has been the contention of my Council that the presence on the publicside-walks of other coloured races is equally as obnoxious as that of the native aboriginal tribes of this country, and with a view to having the law amended (so far as this Council, is concerned) and made applicable to all coloured races, the following amendment has been submitted to the Assistant Colonial Secretary for Local Government to be inserted in the 'Traffic By-laws':

'All coloured persons are prohibited from walking on the side-walks of any street, or on any *stoep*¹ serving as a side-walk', and pointing out that other Municipalities should be in a position to enjoy that privilege which is in existence in Johannesburg.

The Assistant Colonial Secretary states in reply:

¹ A platform along the front and, sometimes, the sides of a house.

‘That the Municipal Corporations Ordinance does not apply to Johannesburg Town Council, who are able to enforce the by-law, we refer to in regard to the use of the side-walks by coloured persons which is contained in the old Town Regulations by virtue of the Proclamation under which that Council is constituted. I regret that I am unable to recommend approval of the by-law submitted by you since it would be necessary to alter the law to permit of it being enforced by the Boksburg Council.’

It will thus be seen that all other towns are to be precluded the privilege of enjoying rights which are in force in Johannesburg simply because that town still possesses an old Town Regulation which so far has not been repealed.

The necessity for this provision is being urged by my Council for the serious and immediate attention of the Assistant Colonial Secretary for Local Government, and should this contention meet with the support of your Council, our aim would be perhaps best met by similar representation being made by resolution of your Council.

I thank you in anticipation for your co-operation.

To a certain extent, it is difficult to withhold sympathy from the Boksburg Council. They do not want to see any Coloured people on their foot-paths. Johannesburg possesses the right to prevent all Coloured people from using them; why should, then, the other Town Councils not be placed on the same footing as Johannesburg? The position appears to be logical enough. What has happened is this: Johannesburg, having got a constitution of its own, does not need to come under the General Corporations Ordinance, and in the special Ordinance for Johannesburg, the draftsman omitted to deal with the town regulations of the old regime. When, however, later, the Municipal Corporations Ordinance was passed, the matter was effectively dealt with by giving a proper definition to the term “Native”. The bolder and honester policy would certainly have been for the Government to delete from the Statute-book that portion of the regulation which unnecessarily subjects Coloured people other than Natives to the indignity; but the straight course having been rightly or wrongly abandoned, the Town Councils in the Transvaal, who feel aggrieved that they have been taken unawares, are now, naturally from their own standpoint, agitating against it. It is no doubt a difficult position. The only reasonable solution seems to be that Johannesburg ought to be placed on the same footing as the other Town Councils in this matter. Then full justice will be done and the other Town Councils will have to rest content with the powers they have got. It, however, does seem strange and somewhat painful that influential and important bodies like the Town Councils of the Transvaal should make a mountain out of a mole hill, and take pleasure in the unnecessary heaping of insult

upon insult on people who have done no harm to them and who, if anything, have deserved well, for, leaving aside for the present the British Indians out of consideration, it must not be forgotten that hundreds of Cape Coloured people were used by the erstwhile Uitlanders, now gentlemen of the Town Councils, for their own benefit. They were fondled; the British flag was constantly dangled before their eyes; its protective power was eloquently placed before them so that they might rush into their arms, make affidavits regarding the *zulum*¹ of the Boer Authorities, and make common cause with them, so that the hands of the Colonial Office might be forced and pressure put upon Mr. Kruger. Surely, these men have a right at least to walk without molestation on the side-walks of any street in the Transvaal, towards the upkeep of which, like other rate-payers, they contribute their quota.

Indian Opinion, 9-7-1904

26. BRITISH INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

The debate on Mr. Bourke's motion in the Legislative Council of the Transvaal, calling upon the Government to pass legislation restricting the liberty of the Indians, took place on Tuesday evening last. The usual platitudes were uttered by the honourable gentleman. The prospective ruin of the petty white trader was dangled before the members. The right of the Transvaal to pass any legislation in the matter was insisted upon, while statements were made as to the entry of Indians into the country. But Mr. Hosken as also Dr. Turner were able to shew completely that Mr. Bourke was hopelessly out of date as to his statements. Mr. Hosken shewed from figures that the Indian has been, and continues to remain, a blessing to Natal, which owes its prosperity to his presence. Dr. Turner, in reply to a violent attack on the Indian on the part of another member about the so-called insanitary habits of the Indians, was able to shew conclusively that the authorities alone were to blame with reference to the condition of the now burned down Indian Location in Johannesburg. The community should feel very grateful to the worthy Doctor for not hesitating to utter the truth, and for thus defending the Indian from undeserved attacks. Mr. Duncan shewed conclusively that the Indians had been allowed to enter the Transvaal most sparingly, and that, with the exception of four, all were *bona-fide* refugees. Mr. Duncan, however, has assured the House of his sympathy, and has promised to bring the whole matter before the Colonial Office. Mr. Solomon's amendment was ultimately accepted shewing satisfaction at the assurance given by the

¹ Urdu for tyranny or oppression.

Colonial Secretary that legislation would be brought during the present session, more or less giving effect to the wishes expressed in Mr. Bourke's speech and motion. Mr. Duncan had to admit that the British Government was tied down by promises made before the war; we shall see how the promises are fulfilled.

Indian Opinion, 9-7-1904

27. SUICIDE AMONG INDENTURED INDIANS

Mr. Lyttelton has, to our utter astonishment, if the cable report is correct, told Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggee that the rate of suicides among the indentured Indians is not great and that, consequently, he would not institute an enquiry.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "Its existence is rightly looked upon as a sign of the presence of maladies in the body-politic which, whether remediable or not, deserves careful consideration". So even apart from the question of the largeness of the number of deaths from suicide, it is a matter which requires investigation. Even the Protector of Immigrants in his report does not go as far as Mr. Lyttelton; he considers the death-rate to be sufficiently great to deserve more than a passing mention.

But let us compare statistics. Out of the free Indian population of 51,259, there were eight suicides. Out of the 30,131 indentured Indians, there were twenty-three. This by itself ought to make one pause. According to the table given in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Saxony had the highest rate, namely, 371 per million in 1882. The rate amongst the indentured Indians is 741 per million. Does not this great disparity between the highest figures on the continent and among the indentured Indians in Natal require some consideration? And yet, as we have repeated before, for the present we blame nobody; we have suspended judgment. Probably the cause is simple, and capable of an easy explanation. All we demand, with the greatest deference to Mr. Lyttelton, is that the matter should be probed to the bottom and cleared up in the interests of justice and humanity. We hope, therefore, that Sir Mancherjee having taken it up will not allow it to slide down, but persist in his enquiry.

Indian Opinion, 9-7-1904

28. *MORE DISABILITIES*

The Transvaal *Government Gazette* for the 1st July contains a draft Ordinance to regulate brick-making, lime-burning and quarrying on proclaimed land, in which we read the following in section 3 of the Ordinance:

Any white male inhabitant of this Colony over the age of eighteen shall be at liberty to take out, at the office of any district Registrar, a license for brick-making, lime-burning or quarrying.

So far the restriction has applied to gold-mining, and with reference to that we have said nothing; but now it will be unlawful for an Indian even to make bricks, for he could not get a license to do so. Mr. Lyttelton, in answer to Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggee, only a few days ago, assured the honourable gentleman that the rights of the British Indians already settled in the Colony would be fully protected. The draft Ordinance before us does not appear to carry out the intention. May we, therefore, take it for granted that the Ordinance will be altered by the Government, or, if it is passed in its present form, vetoed by Mr. Lyttelton?

Indian Opinion, 9-7-1904

29. *THE PLAGUE PEG*

The plague has served as a peg in the Transvaal on which to hang many a disability on the British Indians. The latest we hear is that, under cover of the plague precautions, the issue of permits to British Indian refugees from all the Colonies in South Africa has been stopped, and the only reason, so it would appear, is that plague-infected rats have been found in some localities in Johannesburg, and that, too, not in Indian quarters, but in poor European quarters. The stoppage of the permits was resumed after the appearance of a plague case or two in Durban, but seeing that the plague has suddenly stopped in Durban, some excuse was necessary, and the plague rats have been pressed into service. We do not know what the intentions of the Transvaal Government are, but if the policy of slow torture is to be reproduced in the proposed legislation, the condition of the British Indians in the Transvaal will be simply pitiable. In this connection, it may be as well to reproduce a paragraph from Dr. Murison's report on the health of the borough to show on what flimsy pretext the permits from Durban were stopped.

During the month of June, there have been two cases of plague in Durban, both of which were male natives. They were both found dead one at the Harbour Board Barracks, and the other in Kaffir quarters at Queen Street and owing to the fact that neither of the cases had been previously attended to by a medical practitioner, diagnosis was only made after post-mortem examination. No fresh cases of plague infection have been discovered during June, no plague-infected rats having been found outside the Premises named in my report for the month of May, although large numbers of rats from various localities have been examined both by Dr. Fernandez and myself. The intense infectiveness and mortality of plague among rats were very well exemplified on the case of the infected bond store at Alexandra Road. The premises being securely closed against any possible exit of rats, the disease spread rapidly amongst them, and the dead bodies of as many as 40 rats were found in a single day, till, practically speaking, every one succumbed to this disease. A large quantity of oats, which afforded shelter and food for these rats, and which was certain to be plague-infected was removed and destroyed by fire, and the store and its contents thoroughly disinfected.

Indian Opinion, 16-7-1904

30. THE LATE MR. KRUGER

Ex-President Kruger is no more, and in him one of the most striking personalities of the nineteenth century has passed away, leaving the world the poorer for it. His was a strong character which had, perhaps, many contradictions, but the net result was undoubtedly in his favour. His devotion to those whom he was proud to call his people was unexampled, and even the mistake that he made in defying a powerful nation like the British and in sending his world-famous ultimatum is a mistake that would count, not against him, but in his favour. It was his intense love for the country and its people that made him take the fatal step. There was no vainglory about it. He felt that he was in the right. His faith in the Old Testament teaching was sublime, and he believed that God was on his side and, that being so, he could never lose. Indeed, even after the issue was finally decided, during the short period that he was on this earth, he never allowed himself to waver and still continued, as many Boers do, to believe that good for them will yet come out of the British annexation. And so it undoubtedly will; not perhaps in the manner they would wish, but then God's ways are not our ways, and the future will shew what the destiny of the nation is to be. It has often been urged that the deceased President's flight from Pretoria was due to cowardice. We have

never, however, brought ourselves to accept the charge. He considered that he could best serve his countrymen by remaining away and managing affairs from a distance and he went. To think that the brave man who, when he was wounded by a tiger, with his own hand cut off a finger and dressed the wound and went about his business as if nothing had happened, would be the man to fly from a post of danger is a mistaken idea. His demeanour, too, on the Continent was worthy of a great and godly man. He shewed no undue irritation, resigned himself to the inevitable, and ever continued to guide his people by his advice. The one lesson that he has left behind him is his single-minded, though at times misguided, patriotism, and we venture to think that it will be as a staunch patriot that he will be best known to posterity. The British Indians personally have very little to thank the deceased statesman for. We are yet smarting under his legislation in the Transvaal, but that need not prevent our countrymen from recognising his great virtues, and in joining those who are sorrowing for the death of so great a man.

Indian Opinion, 23-7-1904

31. ENGINEERED AGITATION

Boksburg merchants continue their activity against trade licenses being granted to British Indians and other Asiatics. They have addressed a manifesto to all the Chambers of Commerce in the Colony with a view to united action being taken. Most extravagant statements are made in the documents that percolate through Boksburg. For instance, the other Chambers are calmly told that "injustice and danger are being inflicted on the white community by allowing unrestricted Asiatic trade to obtain a footing in the Colony". The suggested resolution, if listened to, would simply make the Legislative Council look ridiculous in the eyes of the world, for the resolution gravely asks the Council to "suspend the issue of licenses to Asiatics, pending the bringing into force of a permanent law governing Asiatics". Yet we are told that they have succeeded so well in combining that not a single Chinaman has been able so far to obtain a footing near the Chinese compound. Why should, then, there be any indecent haste one fails to understand, but we have it on the authority of our contemporary, *The Star*, that it is essential that such forcible agitation should take place in order to strengthen the hands of the local Government in its representations to the Colonial Office. Read

in that light, we understand what all this means: it is nothing less than intimidation. The people say in effect to the Imperial Government that, "if you do not grant us what we want, we will quarrel with you", for it is stated that "a further resolution is to be moved to the effect that, if the Imperial Government will not grant consent, an agitation for responsible Government be commenced in order that the Transvaal may secure the right to control its own internal affairs". It is quite clear that, so long as the Government continues to fence with the question and, instead of doing perfect justice, thinks of pleasing both the parties, such unhealthy and undesirable agitation retarding the establishment of peace between European British subjects and Asiatic British subjects will continue.

Indian Opinion, 23-7-1904

32. THE CHINESE PUZZLE

The fight over the Chinese trade which was inevitable has commenced in all earnestness and bitterness. The Boksburg people are up in arms against the very idea of the Chinese store-keepers having any dealings with their indentured countrymen. It is not enough that they are to be themselves deprived of all the civil rights and to be reduced to serfdom; it is not enough that they are to get as a Chinaman told *The Star* interviewer wages so little that they would leave very little savings, although the prospect before them at the end of the indenture is that they must return to China. The European store-keeper in Boksburg must, in addition, derive exorbitant profits also from the Chinese trade, and whatever the indentured men may have to spend out of their wages must go into the pockets of the European store-keepers. Then, indeed, would the gentlemen in Boksburg consider that some small measure of justice has been done to them, otherwise the Chinese labourers need not have come at all. And if the Chinese store-keepers are allowed to supply the necessaries to their countrymen, it would be the height of injustice and a deprivation of the rights of the European store-keepers. They confess their utter inability to compete with the Chinese store-keeper. In naked language, it means that they would want to charge the poor slaves far more than the Chinese store-keepers would ever think of doing. And so they are concentrating all their energy, influence and power in preventing a single Chinese trader, or, for that matter, an Indian trader, from having any share in the Chinese custom. They have petitioned

the Lieutenant-Governor, they have called upon all the Chambers of Commerce to join them in the combination and in creating a trust¹ in the Chinese trade in their favour. They have been saying pretty plainly that, if the Government does not come to their assistance, they will take the law into their own hands and, by hook or by crook, prevent a single Chinese store-keeper from having a footing in Boksburg. This shows the temper of the community, and it shows also to what length they are prepared to go in order to assert or, shall we say, usurp the rights which do not exclusively belong to them. Like spoiled and petted children, having so far had their own way, they have overstepped all bounds and simply consider that it is their right to dictate terms to the Government on any question they like. Will Mr. Lyttelton yield?

Indian Opinion, 23-7-1904

33. THE BOKSBURG VIGILANTS

We reproduce the following report of the meeting held in Boksburg in connection with Indian trade, and we are reminded very much of similar agitation in Durban in 1896;² and there is a very strong Durban favour about the second resolution proposed and carried at the meeting. It runs as follows:

That this public meeting of the inhabitants of the Municipality of Boksburg hereby pledges itself to maintain the principles of the existing Asiatic law as always interpreted by the people of the Transvaal by using every possible means to prevent any Asiatic storekeeper trading or residing in Boksburg Municipality outside the location, and urges on Government that, in view of the complications which have arisen, the new law absolutely prohibit Asiatic trading.

Here, then, we see a defiance of Supreme Court in the request for absolute prohibition of Asiatic trading, and a threatened resort to violence, should an Asiatic intend to settle in Boksburg outside a Location. The mover of the resolution illustrated what he meant by every possible means, and these are his pregnant remarks:

So far, by splendid combination and public spirit, the people had refused to let any store or stand to Asiatics in the township, although a Chinaman had secured a licence in Driefontein. He was happy to say, however, that it was hoped by the following morning that danger would be removed and the whole Municipality be absolutely clear of any Asiatic licence

¹ 'A White monopoly of trade with Chinese labour' is meant.

² The reference is to the European opposition to the landing of the Indians. *Vide* "Memorial to Secretary of State for the colonies", 15-3-1897

on a stand outside the location. (Applause.) Such was the force of the ‘moral suasion’ hitherto so successfully exercised. They must, however, be prepared for further attacks and therefore should pledge themselves *to resist by every possible means* the encouragement of Asiatic. *The Star*.

We need not say what “moral suasion” means.

This was too much for a few of the sober-minded who attended the meeting, and among them we were pleased to notice Mr. Constable of *The East Rand Express*. Violently hostile, as we venture to think, he has been to the Asiatic, to his constitutional instinct the resolution appeared to be very obnoxious, and he moved that “every possible constitutional means,” [be substituted for “every possible means”] and that the clause as to total prohibition be erased. The voices of Mr. Constable and his supporters were voices in the wilderness and reason had to give place to passion and prejudice.

As we have often said, if the gentlemen of Boksburg consider that by unmanly threats they will be able to intimidate a single British Indian wishing to assert his right, they are much mistaken, and we refer them once more to the Durban incident as well as the incident at Umtali.¹ In Durban, the ultimatum of the self-styled Demonstrative Committee was powerless to intimidate the Indians into returning to where they came from, and a mob in Umtali was unable to coerce the single inoffensive Indian trader into leaving his store. He defied them to do their worst and stood his ground until police assistance came and the Superintendent of Police discharged the crowd.

What, however, came from the Mayor of Boksburg, when he persuaded the meeting to drop the intimidation of the Government covered by a resolution for the early introduction of Responsible Government, was far more ominous. The Mayor made it quite clear to the meeting that Mr. Duncan, the Colonial Secretary, was working hand in glove with them. We do not wish to put our own views, because we do not wish to do even an unconscious injustice to the Colonial Secretary. These are his words:

The Mayor then explained that he had visited Pretoria that day and could tell them that the Asiatic question was burning one there as on the East Rand. They must not think for one moment that the Government was indifferent to the reports that were being made, but the Government felt it was powerless to prevent licences being granted to Asiatic with the law at present. They were, however, trying all they could to get permission to legislate immediately that no further licences be issued. He was afraid that had Mr. McKew been allowed to place his resolution before them, it would defeat the object of the Government. On the authority of Mr. Duncan (Colonial Secretary) and Sir George

¹ *Vide* “Indian Traders in Rhodesia” 22-1-1899

Farrar, he could state that the Government was quite in sympathy with the white population, and as a proof of that, he was asked to wire the resolutions passed that evening to Pretoria to be sent Home. He was told that the resolutions would strengthen the hands of the Government and he hoped they would soon get speedy relief. The Colonial Secretary told him distinctly that three or four days ago, cables dealing with the question had been sent Home, and that the Government considered the question of vital importance. (Applause.) *The Star*.

We cannot give stronger or better proof in support of what we said last week, namely, that the whole of this agitation is being engineered, and to find that the Colonial Secretary, as representing the Government, should take up a partial attitude and stand behind the agitation asking for strength and so on is a humiliating spectacle. Even the late President Kruger's Government did not act so. He did not ask his burghers or the Uitlanders to strengthen his hands; he fought fairly and squarely. There was nothing behind the scenes, and the Indians knew what they had to face. As it is, they have absolutely no notion of what is going on behind the curtain. The Mayor has only allowed us a peep behind, but that peep is enough to stagger us and to make us despondent. When all these reports of the meeting are telegraphed to Mr. Lyttelton, there will be no one to tell him that these meetings have been practically called forth by the Government, have been encouraged by it, and that the policy of the Government is the policy of the meeting. *Fiat justitia ruat Coelum* has been proclaimed from thousands of British platforms. The saying will now have to be revised in the Transvaal in order that it may fit in with the new order of things which has been established. And read by the light of the remarks made by the Mayor of Boksburg, we feel that the splendid advocacy by Mr. Duncan of the Indian traders at the time of the resolution, moved by Sir George Farrar for the appointment of the Asiatic Traders' Commission, could hardly be considered sincere.

Indian Opinion, 30-7-1904

34. SUICIDE AMONG INDENTURED INDIANS

We are now enabled to print *extenso* the question put by Sir Mancherjee, on the point raised in *Indian Opinion* of the 4th June last, about the abnormal rate of suicide among indentured Indians, and the answer given by Mr. Lyttelton:

Sir M. Bhownaggee asked the Colonial Secretary if his attention had been drawn to the statement in the Annual Report for 1903 of the Protector of Indian Immigrants in Natal that there had occurred in that year no fewer than 31 cases of suicide, being at the rate of 741 per million; if the indenture

labourers committed suicide in an overwhelmingly large proportion; and whether the local authorities had been able to trace the causes to which this voluntary destruction of life was due.

Mr. Lyttelton said he had seen the report referred to. The rate per million among Indians was 382, and not 741, as stated, the rate among free Indians and indentured Indians being 157 and 766, respectively. He was informed that a Magisterial inquiry was made into the circumstances attending each case of suicide, and whenever the evidence tended to show that the fatality in any way resulted from ill-treatment received from an employer or employee, the Protector of Indian Immigrants made a personal visit to the estate and inquired into the circumstances. In one instance, and one only, did the evidence tend in this direction. Generally speaking, witnesses stated that they could give no reason for the suicide, and if those who were supposed to know declined to give any information, it was impossible in many cases to arrive at even a probable cause. The general rate among Natal Indians in 1902 appeared to have been 333, and in 1901, 383, so that the rate for the year 1903 was not altogether exceptional. This rate had been exceeded in Paris.

Sir Mancherjee's figures have been taken from this paper,¹ and Mr. Lyttelton put into Sir Mancherjee's mouth a statement which we see he has never made, and then denied the authority of his figures. Sir Mancherjee enquired whether the rate was not 741 per million among indentured Indians. There is slight error, namely, that Sir Mancherjee refers to 31 cases. Now the 31 cases are the total number of suicides, of which 23 were among the indentured Indians, but his ratio is quite correct. Sir Mancherjee's figures, therefore, remain quite unchallenged and, as the *Daily News* has pointed out, by the figures that Mr. Lyttelton himself produced, he has simply given additional force to the remarks made by the Indian member, for, according too Mr. Lyttelton's ratio, the figure is not 741 but 766 as against 157 among free Indians. These are eloquent if also very painful figures. And in the face of those appalling figures, Mr. Lyttelton declared himself satisfied with the meagre reference to the matter in the Protector's report, and in so doing, he has, in our humble opinion, missed the very point we have raised. We do not yet ascribe the suicide to the ill-treatment received from the employers, as Mr. Lyttelton has evidently assumed, but we do say that the condition which causes such a death-rate from self-destruction is such as to call for an enquiry, in the interests of both the employers and the employed. We know that the rate is not exceptional for the year under discussion, but it has been going on from year to year, and that is the worst of the situation. That is why we consider it to be high time a full

¹ Vide "Indentured Indians", 4-6-1904; it is not unlikely that Gandhiji sent Bhownagree a copy of this article.

and impartial enquiry were instituted. It may be that it is the situation under which the indentured men are placed which is to blame rather than any actual ill-treatment by the employers. It may be that the men themselves who are called upon to do the work find it too trying for them, or that there are climatic conditions which predispose them to such acts or that it is simply home sickness on their part. Be the cause whatever it may, it is essential that the public should know exactly what it is, and that the Indian mind also which is very much agitated over it should be satisfied on the point. We cannot, therefore, understand what possible objection there could be to a reasonable request for an enquiry, except perhaps that of expense, but we dismiss that from consideration altogether, knowing as we do, how enquiries after enquiries are granted on much less important matters, involving a very heavy outlay. We, therefore, trust that this question will not be allowed to rest, and that it will be made clear to the Colonial Office by the worthy Knight that the suggested enquiry does not pre-suppose ill-treatment by the employers, and that it is not intended to cast the slightest reflection on them. All that is needed in an investigation into the truth and no more.

Indian Opinion, 30-7-1904

35. FROM PILLAR TO POST

The report of the meeting of the Town Council of Johannesburg, which we give in another column, about the housing of Natives and Asiatics, is interesting reading. It will be remembered that, during the plague outbreak, the old Location was burned down and the inhabitants were removed to Klipspruit Camp. Some members of the Council were of the opinion that it was a good riddance and thought that the Camp was a permanent Location. They, however, found that, after the isolation period had expired, the inmates were allowed to remove to town, provided they could shew dwellings to the satisfaction of the Rand Plague Committee. It should also be borne in mind that the Indians thus dispossessed have nothing at all in the shape of a piece of land where they could permanently reside. No Location in place of the one burned down has yet been appointed, and, not possessing the right to own fixed property, they are obliged to remain in a state of suspense. The report now shews that the Town Council does not know its own mind. It is yet as far away from the choice of a suitable site as it ever was, and the position is that, in the

meanwhile, the Indians may be driven from pillar to post at any moment?].¹ They have to pay exorbitant rents in the already overcrowded Malay Location. Their trade is gone. They are without goods, which have been burnt, and are without compensation. The position is truly pitiable and not a finger is raised by the Colonial Secretary, who is supposed to insist on a suitable site being provided for them, while the Town Council is carrying on profitless discussion on various schemes. When will this injustice end?

In striking contrast to the indifferent attitude of the Town Council and the Local Government is the following cablegram published in our esteemed contemporary's columns, wherein Mr. Lyttelton is reported to have said:

We could not coerce the inhabitants of the Transvaal to allow the importation of Indian labour, but we might endeavour to persuade them.

A policy of exclusion is short-sighted and inhumane.

But if the Transvaal choose to place difficulties in the way of British Indians entering the Colony, although I should deeply regret the decision, I do not believe that it could resist the case of Indians who came under the Republican law, which is quite different.

I think that the decision of the Supreme Court ought to be upheld, as it is impossible for us to assume a position inconsistent with our national dignity and honour, and to refuse privileges which have been asserted in a court of law.

It is impossible to say that these Indians have not the rights under the British flag which the Boer law gave them.

I am perfectly certain that the citizens of the Transvaal who value the Imperial connection will honour the dignity of the British name as much as anybody, and freely grant such rights.

Mr. Lyttelton's remarks are cheering; the only question is whether he will be strong enough to put them into practice and to withstand the opposition from the local Government. We have all along been saying that the treatment meted out to the British Indians since the British occupation is inconsistent with British dignity and British national honour. We now find the Colonial Secretary endorsing that view from his seat in the House of Commons. Let us hope that his deeds will be as good as his words.

Indian Opinion, 30-7-1904

¹ The original is mutilated.

36. A RETROSPECT

We have much pleasure in announcing that the plague restrictions on the movements of the British Indians within the Transvaal itself, imposed by the Rand Plague Committee, have been withdrawn, and now Indians wishing to travel from one place to another in the Colony would no longer be required to submit to a medical examination and carry travelling permits. We wish to congratulate our countrymen in the Transvaal on their deliverance, and more so on the exemplary patience shown by them. We have always held that the restrictions were totally unnecessary, though we have, at the same time, also advised that submission was the very best thing that could be done by them. The plague officially broke out in the middle of March last and, beyond the first virulent outbreak, it has never raged in a dangerous form. For the last three months, there have been only isolated cases, and these confined mostly to the Natives. And yet for four months and a half, the Indians have laboured under grievous disadvantages as to their movements. The statistics shew conclusively that, outside the Indian Location, the plague has been no respecter of persons, and outside Johannesburg hardly an Indian case had happened. Some of the districts have been absolutely free from any Indian cases. Moreover, the authorities have not been able to bring a single complaint against them. They have shown themselves willing and eager to fall in with the wishes of the authorities, and even when their houses and effects were burned down, and when they were asked to go to a camp thirteen miles from the town, they did so without grumbling. Dr. Turner, the Medical Officer for the Colony, has deliberately given it as his opinion that, for the outbreak in the location in Johannesburg, the Indians were in no way to blame, and that the authorities, having neglected their first duty as to keeping the place in a sanitary condition, were responsible for the state of affairs. Hundreds of Indians, who have been rendered homeless and whose goods have been destroyed, are yet without payment of any compensation whatsoever or without a fixed abode. We take leave to say that very few communities are to be found in the world behaving in the manner in which the Indians have during the trying ordeal, and under most vexatious difficulties. Will the Government take note of this? Will the Rand Plague Committee, which has come in close contact with the people, have the courage to give the Indian his due? Will Mr. Lyttelton take into consideration these facts in approving of any restrictive

legislation? And will the friends of Indians in England bring them home to the authorities and see that the work so well done is not wasted away?

Indian Opinion, 6-8-1904

37. SIR PHIROZSHAH

The mail papers to hand bring the most gratifying news that the Honourable Mr. Phirozshah M. Mehta has been knighted. If any man deserved the honour, it certainly is Sir Phirozshah. He is one of the oldest public workers. He is the father of the Corporation of Bombay and probably there is not a single member of that great Corporation who has attended so many meetings or served the length of time that Sir Phirozshah has done. He is the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency and is recognised as the first leader as no other man in any other province in India is. His unrivalled ability and experience, his eloquence, his tact and unfailing courtesy to his opponents have earned for him great popularity with the people and prestige with the Government. He has left his mark on many legislative enactments of the Bombay Presidency, and, during the short period that he was enabled to serve the Imperial Legislative Council at Calcutta, he carved out for himself a unique position. It is worthy of note that Sir Phirozshah had always been associated with the National Congress and has twice been the President of that institution. The conferring of the knighthood, therefore, is no less a compliment to the Congress than to the honourable gentleman himself. We think that in honouring him the Government has honoured itself. This is not the first time that a Congress leader has been so honoured. The Honourable Mr. Gokhale, who, as our readers are aware, has been doing yeoman service in the Imperial Legislative Council, has only lately received the distinction of C.I.E., and we note, among the recent recipients of honour, the Honourable Sankaran Nair.¹ All this shews perhaps the signs of the times, but it shews also that the Government is fully alive to the good work that is being done for it by the leaders of the Indian community in different parts of India.

Indian Opinion, 6-8-1904

¹ Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair (1857-1934), a judge of the Madras High Court and President of the Indian National Congress in 1897.

38. *THE BRITISH INDIANS IN LOURENCO MARQUES*

A correspondent named "Fairplay" wrote some time ago to our contemporary, *The Star*, in connection with the position of the British Indians in Lourenco Marques as compared to the[ir] position in the Transvaal. The correspondent made the Indians in Delagoa Bay say as follows:

We are perfectly and absolutely free here under Portuguese rule, and we are a hundred times better here than in the Transvaal, although we are all British subjects.

On this, the regular correspondent of *The Star* writes from Lourenco Marques to our contemporary, stating that

it may be news to the writer that an act was crowded out of the last sitting of the Cortes from want of time, and is to be brought up at the next sitting, under which newly-arrived Indians are to be taxed at the rate of £80 per head per annum. It is stated that this measure has the approval of the Government. If the above proposal of Mr. Deputy Carvalho passes into law, 'Fairplay' will find some other dumping ground than Portuguese territory for his friends.

Now, if the information given by *The Star* correspondent be correct, it shews once more that it is not the Portuguese in Delagoa Bay who are opposed to the Indians, but that it is the general body of European merchants, such as the Uitlander class is composed of, which have succeeded in getting round the Portuguese Government, so that they may be able to get a monopoly in trade. They did not during the old regime in the Transvaal, and persuaded the late President Kruger to pass legislation. It has been only recently that a large European population have settled in Delagoa Bay, and we should not be at all surprised if they have persuaded the Portuguese Government to place restrictions on British Indians. Mr. Lyttelton will have to be very careful if he is at all jealous of the rights of the British Indians in South Africa, and once the Portuguese Government embarks upon restrictions on the British Indians, the problem will undoubtedly be far more complicated, because Delagoa Bay is not a British Colony, and because the ways of the Portuguese are often inscrutable.

Indian Opinion, 6-8-1904

39. SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND BRITISH INDIANS

Superintendent Alexander has submitted to the Durban Town Council a report which is full of interest. His remarks about Indians are very satisfactory. He says in connection therewith:

In dealing with our large population (about 16,000), I have had very little trouble. They are most amenable to law and order. Only in one instance, at their last annual Mohurrun festival, did some of them attempt to resist my orders; but as soon as they knew the order was to keep them clear of public-houses, they at once apologised.

The following remarks of his on drunkenness shew how much the Borough owes to the Superintendent for his good work in this direction, and we can only hope that he will long be spared to the community to render his services in the manner has for the last twenty-five years and more.

During the year, 15,438 crimes and offences were brought to notice by your police, and dealt with, as shown in the statistics. I am glad to say that, on the whole, the community have behaved well, considering the large number (about 300 Europeans) out of employment, and that half of the population are uncivilised blacks of many nationalities, and that we have also a large number of European foreigners amongst us. There is, I am glad to say, a large falling-off in drunkenness amongst Europeans. No doubt the depression in trade has had something to do with it, but from constant observation, I am more inclined to think that the large facility now in town for obtaining refreshments of all sorts (not intoxicating) has more to do with it than any thing else, as one can now take a friend into a restaurant who would not go into a public-house; and, when one has there refreshment of this sort, one does not care for other liquors. I know the publican complains of how hard it is to pay the rent, etc., through the falling-off in his takings. This can only be remedied by the owners of the property reducing their rents which are now much too high to permit the proprietor to deal as honestly with his customers as he would probably wish to do. It is for this reason alone that I have throughout endeavoured to keep down the number of licences, and I think the Borough can congratulate itself upon having less licences for the sale of intoxicating liquor than any other seaport town of its size in Great Britain or her Colonies, as we have only 5 hotels, 18 hotels and bars, 17 public-houses, and 7 bottle stores. I am further glad to say that drunkenness amongst European women in this Borough is very small compared with towns in Great Britain. Of the 1,317 Europeans arrested for drunkenness last year, only 24 were women, and only one case of a lad under 19 years of age; whilst I find by the Police statistics of seaport towns in Great Britain, some of them shew 60 per cent. arrested for drunkenness to be women and 50 out of the 1,000 lads

under 19 years of age. With Indians and Natives arrested for drunkenness, the percentage of women is nine and ten respectively.

But the burden of our remarks today will be applied to the little sentence in the report wherein the Superintendent states that "with Indians, the percentage of women arrested for drunkenness is nine". This is not a new thing but, all the same, it is heart-rending to think that Indian women, who in their own country have never known what drink is, should here be found in the streets in a state of drunkenness. There are undoubtedly cases which are beyond one's control, and much may be urged in extenuation of the weakness of the fallen women, but we conceive that so long as a single Indian woman is to be found in the Borough under the influence of drink, it must reflect upon the Indian community. We have often had to perform the duty of urging the rights of the community. It is today our privilege to draw the attention of the community to a very obvious duty which it owes to itself and to its womanhood. Personally, we would see it made criminal for Indian women to be supplied with drink at any of the bars in town, but it would be far more satisfactory if, so far as Indian women are concerned, the community could carry on a battle against the curse, and we have no doubt that success can be easily attained. There are Indian societies in town, and enough young Indians with plenty of time at their disposal to carry on the much-needed temperance work, and here all creeds might usefully join hands. We may also appeal to the Reverend Mr. Smith and the Reverend Father Murray, who have all the facilities at their command and a suitable organisation to work with. And there are also educated Indian ladies who could be very helpful in the matter. It ought to be quite feasible to have small bands visiting each Indian bar and speak[ing] to the women as well as to the barmen, for we do not see why even barmen, who are mostly Indians, should not be persuaded to decline to serve women. We need not go into the merits of the question, for there can be only one opinion. It is hardly necessary to point out the awful results that flow from drunkenness, especially among women. The stamp that the crime (for it is nothing less) leaves on posterity is often indelible, and it ought to be held as sufficient to wake up within us unquenchable energy to see the reform through. We shall be glad if our young readers would ponder over the suggestion we have ventured to make and take it up without and delay.

Indian Opinion, 13-8-1904

40. THE PIETERSBURG CLAPTRAP

In another column, we publish a report copied from the *Zoutpansberg Review and Mining Journal*, dated 29th July, of the anti-Asiatic meeting held in Pietersburg, which is said to have been attended by from two hundred to three hundred people. The main resolution passed was similar to that passed at Boksburg, and the usual fallacies were dished up with an increasing mixture of spices in order to render them palatable to the meeting. For instance, one of the speakers said that the Indians lacked “the desirable qualities in residents of towns” in that they did not leave “something of a lasting and progressive nature”. Another speaker said, “They kept no carriages, bought no produce, and spent no money”, and a third said, “If an Indian took 5s. in a days’ business, he went without food altogether, and if he took £5, he would kill a fowl”. These statements are made by people who would be accepted as sober in ordinary business affairs. To degrade a class of people with deliberation, to coop them up in pens, to deprive them of the right of buying land, and then to turn round upon the very men and charge them with want of qualities desirable in citizens is a fine game. If any of these worthy speakers have travelled beyond the boundary of the district of Zoutpansberg, we might venture to direct their attention to what they, the Indians, have done in the way of progressive citizenship in Cape Town, Durban, and other places where they are allowed some rights. They have built business places in each of these towns which would compare favourably with any, and in building those places, they employed European architects, European contractors, European builders, bricklayers, carpenters, etc., and some of these buildings are tenanted also by Europeans. In one instance, we know a man, a European, who was a tenant for nearly twenty years. The Indian landlord never increased the rent during that time. The tenant was reduced to poverty and could not pay rent, and the generous-minded landlord excused payment of rent for, we believe, a number of years, and would not take proceedings for ejectment. This is fact and no fairy tale. We would be pleased even to give the names of the parties to any *bona-fide* enquirer. May we ask whether all this shews lack of good citizenship? One of the speakers said again that “the true solution of the Asiatic question lay in the application of the maxim, ‘the greatest good for the greatest number’”. We must confess that we are not blind believers in that maxim; we think that it has worked untold mischief in many cases, and is yet likely to do so in the history

of the world's progress. But for the sake of argument, assuming its soundness, let us examine its application. The gentlemen who spoke at the meeting held briefs for the traders. The crime committed by the Indian is that he competes with them, he lowers the price of the necessities of life and, having a fund of patience at his command, is a better seller, especially to those whose pockets are not too full, whether they be Europeans or Natives. Even then, if the Indian trader is of any disadvantage to the European trader, which we deny, he is on the whole of great benefit to the largest number of the inhabitants of the Transvaal and, in proof of that, the very fact that he has to depend for his business on the support received from the poor whites, including the Dutch and the Natives, may be mentioned without fear of any contradiction. And, strangely enough, the meeting itself found it necessary to establish a provisional White League Committee "for the propose of devising means to discourage trade with the Asiatics". The drafting of the constitution has been left in the hands of the Mayor and others. So then, we have the Local Board taking sides in a question of this description. But in arguing about this matter, we know we are beating the air. To men steeped in prejudice, an appeal to reason is worse than useless. We can only hope that what reason may not accomplish will be accomplished by the great healer, Time, and the Indian can afford to wait, as justice is on his side.

Indian Opinion, 13-8-1904

41. THE MAYOR OF DURBAN

We have to congratulate Mr. Ellis Browne on his re-election as the Chief Magistrate of the Borough for the third time. In this go-ahead and daily growing town, consisting as it does of a cosmopolitan population, having often conflicting interests, the office of Mayor is no sinecure. In Mr. Ellis Browne we have a gentleman of varied acquirements and possessing a large amount of industry. So far as the British Indians are concerned, he knows them well; he has been brought into frequent personal contact with all classes of the community, and but for his notorious minute on the Bazaar question, he was known to be fair-minded and impartial. That he lost his head, as so many did, on the Bazaar question is easy of explanation. It was Lord Milner's spell under which he was then labouring. His Excellency's Notice 356 of last year¹ came down on the Indians like a bomb-shell.

¹ *Vide* "British Indians in South Africa", (Government Notice), 15-5-1903

It affirmed the policy of the Government with regard to Indians, and it meant that His Excellency approved of the old Republican legislation. Naturally, our worthy Mayor thought that it must have been sanctioned by Downing Street and what could be allowed in a Crown Colony where, moreover, the very subject-matter of the Notice was a cause of the war, should a *fortiori* be permissible in a self-governing Colony like Natal, and that was the reason why he hurled his minute at the Indian community. Let us hope, however, that it is now forgotten, and if we have rescued it from oblivion it is to shew that it was a temporary aberration, and by no means representative of the general attitude of Mr. Ellis Browne. We wish him further success and prosperity to the Borough during his term of mayoralty.

Indian Opinion, 13-8-1904

42. OUR GRAND OLD MAN

The number of *India* to hand by the last mail shews the perennial activity of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India. Nothing comes to him amiss if it is at all to be of benefit to the millions of his fellow-countrymen, and the correspondence between Mr. Lyttelton and himself published in *India*, and which we reproduce in another column, on the question of the status of the British Indians in the Transvaal, is but an instance of his activity. Many a man at his age would be entitled to retire from public life and enjoy well-deserved rest, but Mr. Naoroji, in spite of his age, can give points to many young workers in the cause. In his self-imposed exile, the only pleasure he knows is that of doing what he considers to be his duty by his countrymen. For spotless purity of life, for utter selflessness, and for sustained public activity without caring for reward or praise, it will be difficult to find Mr. Naoroji's equal, not only in India but, we may say without exaggeration, in any part of the globe.

Indian Opinion, 13-8-1904

43. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

August 15, 1904

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

What a pity about Devchand Kothari ! I am doing my utmost regarding your permit. It is not at all certain that I am going to Durban. Did you receive the two Pitman books which were sent to you some days ago?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Please impress upon Abhechand¹ and Anandlal² the absolute necessity of sending something every month to their father.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 5651

44. FOOT-PATHS IN THE TRANSVAAL

Last week there took place in the Legislative Council an interesting discussion on the amendment proposed by the Colonial Secretary, in the Municipal Corporation Ordinance, giving the right to the Municipalities to

prohibit the use of the side-walks of any public street by Natives not holding letters of exemption, issued under the Coloured Persons Relief Proclamation, 1901, and by coloured persons who are not respectably dressed and well-conducted.

This amendment was opposed by Mr. Brink and, as might be expected, was seconded by Mr. Loveday. The honourable gentleman said that the old regulations ought not to be tampered with. Now the old town regulations prohibit the use of the side-walks by Coloured people entirely, and it was said that it was a trespass upon the rights and privileges of the people for the Government to make any change whatsoever in the old law. The Attorney-General stated that, under the old law, a Kaffir even when entering a shop was liable to be arrested for being on the foot-path. He also said that it was practically a dead

¹ Nephews of Gandhiji

² *ibid*

letter, and that even during the Republican regime, respectably dressed Coloured people were not interfered with. To that, we may add the instance of an Indian who was pushed off the foot-path, and who approached the then British Agent. The British Agent at once took up the defence of the Indian and made a strong representation to the State Secretary, Dr. Leyds, who sent a letter of apology and said that it was under a mistake and misapprehension that the police interfered with the Indian who was walking on the foot-path, and he assured the British Agent that such occurrences would not be repeated. No protest was made by Mr. Loveday then against such a relaxation of the law, but now that the Government wishes to recognise the relaxation, Mr. Loveday and his friends are indignant. And yet it must be apparent to anybody that the Government amendment is, although meant to give relief, nothing less than an affront, because to make distinctions with reference to use of side-walks is so foreign to British traditions. It can only be in this enlightened twentieth century, and that in the Transvaal, that in the name of that Government such a thing is possible. And the proviso as to [being] 'respectably dressed and of good conduct', is so elastic that, under it, unless the police have very special instructions, much mischief may be done. Even Dr. Turner, official member though he is, felt that the whole thing was ridiculous, and gave a very apt and humorous instance of a white man whom he saw outside the Government Buildings in Pretoria, "swaying to and fro, with his hands in his pockets and a pipe in his mouth, and spitting all round a clear six foot circle". The question, therefore, is hardly one of colour, but of hygiene and sanitation. The proper thing would be to punish all people who soiled the foot-paths, and it provides an intelligible, safe and inoffensive remedy.

Indian Opinion, 20-8-1904

45. INDIA MAKES THE EMPIRE

Our contemporary, the Johannesburg *Star*, has a leading article on "India and the Empire", based on Lord Curzon's speech¹ at the Guildhall, and it endorses Lord Curzon's view of the importance of India, and quotes with approval the following remarks that fell from Lord Curzon's lips:

If you want, he says, to save your colony of Natal from being overrun by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help, and she gives it; if you want to rescue the white men's legations from massacre at Peking, and the need is

¹ Made in London on July 20, 1904

urgent, you ask the Government of India to despatch an expedition, and they despatch it. If you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discover that Indian troops and an Indian General are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Government of India to send them. If you desire to defend and of the extreme outposts or coaling stations of the Empire, Aden, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong Kong, even Tientsin or Shan-hai-kwan, it is to the Indian Army that you turn. If you want to build a railway in Uganda or in the Soudan, you apply to India for labour.

But our contemporary has not a word to say to the Colonists on behalf of the inhabitants of India who are settled in the Transvaal! Proud as the descendants of Englishmen are in the Colonies to belong to the British race, and eager as they are to enjoy the privileges that the British Empire has to offer them, they would shirk the responsibility that membership of the Empire imposes on them, especially so far as British India is concerned. They are willing to appropriate the glory that comes from the British connection with India, and from a distance to applaud the valour of the Indian soldiers, but when it comes to a fair treatment of the brethren of these very soldiers, they want to hold themselves aloof. It is, therefore, a pity that our contemporary did not make use of its opportunity, in dealing with Lord Curzon's speech, of placing before its numerous readers the principle of recognising the very elementary and simple duty of *quid pro quo*. As Sir Mancherjee has said, the Colonies cannot with impunity continue to insult and embitter the feelings of three hundred millions of inhabitants of India for an indefinite length of time. Slowly, though surely, the exclusive policy of the Colonies is making a deep impression on the minds of the Indian people, and it cannot but make the task of government in India more and more difficult as it becomes known that for an Indian the privilege of British citizenship or British connection means little or nothing outside India, and that no matter what his status or ability may be, he is not wanted by the Colonies.

Indian Opinion, 20-8-1904

46. SUICIDE AMONG INDENTURED INDIANS

Some correspondents have of late been writing to *The Natal Mercury* about our remarks on the high rate of suicides among the indentured Indians. The writers have chosen to write anonymously, and although as a rule we decline to notice correspondence relating to matters appearing in this journal published in some other, especially under fictitious names, we feel disposed

for the sake of elucidation of the truth to offer a few remarks. One of the writers styling himself “A White Man” has sent a letter which is totally beside the purpose. He discusses the personnel of the editorial and the managerial staff of the paper and draws, in his imagination, a distinction between the Hindoos and the Mahomedans, and gives it as his opinion that the journal does not represent the Indian community. We do not propose to answer any of these allegations. Whether the paper represents anybody or not would not in any way detract from the truth of the statements made by us regarding the question of the suicides. We may, however, parenthetically draw “A White Man’s” attention to the advertisement¹ that appeared in connection with this paper in the preliminary numbers. It was signed by all the influential leaders of the community, and if he will take the trouble to scan the list, he will find an answer to most of his allegations. He will study therefrom also the aims of the paper. When, however, the writer states that it is our purpose to calumniate the whites in discussing the Protector’s report on the Indian suicides, we think it right that we should protest against any such insinuation. We commend the following from our very first leader on the subject² and leave “A White Man” and those who may think with him to judge for themselves:

We do not wish to draw any conclusions against the employers from these staggering figures but we do plead for a thorough enquiry, alike in the interests of the Indians as of the employers, and we consider that nothing short of an impartial commission to investigate the cause would meet the ends of justice.

We have not in any way whatsoever cast any reflections on the planters. All we care for is an investigation in the interests of all concerned. That the figures we produced were staggering no one would deny, but “Anglo Indian” has questioned them. We can only, therefore, draw his attention to the corroboration given to them by Mr. Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary, when he said that the rate among the non-indentured Indians was 157 per million and among indentured Indians 766 per million. If, therefore, we erred, we have erred in very good company, and in spite of the remarks of “Anglo-Indian” and “A White Man”, we adhere to the statements we have made and urge that an enquiry should be instituted.

Indian Opinion, 20-8-1904

¹ This appeared in Gujarati, Tamil and Hindi, signed by representative Indians speaking those languages. *Vide* “Ourselves”, 4-6-1903

² *Vide* “Indentured Indians”, 4-6-1904.

47. MR. LYTTTELTON'S DESPATCH

The debate in the Legislative Council of the Transvaal on the Indian traders' question and the publication of Mr. Lyttelton's despatch mark a most important stage in the history of this much-vexed controversy. On the one hand, the Home Government finds that it cannot, consistently with national honour, give away the rights of the British Indians which they jealously guarded during the Boer rule. On the other hand, the local Government and the Colonists seem to be bent upon rooting out the Indian. More than once has Sir George Farrar expressed in emphatic terms that probably the first act of a responsible Government when it came would be to extinguish the Indian trader by giving him compensation. We all know what the giving of compensation means! Thus, then, there is a direct conflict between Imperial interests and local prejudice we will not dignify it by the name of local interests, because we venture to think that the presence of the Indian in no way constitutes a menace to the white community. We have in these columns times without number shown that the white trader has not been driven out either in the Cape or Natal, where the Indians enjoy comparatively greater rights than in the Transvaal, but that they are earning side by side with the white man an honest livelihood. The unmeaning prejudice takes no account of the immeasurably superior facilities that the European enjoys in many respects, and the organising power which the Indian lacks. These two more than counterbalance the so-called cheap living of the Indian. But, as a matter of fact, nobody has ever asked for unrestricted trading rights on behalf of the Indians. All that is necessary is to absolutely protect vested interests, and to allow the Indian a reasonable share in future trade. To see men like Sir George Farrar and Mr. Bourke haranguing about the impending ruin threatening the Colony in the event of the Indians being allowed to continue to trade when they must know that the Indian is an almost negligible quantity, when one of them alone could but out every Indian in the colony thrice over is a most humiliating spectacle unworthy, shall we say, of those who profess to be guided by British traditions. If so much could, with justice, be said of the non-official members of the Legislative Council, what are we to think of the attitude of the Government? What are we to think of the Lord Milner of today asking Mr. Lyttelton to take

away practically everything from the Indian, and of the Lord Milner, on the eve of the war, who persisted in his advocacy of the Indian cause, and who would not barter away the rights of one class of British subjects for the sake of securing those of another class? Lord Milner prides himself on being an out-and-out Imperialist. Is His Excellency's Imperialism confined to South Africa only? The reading of Mr. Lyttelton's despatch has been both pleasant and distressing. What the local Government was ready to grant in the beginning of 1902, it has now retracted. What Lord Milner promised to do, when he justified the now notorious Bazaar Notice No.356 of last year, has now been retracted. His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, instead of taking up an impartial attitude, has constituted himself an exponent of the anti-Asiatic policy. All this is painful. Mr. Lyttelton, therefore, takes up the cudgels on behalf of the Indians, and on behalf of the Imperial policy and promises made by British statesmen and ministers. He shews conclusively that there can be only one solution of the question, namely, to grant reasonable rights to British Indians. But the reading becomes again distressing when we come to look at his final proposals, which seem merely to require the protection of the existing trading licences, leaving the principle of compulsory segregation intact, as also the great principle of Colour legislation. But all this later, because even what little the Colonial Secretary requires, the Transvaal Government is not prepared to grant. We have no doubt that the resolution of the Legislative Council has been cabled to the Home Government, and much will depend upon the attitude that may be assumed by it.

Indian Opinion, 27-8-1904

48. MEMORIAL TO COLONIAL SECRETARY

[Prior to *September 3, 1904*]¹

TO
THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
PRETORIA
SIR,

The despatch addressed by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to His Excellency the Governor, dated the 13th April this

¹ The date on which the petition was presented is not available.

year, on the status of British Indians in the Transvaal, contains certain matters which have deeply grieved my Association, and I am, therefore, directed to humbly submit the following to His Excellency and to request that the same may also be forwarded to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The despatch recommends the immediate adoption of the recommendations made therein as to alteration in the existing law with regard to British Indians, and based before on two incidents, the first being the test case of Habib Motan and the Government, underlying which is, in the words of His Excellency, the problem of self-preservation, and the second, the prominence into which the question came owing to the outbreak of bubonic plague.

To take the second incident first, my Association ventures to submit that it has been shown most conclusively that the Indians residing in the Location were in no way responsible for the outbreak. My Association would gladly have refrained from making any remarks in the matter, but as it is responsible for the statements supplied in this instance to Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggee, and as his information has been controverted by His Excellency, a brief explanation has become necessary in justice to my Association.

It will be recollected that the plague was officially declared as having broken out on the 18th March last. The Location was expropriated by the Johannesburg Town Council on the 26th September last year. Before that date, each owner of the Stands in the Location was held responsible for a proper sanitary upkeep thereof. The owners, therefore, employed men in order to keep the Stands in a clean condition, and up to that date, no epidemic was known to have arisen in the Location, and the Indian community had remained particularly free from infectious or contagious diseases. The sanitary control, from the 26th September, 1903, passed into the hands of the Town Council. The owners were not allowed to have any say either as to the manner in which the Stands were kept or as to tenants that were received. Instead of one man or men to clean each Stand, there were a few men employed by the Municipality to look after the whole area. The result was that they were totally unable to cope with the work. The population, too, went up considerably, as, regardless of the accommodation in the Location, the Town Council accepted tenants. Complaints were frequently made about this unsatisfactory state of

things, but nothing was done. The following letter was written to Dr. Porter, giving the necessary warning:

21 TO 24 COURT CHAMBERS,
15th February, 1904

To
DR. C. PORTER
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
JOHANNESBURG

DEAR DR. PORTER,

I am extremely obliged to you for having paid a visit last Saturday to the Indian Location, and for the interest you are taking in the proper sanitation of the site. The more I think of it, the uglier the situation appears to me, and I think that if the Town Council takes up a position of *non possumus*, it will be an abdication of its function, and I do respectfully say that nothing can justify the Public Health Committee in saying that neither overcrowding nor insanitation could be helped. I feel convinced that every minute wasted over the matter merely hastens a calamity for Johannesburg and that through absolutely no fault of the British Indians. Why, of all places in Johannesburg, the Indian Location should be chosen for dumping down all the Kaffirs of the town passes my comprehension. While the great projects for sanitary reform of the Public Health Committee are undoubtedly very laudable and probably necessary, the obvious duty of dealing with the present danger of insanitation and over-crowding in the Indian Location, in my humble opinion, is not to be neglected. I feel that a few hundred pounds now spent will probably cause a saving of thousands of pounds; for, if, unfortunately, an epidemic breaks out in the Location, panic will ensue and money will then be spent like water in order to cure an evil which is now absolutely preventible.

I do not wonder that your staff, hard worked as it is, is unable to cope with sanitation in the Location, for what you do want, and what you cannot get, is a *topaz* for each Stand. What is everybody's business is also nobody's. You cannot expect every resident to look after the sanitation. Before expropriation, every Stand holder was held responsible, and very naturally, for the proper sanitation of his Stand. The result, as I know personally, was that every Stand had a *topaz* attached to it who continually looked after the Stand, and I have no hesitation in saying that, compared to what the Stands are now, they were kept in an ideally good condition.

You ask me to suggest remedies. I have slept over the matter, and if only the Town Council would take up a reasonable attitude, I have no doubt that an immediate improvement without any cost to the Town Council, and probably to the saving of a few pounds, is possible. Let short leases—six monthly or quarterly—be given to the Stand-holders. The leases may state exactly how many people are to be kept on each Stand, or in each room. The leasees could pay, say 8 per cent. on the valuation of the valuers, and should be made strictly responsible for the sanitation of the Stand leased by them.

The sanitary regulations could then be strictly enforced; one or two inspectors could visit the Stands daily and come down upon defaulters with a heavy hand. If this humble suggestion is accepted, you will see vast improvement in two or three days, and you, by a stroke of the pen, could deal effectively with insanitation and over-crowding.

The Town Council would also be saved the necessity of having to make individual collections of rents.

Of course, under my suggestion, the Town Council must withdraw the Kaffirs from the Location. About this mixing of the Kaffirs with the Indians, I must confess, I feel most strongly. I think it is very unfair to the Indian population, and it is an undue tax on even the proverbial patience of my countrymen.

Although I have not personally visited other portions included within the Insanitary Area, I very much fear that the same condition of things exists there, and the suggestion I have made above would apply to other parts also.

I trust you will receive this letter in the spirit in which it is written, and I hope that I have not expressed myself more strongly than the urgency of the occasion requires. I need hardly add that my services in this direction are entirely at the disposal of yourself and the Public Health Committee, and I have no doubt that, if the Town Council would but give the Indian community a fair chance of proving what it is capable of doing in the way of sanitation, I do not think it would be much mistaken.

You may make what use you like of this communication.

In conclusion, I hope that an immediate remedy will be found for the danger that threatens the community.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) M. K. GANDHI

Dr. Porter in his turn passed this letter on to the Public Health Committee which, however, took no action. Extraordinary rain supervened and brought on the much-dreaded plague.

Here, then, in the humble opinion of my Association, there was nothing left undone by the Indians residing in the Location. It was with them purely and simply a matter of helplessness. There was nowhere else for them to go to. It was impossible to vacate the Location and overrun the town. In spite of urgent entreaties, no site was fixed for them in lieu of the expropriated Location. Dr. Porter's opinion about the condition of the Location, which my Association has taken exception to, was given in 1902, and yet, up to the time of expropriation, (that is, for nearly one year,) the Location was allowed to remain in the same condition without any epidemic having broken out.

Here, then, there is a practical demonstration of the truth of evidence given by Dr. Johnston and the late Dr. Marais.¹ The Location

¹ *Vide* "Evidence against lord milner's charge of insanitation", 13-8-1903

did, as a matter of fact, assume the state described by Dr. Porter after it became the property of the Town Council, and after the Indians themselves became unable to look after it.

Furthermore, the Medical Officer of Health for the Transvaal is reported to have said as follows in connection with the outbreak, thus absolving the Indians in the Location from liability:

The coolie Location at Johannesburg was in a disgraceful condition, and why? Because those poor people were compelled to live in it like chickens in a coop, and it was left in a most insanitary condition by the authorities. If Mr. Raitt (member, Legislative Council) has been compelled to live in it, he would have been just as dirty.

It is also noteworthy that Indians have been no more liable to the disease in the Transvaal than the other communities outside the Location, that is to say, where they had control of their premises. For instance, in Pretoria and Potchefstroom, where there are Indian Locations, there were practically no cases of plague amongst the Indians.

Before concluding this portion of the representation, my Association invites His Excellency's attention to the following from Drs. Veale and Spink, both medical gentlemen of long standing:

I hereby certify that I have practised as a general medical practitioner in the town of Pretoria for the last five years.

During that period, I have had a considerable practice amongst the Indians, especially about three years ago, when they were more numerous than at present.

I have generally found them cleanly in their persons, and free from the personal disease due to dirt or careless habits. Their dwellings are generally clean and sanitation is willingly attended to by them. Class considered, I should be of opinion that the lowest class of Indian compares most favourably with the lowest class of white, i.e., the lowest class Indian lives better and in better habitation and with more regard to sanitary measures than the lowest class white.

I have, further, found that during the period that small-pox was epidemic in the town and district, and is still epidemic in the district, that, although every nation nearly had one or more of its members at some time in the Lazaretto, there was not a single Indian attacked.

Generally, in my opinion, it is impossible to object to the Indian on sanitary grounds, provided always the inspection of sanitary authorities is made as strictly and regularly for the Indian as for the white.

H. PRIOR VEALE, B.A., M.B., B.C., (Cantab.)

This is to certify that I have examined the residences of the bearers of this note, and that they are in a sanitary and hygienic condition, and, in fact, such as any European might inhabit. I have resided in India. I can certify that their habitations here in the South African Republic are far superior to those of their native country.

C. P. SPINK, M.R.C.S., & L.R.C.A., (London.)

As to the first-mentioned point, in dealing with it, His Excellency has dwelt on three illustrations, namely, Johannesburg, Pietersburg and Natal. In the humble opinion of my Association, the fact that Johannesburg has been able to hold its own against the British Indian shews that the Indian is unable to compete with the European in trade, except in petty trading, and then, too, he is not successful in ousting the European, for it is notorious that, in Johannesburg, the petty trade is mostly in the hands of aliens from Europe. In Pietersburg, too, with the greatest deference to His Excellency, the bulk of the trade, both wholesale and retail, is in European hands, and the European houses, which are referred to by His Excellency as having wholesale businesses only in Pietersburg, are also, according to the information in possession of my Association, carrying on a retail trade, whereas the Indians there confine their trade to the retail branch.

My Association respectfully submits that the comparison drawn from Natal is very unfair to the British Indian community, for there is no analogy between Natal and the Transvaal. The former has been importing labour from India now for over thirty years, and the bulk of the Indian population is under indenture. The free Indians who have entered the Colony as independent men number less than ten thousand (10,000). But even there, my Association ventures to submit, the retail trade has not passed entirely into Indian hands. In all the important towns, it is still controlled by the Europeans.

The following is the testimony given by Sir James Hullett only last year as to the value of the Indian to Natal:

The Arabs were limited and were traders almost entirely. The ordinary small trader could not compete with the Arabs. The retail Kaffir trade of the Colony was practically in the hands of the Arabs. In the country districts, witness had no objection to this because he thought the ordinary young white man or woman could do something better than looking after Kaffir country stores. The Arab's wants were less than the ordinary white man's wants, they sold at a smaller profit and, to a certain extent, they dealt fairer with the natives than the European traders, who, at the country stores, desired to make such large profits. Apart from the country districts, he supposed—from appearance—that Arab traders were doing an ever-increasing business in the towns. They were supported to a certain extent by white inhabitants. The white inhabitants, and with a certain amount of justice, complained of the Arabs, but yet helped to support them because of being able to get their goods cheaper from them than elsewhere. But all this did not mean the climination of the white man from trade altogether. (This witness said emphatically).

Most public men there believe that Natal owes its prosperity to the presence of the Indian. The special Commissioners, who, some years ago, examined the whole question, said, especially with reference

to the British Indian trader, against whom His Excellency has been pleased to advance so much argument, gave their opinion [*sic*] as follows:

We are content to place on record our strong opinion, based on much observation, that the presence of these traders has been beneficial to the whole Colony, and that it would be unwise, if not unjust, to legislate to their prejudice.

Nearly all of them are Mohammedans, either total abstainers from alcoholic liquors, or drinking them in moderation. They are thrifty by nature and submissive to the law.

Out of the seventy-two European witnesses, who gave their evidence before the Commission, almost every one of those who spoke as to the presence of the Indian affecting the Colony has said that he is indispensable for its welfare.

But the most striking instance, perhaps, shewing that the Indian is not the menace that he is popularly considered to be to the white predominance, is to be found in the Cape Colony. That Colony has never imported Indian labour, but up to last year, it was open to receive any Indian who went there. Indians are entitled to own land, they may take out licences to trade without any let or hindrance, and they enjoy practically all the rights possessed by His Majesty's other subjects. And yet his competition has not told upon the European community in any way whatsoever, except in so far as his presence has stimulated healthy rivalry. There are at the Cape far wealthier Indians than in the Transvaal, but they have not made any appreciable impression on the ownership of land.

My Association, therefore, ventures to submit that the past, in so far as it throws any light on the question, does not bear out the fears expressed by His Excellency.

That the opposition to the British Indian is confined to the trader class in the Transvaal, and therefore, purely interested, is, in the humble opinion of my Association, plain from the fact that the Indian depends largely upon European support. Having been found reliable, the European banks give him credit, European houses sell him goods on credit, and the European customers purchase goods from him, his best customers being the Dutch people. It may here be mentioned that, even during the Boer rule, a Petition, extensively signed by the Dutch people as also the English people, was presented to the late President Kruger favouring the presence of the Indian.

The social and political equality, it is true, was never recognised during the Boer regime as between white and Coloured people, but the Indian, it will be readily admitted, has studiously kept himself aloof

from intruding himself on any of the two departments.

My Association craves leave to discuss the proposals made by His Excellency which have been termed by him “concessions”, but which, in the humble opinion of my Association, constitute a further encroachment on the small measure of liberty enjoyed by the British Indian under Law 3 of 1885, which the proposals are intended to replace.

(1) Under the Law, then, as now interpreted, the Indian, is, as in practice he has always been, free to trade anywhere he chooses.

(2) Though there is in the Law a clause restricting residence to Locations, wards, or streets set apart for the purpose, as the Supreme Court has held, it is inoperative, as there is no sanction provided for it in the Law. The British Indian is, therefore, free to reside where he likes. He may not own fixed property, but he is entitled to own leases.

(3) There is in the Law no restriction whatsoever on the free immigration of Asiatics.

Under the proposals made by His Excellency, the issue of licenses outside Bazaars would be restricted only to those who were carrying on business at the commencement of hostilities, and, then only, during the residence in this Colony of the licensees, a proviso which materially curtails the possibility of expansion even for the few who were trading at the commencement of hostilities. The proposal, therefore, would ultimately mean a complete sweeping out of the British Indian trader, except from Locations.

Exemption from liability to reside in Locations is contemplated, but, as has been shown above, the liability to reside in Locations does not exist, but will have to be created and will, therefore, be a new restriction.

Exemption from registration will be merely nominal, as almost all the old residents of the Transvaal have, in obedience to Lord Milner’s advice, paid the registration fee, and as the fewest possible new men would be allowed to enter the Colony under the Immigration Ordinance proposed to be introduced. As a matter of fact, the Peace preservation Ordinance is employed to shut out every Indian who is not a refugee, no matter what his intellectual attainments, social qualities, or habits of life may be.

It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that in not a single particular will the proposals under discussion concede anything to the British Indians, but they would very materially restrict the rights hitherto enjoyed by them.

My Association is grateful to His Excellency of advising that the Indians may be allowed to hold land in their own names which

may be devoted to religious purposes, but my Association may be pardoned for saying that, when the bulk of the Indian population is compulsorily segregated, the concession would be of little or no use, and could not be availed of if the land is not allowed to be used for purposes of drawing an income for the support of religious institutions. Nor is the proposal altogether new, because, time after time, Her late Majesty's agents brought the matter to the notice of the late President Kruger, who had promised to grant relief.

His Excellency has been pleased to say that "the British Indian Association maintains that these sites (referring to the new Locations laid out) are quite unsuitable, but they have in my opinion overstated their case". With the greatest deference to His Excellency, my Association ventures to submit that it has always been its endeavour to place facts without any varnish at all, and, in making its submission regarding the new sites, my Association has, in every instance, supported its objections with disinterested testimony. The members of my Association, being most of them traders of long experience, also claim to speak with confidence regarding these sites, and however valuable they may become in the distant future, for immediate purposes, save in one or two instances, they are totally useless, situated as they are in isolated and uninhabited spots where there has been no traffic. In Pietersburg, for instance, the new site has been fixed nearly two miles from the town where, as it is only a small village, there can be no traffic. It is, therefore, a question purely and simply of establishing a new Indian village. Half a dozen store-keepers removing there will have only themselves to trade with. To say that removal to such a Location would be tantamount to removal from Cheap-side to Hampstead Heath in London would, in the humble opinion of my Association, be an understatement of the case. And the very fact that these sites have been fixed so far apart is a limitation of the powers vested in the Government in virtue of Law 3 of 1885, which contemplates the setting apart of "streets and wards" besides Locations.

The crux, however, of the whole question is legislation in anticipation of the future, and my Association cannot help saying that the future being guarded against by the Immigration Act on the Natal or Cape lines, there would appear to be no reason for the fear of the Indian swamping the European in any department of life. As against the ever increasing European population, the Indian population, which may be estimated at twelve thousand (12,000), would always remain stationary with the addition of the few who may be able to enter the

Transvaal under the education test. In Natal, for instance, during the five years' working of the Act, only 158 new men were able to enter the Colony under the test, when it consisted of a simple set form. As His Excellency is aware, now the test has been considerably raised, being the same as in the Cape Act, which makes it impossible for any but those who have a fairly competent knowledge of the English language to enter the Colony. And although my Association does not share the fears expressed by His Excellency, in view of the popular prejudice, it is prepared to accept the imposition of the restriction, so long as reasonable facilities are afforded for servants and salesmen, who may be absolutely necessary for the carrying on of existing businesses, to enter the Colony.

With reference to the issue of new trading licences to those who did not at any time trade before war in the Transvaal, whether with or without licences, my Association, in order to allay the popular prejudice, and as an earnest of its desire to meet the wishes of the European Colonists as much as possible, would be prepared to accept a general measure, leaving it to the option of the Government or the Local Boards either to grant or refuse such licences, subject, however, to an appeal to the Supreme Court in cases of manifest injustice; for instance, where the new applicant is supported by a majority of European residents, provided, however, that the existing licences are not in any way interfered with, except when the premises are not kept in a sanitary condition or the licensee does not comply with the regulations as to book-keeping, etc. Thus, the issue of new licences will be regulated without any invidious legislation based on distinction of colour.

My Association respectfully submits that the prohibition to own fixed property is as unjust as it is uncalled for, and to prevent a handful of Indians in the Colony from buying land freely is manifestly contrary to British traditions.

My Association has refrained from saying anything with reference to the promise made on behalf of the British Government forty years ago, because, in its humble opinion, the case for the British Indians is exceedingly strong on its merits, but I may take the liberty of saying that, if the situation when Sir Charles Napier gave his proclamation in 1843 was different to what it is today, it was certainly not so different when the late Lord Rosemead and the late Lord Locke, as also Lord Milner, made, during the Boer regime, the most strenuous effort on behalf of the British Indians and more or less successfully protected their rights against encroachment by the late President Kruger. The position, when the hostilities broke out and

when Her late Majesty's ministers declared that the disabilities of the British Indians were one of the causes of war, was also not very different from what it is today.

My Association, therefore, feels that the Indian community has not been fairly treated in that these facts have been overlooked. My Association respectfully submits that the Indians, as subjects of the Crown, and as law-abiding and peaceful residents of the Transvaal, have a claim to an impartial consideration of their position at the hands of His Excellency as representative of the King-Emperor and Head of the State.

The British Indians, moreover, may be excused for drawing His Excellency's attention to the humble services that they, as a race, have always rendered to the Crown. Whether it is in Somaliland, Tibet, China, or in South Africa, the Indian soldier has, side by side with the soldier from the British Isles, borne the brunt of the battle. Lord Curzon spoke the other day in the following glowing terms about India's services to the Empire:

If you want to save your Colony of Natal from being overrun by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help, and she gives it. If you want to rescue the white men's legations from massacre at Peking, and the need is urgent, you ask the Government of India to despatch an expedition and they despatch it. If you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discover that Indian troops and an Indian General are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Indian Government to send them. If you desire to defend any of the extreme outposts or coaling stations of the Empire, Aden, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong Kong, even Tientsin or Shan-hai-kwan, it is the Indian Army to which you turn. If you want to build a railway in Uganda or in the Soudan, you apply to India for labour. When the late Mr. Rhodes was engaged in developing your recent acquisition of Rhodesia, he turned to me for assistance. It is with Indian coolie labour that you exploit the plantations equally of Demerara and Natal. It is with Indian trained officers that you irrigate Egypt and dam the Nile. It is with Indian forest officers that you tap the resources of Central Africa and Siam, with Indian surveyors that you explore all the hidden places of the earth.

Unless we can persuade the millions of India that we give to them absolute justice as between man and man, equality before the law, freedom from tyranny and injustice and oppression, then your Empire will not touch the hearts and will fade away.¹

¹ The wording in this extract from Lord Curzon's Guildhall speech differed slightly from that cited earlier in "India Makes the Empire", 20-8-1904, with which this has been brought in line.

Sir George White generously acknowledged the services of the devoted Prabhu Singh, who, at great risk, sat perched up on a tree within the range of the Boer fire, and never once failed to give the warning of the firing of the Boer guns from the Hill of Umbulwana during the siege of Ladysmith. The Indian monument on the Observatory Hill in Johannesburg is also a testimony to the Indian contribution to the war in South Africa. The British Indians in the Transvaal who belong to that race are, in the humble opinion of my Association, entitled to some measure of consideration, specially as to their vested rights and their right to earn an honest livelihood in the Transvaal, with dignity and self-respect, and without being perpetually reminded that the colour of their skin is a bar to the ordinary civil liberty, as distinguished from the political, under the British flag.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHAIRMAN

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 3-9-1904

49. LETTER TO "THE STAR"²

COURT CHAMBERS,

JOHANNESBURG,

September 3, 1904

TO

THE EDITOR

The Star

SIR,

I trust you will allow me to say a few words with reference to your editorial on the representation of the British Indian Association. I am afraid the most important point of the representation has been missed by you, and, in my humble opinion, the publicists in the country would render a service to it by drawing the attention of the public to the fact that the representation meets entirely the most pressing objections of the Europeans who do not want unrestricted immigration of Indians, and would allow no new licences to them. The Association accepts Sir Arthur Lawley's proposal as to the introduction of an Immigration Ordinance on the Cape model, and

¹ This was reproduced in *Indian Opinion* under the title "British Indian Association: A letter from Mr. Gandhi".

makes a suggestion whereby the objectors themselves, namely, the local authorities, would have the virtual control over the issue of new licences. Could the Indians go further? It should not be forgotten that, when the late Mr. Kruger wanted to nullify the decision of the late High Court by Volksraad resolutions, there was tremendous opposition. The Colonists, who then formed the Opposition, are now asking for the very thing they opposed, for it is nothing less than the decision of the Supreme Court that they wish to override by stopping or suspending the issue of Asiatic licences. Such a thing in a British country would be impossible if self-interest did not temporarily blind the fine sense of British justice. And yet, the British Indian Association, recognising the popular prejudice, is prepared to forego very largely the fruits of victory dearly won after a tremendous struggle. Personally, I do not fear the verdict of any Commission that may be appointed, believing, as I humbly but firmly do, that many of the objections raised against the Indians have no foundation in fact. The number of retail Indian traders in the Transvaal is very small compared to the European. But I think that the appointment of a Commission is unnecessary and it will indefinitely postpone a settlement of the question. It will be very surprising if Mr. Lyttelton goes back upon his despatch and suspends the issue of Indian licences, pending the finding of the Commission. The British Indian Association has ever tried to meet the wishes of the Europeans. It has again made a supreme effort, and you would, I submit, be serving the country by laying stress upon this fact, especially in view of the extreme measures that are being suggested at Potchefstroom and elsewhere. The time is of the essence at present; the controversy has reached a stage which admits of a definite decision as the only remedy. Session after session, legislation has been passed, and each time the question has been shelved. The Association has made definite proposals which, I venture to think, afford a reasonable solution worthy of a trial, at any rate. They have, moreover, the merit of disposing of the question locally.

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 10-9-1904

50. THE INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

We confess that we do not understand Lord Milner's attitude on this question, if the cablegrams received by our contemporaries give a fair summary of His Excellency's view, for we are told that His Lordship thinks that

an attempt to place coloured people on an equality with whites in South Africa is wholly impracticable and wrong in principle, but he holds that when a coloured man possesses a certain high grade of civilisation, he ought to obtain a white man's privileges, irrespective of colour.

If this is all that His Excellency means, we can see nothing inconsistent with it in Mr. Lyttelton's despatch, for he has proposed that further immigration of British Indians should be stopped, save for those who would satisfy the test laid down by His Excellency. With reference to those that are already in the country, he proposes that segregation for sanitary purposes, but not for trade, may be allowed. There, then, remains the question of trading still open, but Lord Milner has answered that question himself when he says :

While we should be justified in legislating even contrary to public opinion to protect the vested rights of the Indians already here, we should not be justified in regulating the Asiatic question so far as it is *res integra* in a manner opposed to the voice of a vast majority of the European population.

If then, the vested rights are to be protected, nothing more has really been asked for by Mr. Lyttelton, for we claim that every Indian who is now settled in the Transvaal, having been allowed to trade free[ly]¹ during the Republican regime, has a vested right in such ability to trade, whether he actually traded or not, and those who may come hereafter will only be such as would possess a certain high grade of civilisation! The whole of the [op]position from His Excellency [fal]ls to the ground, but, un[fort]unately, during the last two [years], we have learnt things [which] enable us to know that [howev]er, painful it may be to [have to] say so, Lord Milner does not mean what he says. There is no intention to grant the better-class Asiatic any special rights, and the vested rights have tapered down to actual trade carried on by Indians on the 11th of October, 1899. For, was it not the contention of the Asiatic Traders' Commission that they had authority

¹ This and other words in square brackets have been reconstructed from the damaged original

only to investigate the cases of those who were trading at, and immediately on, the commencement of hostilities, and that, under the reference, they could only deal with the cases of people who were trading as far back as October 1899? Had it not been for the godsend in the shape of the Supreme Court decision, more than 75 per cent of the Indian traders would by this time have been wiped out of existence under the above reference, and probably the Colonial Office would have done nothing. We, therefore, plead for a frank statement of the policy. As to the European opposition also, we have to protest against His Excellency laying so much stress upon it for two reasons: [first] no opposition on the part of one body of British subjects could be allowed to avail in order to take away the legitimate rights of another body; [second] the opposition is fostered by the Government itself. Mr. Lyttelton's despatch has in that respect been an eye-opener. Although Mr. Duncan and Sir Richard Solomon made what appeared to us to be a righteous defence on behalf of the weaker party, when the Asiatic Traders' Commission was appointed at Sir George Farrar's instigation, both of them, as would appear from the despatch, have been asking Mr. Lyttelton as vigorously as they could to take away practically everything from the Indians. We find the same subservience to European sentiment in the Legislative Council. The motion proposed by Sir George Farrar, regarding a Commission to be appointed from England, and a stoppage of the issue of all new Indian licences in the meanwhile, is gladly accepted by the Government. When the late Mr. Kruger passed any resolutions to nullify the decisions given by his High Court, he was furiously blamed. His conduct was considered to be brutal, short-sighted, and all the ugly names that could be given him were brought into play. Not a voice, however, is raised in protest when the very same thing is proposed by the representative of the British Crown, namely, to take away the right of the Indian to trade in the Colony, which has been emphatically recognised by the unanimous decision of the independent judges of the Transvaal. We hope, therefore, that Mr. Lyttelton will realise the position in which the British Indians in the Transvaal are placed, and will realise also that the local Government, having so thoroughly allied itself with the popular prejudice, is hardly in a position to give an unbiassed opinion. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, it has been very much discredited. There is intense dissatisfaction among the people of the Transvaal with reference to its policy in many other matters. It is, therefore, afraid to do right in the Indian case, because it

is that of people who are voiceless and who are powerless to give any trouble to the Government. May Mr. Lyttelton have sufficient strength to save what he has termed “the national honour” in connection with the Indian question is our fervent prayer.

Indian Opinion, 3-9-1904

51. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG
September 5, 1904

TO
THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENSINGTON ROAD
LONDON, ENGLAND

SIR,

The matters have now reached a crisis with reference to the Indian question. The *Indian Opinion* would give you all the information up to date. The representation of the British Indian Association printed therein will, I think, shew the position clearly. The proposals of the Association are as moderate as they possibly could be and they represent the irreducible minimum that the British Indians are entitled to. You will there see all the most reasonable objections of the Colonists met. Even the point as to the educational test has been yielded, but the right of review by the Supreme Court on the question of licences and the ownership of land are absolutely essential. As to the latter, if necessary, certain portions may be reserved for exclusive European ownership. As to the licences, I may, at the risk of repetition, state the position clearly. Any Licensing Act should leave untouched the existing licences and the right to trade freely to those who were trading before war whether with or without licences but who have not yet taken out licences since British occupation mainly because they have not yet been allowed to return to the Colony, unless, of course, with reference to these licences, the premises are not kept according to the

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji communicated the contents of this letter, excluding the postscript in the form of a statement to the Secretary of State for the Colonies (C.O. 291 Volume 79, Individuals N) and the Secretary of State for India (C.O. 291, Volume 75, India Office). The statement was also published in *India*, 7-10-1904, as a despatch dated September 9 from its Johannesburg Correspondent.

sanitary requirements or because the books are not kept in the English language. As to the new licences, the Government or the municipal authorities may have full discretion subject to the right of review. This will set the whole question at rest. The proposal is based on the Natal model without its most unjust clause depriving the Supreme Court of its inherent jurisdiction, a fact which has rendered uncertain the position of every Indian trader there. If the proposals of the Association are accepted, the appointment of a Commission would appear to be quite unnecessary. The licences could not be suspended, as suggested by the Legislative Council resolution. And if the licences are not suspended, I hardly think Lord Milner will accept a Commission. In fact, the object of asking for a Commission was to secure indirectly what Mr. Lyttelton declined to grant directly. It would, too, indefinitely postpone the question of licences and, if Mr. Lyttelton agreed to suspend the issue of licences, there would be no hurry on the part of the anti-Indians to have any definite legislation.

I note that the question of the Orange River Colony has not yet been raised. I venture to think that it should be kept prominently in view for, to my mind, it is nothing short of a scandal that the Colony is still allowed to shut its gates almost entirely in the face of Indians.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

PS.

Sir Arthur Lawley, as also Mr. Duncan, the Colonial Secretary, left last week for London. May I suggest that a mixed deputation should wait on them and discuss the question with them? It might influence them very greatly, and, in any case, it will shew them that influential men holding different shades of opinion are absolutely unanimous in connection with this question.

From a photostat of the typewritten original: G. N. 2260.

52. THE TRANSVAAL

We have published the important dispatches from Lord Milner and Sir Arthur Lawley, to which Mr. Lyttelton's dispatch, also already published in these columns, was a reply. These documents shew the importance of the Indian question, not only in the Transvaal, but in South Africa. The British Indian Association of the Transvaal has sent in a representation to the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, (reproduced by

us last week)¹, controverting some of the assertions made by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in his dispatch, wherein he has clearly shewn himself to be more a partisan than an impartial administrator. There is throughout that dispatch an eagerness to put forward all the points that His Excellency could conceive of as being in favour of the European objections. He has not hesitated to advise Mr. Lyttelton even to break the promises repeatedly given to the British Indians in the name of the Government he represents. Now we do not consider that in affairs of State there may not be circumstances justifying a breach of promises once made, but in this instance there is not a shadow of justification for it. Sir Arthur Lawley has dwelt on Sir Charles Napier's proclamation of 1843, and thinks that the situation then was quite different from the one presented to-day. As, however, the British Indian Association has reminded His Excellency, that promise was acted on even up to 1899. Not long ago, Lord Ripon laid it down as the emphatic policy of the Government, in the dispatch, when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies, that it was the wish of Her Majesty's Government to treat all her subjects on a footing of equality. We must confess that we have failed to see a single circumstance which would justify a wilful breach of promises solemnly made and reiterated. Nor is there any ground for magnifying the question out of all proportion, and then justifying iniquitous differential legislation. One could understand such an attitude if the doors of the Transvaal were proposed to be kept wide open for the reception of the millions from India, but in the same breath that Sir Arthur Lawley draws a lurid picture of the state in which the Transvaal would be, if India was allowed to pour her millions into the country, he also advocates the adoption of the Cape Act thus reducing Indian immigration practically to a vanishing point. To put a few thousand Indians, under galling restraints, in a population of one million white men, a population, moreover, which is ever increasing, is a measure that ought not to be tolerated for a single minute in a British Colony. That Sir Arthur Lawley, however, has been fit in his representative capacity to advocate such a measure is a circumstance of ominous importance. What has happened today with reference to the Indian question may happen tomorrow regarding some other. It is the underlying principle which should cause anxiety for the future. If the views held by His Excellency are at all popular with the British administrators, they

¹ *Vide* "Memorial to Colonial Secretary", dated "Prior to September 3, 1904".

mark, in our humble opinion, a decline from the highest British traditions which alone have made the Empire what it is. And even while the so-called "Imperial wave" is passing through the Empire, seeds are probably being sown for its disruption. For the sake of keeping up a nominal connection with the Colonists, England has to surrender all that is noblest and best in her. Looking at the representation of the British Indian Association, it appears to us to be unanswerable; and, if the proposals made therein are accepted by the Government, they afford an extremely easy solution of the difficult question. We consider that the Association could have rested on the advantage gained by the decision in the recent test case; but, since life is made up of compromises, and a policy of conciliation is preferable to any other, the Association has done well in putting forward the most reasonable and conciliatory suggestions as to immigrations, as also dealers' licences. One fact, however, must be borne in mind, namely, that it is, as it ought to be, the irreducible minimum that the Indian community could be expected to accept. We have never been able to reconcile ourselves to the view of tabooing the Indian languages in the education test. It is uncalled for, and it will ever remain a matter of soreness that both Lord Milner and Sir Arthur Lawley refused to agree to the perfectly just proposal made by Mr. Lyttelton that Indian languages should be recognised. However, for the sake of buying peace, and in order to shew how reasonable the Indians are, as they have always been even under most trying conditions, the British Indian Association is prepared to accept an Immigration Act along the Cape lines, and to give absolute control, subject to review by the Supreme Court, over the issue of fresh dealers' licences, which means practically for an Indian to surrender his right to trade, and yet that is exactly what the Association has done. In return, all that the Association asks for is the right of ownership of fixed property and yet, we are not sure that it would be a new thing, for it is a question whether it is possible to attack the ownership clause in Law 3 of 1885. The principle of compulsory segregation also is repudiated by the Association, and as the Supreme Court has shewn, there is no compulsion warranted by Law 3 of 1885. In the face of this fact, it is indeed strange that Sir Arthur Lawley should call his proposals "concessions", and then tell Mr. Lyttelton that he may have difficulty in carrying them out. Every one of His Excellency's proposals, as a matter of fact, constitutes a fresh restriction of the liberty of the British Indians. If, however, the representation of the British Indian Asso-

ciation is met in a fair spirit, the whole controversy can be closed, at any rate for the time being, and the necessity of an expensive commission from England be avoided. The argument has often been advanced that, seeing that the self-governing Colonies have been allowed to pass certain laws, the Transvaal also ought to be placed on the same footing. We may, therefore, incidentally mention the fact that nowhere has the Home Government agreed to such extraordinary proposals as those made by Sir Arthur Lawley. Australia, it will be recollected, passed an immigration Act applying to Asiatics as such. The Act was vetoed, and one of a general character based on the Natal model had to be passed by that Colony. Natal itself, when it endeavoured to pass an Act specially directed against Asiatics, was unsuccessful in the attempt. If, therefore, the legislation proposed by Sir Arthur Lawley is at all countenanced, it will be totally new departure on the part of the Home authorities.

Indian Opinion, 10-9-1904

53. AN ENGINE OF OPPRESSION

Permit restrictions against Indians entering the Transvaal become more and more severe day by day, while greater facilities are being afforded to the Europeans, whether British subjects or otherwise. Now, officers have been appointed to board steamers on their arrival, so that Europeans who may wish to proceed to the Transvaal may have their permits granted to them without having to wait. On the other hand, on the ground of plague, the Indians are being prevented, whether they are at the Cape, Natal or Delagoa Bay, from entering the Transvaal, and that, although they may give absolute proof that they are refugees. The most glaring instance that has come to our knowledge is in connection with the visit of the Indian football teams from Kimberley and Durban. In another column, we publish the whole of the correspondence which speaks for itself. The Acting Chief Secretary could not see why temporary permits should be granted to British Indian players who, be it remembered, are all respectable men and living in European style, if that counts for anything. Football is an essential[ly] English game, and we would have thought that Mr. Robinson would not have referred to it sarcastically, as he has done in the correspondence in question. Mr. C. Bird, Principal Under-Secretary, to whom the Indian players ought to feel most deeply grateful, sent a pressing wire to the Permit Secretary, which, too met with scant courtesy at the hands of the Transvaal authorities. Mr. Bird was very emphatic. He said: "The Natal team are all respectable men,

chiefly employed as clerks, and I see no more danger in allowing them to go to Johannesburg than anyone else". Nothing could have been stronger, and coming as it did from responsible quarters, the recommendation might have been listened to. But perhaps in the Transvaal people are living in the Middle Ages.

Indian Opinion, 10-9-1904

54. THE INDIANS IN POTCHEFSTROOM

The people at Potchefstroom seem to be very much exercised over the few Indian store-keepers who are earning their livelihood in the town. In their eagerness to drive every Indian away from Potchefstroom, they are resorting to intimidation. Only the other day, a fire took place in an Indian store which, it is believed, is the work of an incendiary. The papers say the Indians are alarmed, and that the insurance companies do not take Indian risks, and that even the white men living in the vicinity of the Indian stores have become uneasy. Happily, the police seem to be on the *qui vive* and there seems to be no ground for great anxiety on that score. We are grieved, however, to find that even the Potchefstroom Town Council has allowed itself to be carried away, and has placed on record a resolution unworthy of a representative body. The following is the recommendation of the Health Committee of the Town Council:

That, in view of the fact that no movement is being made by the Government to locate Asiatics in bazaars, this Council order all Asiatics in the town to retire and reside at night in the Indian location. That a month's notice be given the said Asiatic traders by way of advertisement in the local newspapers, in which to conform to the Council's direction. And further, should it prove necessary, that fifty special white police be enrolled to assist in the carrying out of the Council's resolution, and that the Council urgently requests the Resident Magistrate to give all the assistance in his power to that end.

As we have already said in previous issues, there is no power given in Law 3 of 1885, as amended in 1886, to compulsorily segregate British Indians. The action of the Council would, therefore, be utterly illegal if an attempt were made to enforce the resolution above quoted. How, in the face of the dictum of the Chief Justice with reference to this clause in his judgment in the Test case of *Habib Motan v. The Government*, the Town Councillors of Potchefstroom have thought fit to suggest that fifty special white police be enrolled to put the Indians in the Location, presumably by force, we cannot understand. We can but hope that the Government would take note of the resolution in question and warn the Town Council against any such step. The Indians have by law a perfect right to trade and reside

where they like, and they have a right to expect protection in the exercise of that right from any violence, even though it may be from a legally constituted body like the Town Council of potchefstroom.

Indian Opinion, 10-9-1904

55. INDIANS AT THE CAPE

In the Cape of Good Hope *Government Gazette*, dated the 30th August last, appears the following proclamation issued by His Excellency, Major-General Edmund Smith Brook, the officiating administrator of the Colony:

I do hereby proclaim, declare and make known that, from and after the date hereof, it shall not be lawful for any Arab, Indian or other Asiatic, of whatsoever nationality, to enter any of the Territories aforesaid (namely, the Transkei, including Gealekaland; Tembuland, including Emigrant Tembuland and Bomvanaland; Pondoland, including East and West Pondoland; Port St John's; Griqualand East;) without a special permit signed by the Resident Magistrate, or by his order, and approved by the chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories; and any such person entering any of the said Territories without any such permit shall, upon conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty shillings, or in default of payment of fine, to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any period not exceeding one month, and be ordered to remove from the Territory forthwith; and should any such person as aforesaid disobey such order, he shall, upon conviction, be subjected to a further penalty not exceeding twenty shillings and be liable to be summarily removed beyond the boundaries of such Territory.

What the Indians have done in the Cape Colony to merit this restriction, we do not know. The Indian population at the Cape is small enough in all conscience, and the Cape politicians have often made it a boast that, in that Colony, they are not guided by Colour prejudice. The ink with which Mr. Schreiner penned his reply to the *Bloemfontein Post* on the Question of the Native franchise is hardly yet dry, and we now read in the Cape *Government Gazette* the Proclamation referred to. If, as Mr. Schreiner says, it is true that the people at the Cape are quite satisfied that the native of the soil should enjoy the franchise right, and that the test whereby a person's merits should be judged is to be not the colour of his skin but the degree of civilisation attained by him, this prohibition against the entry of the Indians into the Cape dependencies appears to be unintelligible. If it is not a crime for the resident Indians at the Cape to remain there, why should it be a crime for them to enter its dependencies? Special circumstances could undoubtedly be conceived which would justify such a

treatment, but certainly the Proclamation is totally silent. We are, therefore, quite in order in concluding that the prohibition has been issued against the Indians as such. We consider it to be a wanton insult offered to the Indian community, aggravated by the fact that the Cape Peninsula is practically closed against any new Indian immigrants. Indeed, this latest invasion of the Indian's right as a British subject savours too much of the anti-Colour wave that is at present passing over South Africa, and which was initiated last year by the Transvaal Government issuing the Bazaar Notice 356 of 1903. We hope that the British Indians at the Cape have protested against the proclamation, and that they will not rest content until it is abrogated or shown to be justified by any exceptional circumstances. We have altogether too much of this kind of Proclamations against which there seems to be no effectual remedy. The Letters Patent which, if it were a question of passing legislation through the proper channels, as for instance, the Legislative Council, would have to be referred to the Home Government, but legislation by Proclamation, as in the case in question, is evidently not under any such control. The Governor acts without the assistance of the legislative body, and his orders have the force of law. These Proclamations are not submitted to the authorities in Downing Street before they are issued. It, therefore, amounts to this, that sometimes it is really easier to tighten the yoke that grinds the Indian in territories that are more directly under the Crown than where there is a properly constituted legal machinery. This is a question which we submit for consideration by politicians in England who are interested in the Imperial question of the status of British Indians outside India.

Indian Opinion, 17-9-1904

56. *THE LATE MR. PRISK*

Death has removed from us a courteous gentleman and a publicist of great ability in the person of Mr. Prisk. In a quiet and unassuming manner, the deceased gentleman did a great deal for the community in his own special department. The life of a journalist is never an easy one. He has responsibilities of which, perhaps, the public have no adequate notion. On the one hand, he has to please his employers, and, on the other, to represent public opinion, in doing which he may have to make great sacrifices. He has often also to deal with conflicting interests and examine matters that come before him, not merely from the public standpoint, but also from his own, and when his own views, conscientiously held, run counter to public opinion in a given

matter, the situation becomes very delicate. Mr. Prisk, however, steered himself clear of all the shoals and rocks that come in the way of newspapermen, and performed his duties unflinchingly. We can well remember the assistance that he rendered in an encouraging manner at the time when Indian famine relief subscriptions were opened in Natal. Many of our readers will recollect the special cartoons that were published as supplements to *The Natal Mercury*, and the great space that was allotted to the famine literature in that paper. We tender to Mr. Prisk's family our respectful condolences, and hope his mantle will fall on worthy shoulders.

Indian Opinion, 17-9-1904

57. INDIANS IN PIETERSBURG

Our contemporary, *The Star*, publishes the information that "a White League has been formed in Pietersburg to take action on the Asiatic question. The executive committee consists of three representatives of the Town Council, four delegates of the local Boer Vereeniging, and four other prominent townspeople" and that, at the Town Council meeting, it was decided to approach the Government with the object of obtaining authority for Municipalities to regulate hours of business. We are not surprised at the idea of forming a White League in such a hotbed of Colour prejudice as Pietersburg is. All we can say is that we do not understand the reasons for this activity, for Lord Milner, with an iron hand, has stopped the entry even of the few Indian refugees who were allowed to return to their homes per month. Indeed, as our readers must have noticed, His Excellency would not even allow temporary permission to an Indian football team to pass the sacred precincts of the Transvaal. What, then, would the White Leagues do to justify their existence, unless, like the Potchefstroom vigilants, they intend to terrorise the resident Indians? The proposed action of the Town Council with reference to the regulation of closing hours, we sympathise with. We understand that the Indians in Potchefstroom have taken the lead in the matter and have decided to close their stores at the same hours as the Europeans. And we can but hope that the Indians in Pietersburg will follow the excellent example set to them by their Potchefstroom brethern, and render it unnecessary for the Town Council to have any such bye-laws. It will be a graceful and timely action on their part, and perhaps, it will go a long way to shew the

would be members of the proposed White League that, so far as possible, they are anxious to conciliate their sentiments.

Indian Opinion, 17-9-1904

58. INDIANS IN POTCHEFSTROOM

We reproduce in another column an admirable letter addressed to the *Transvaal Leader* by Mr. Abdool Rahman, the Secretary of the Potchefstroom Indian Association. The letter shews clearly how mistaken the zeal of the Vigilants' Association is, and to what an extent the Indians are prepared to meet the wishes of the white men. The most important part of the communication, however, is the information contained therein that the Indian merchants in Potchefstroom have decided to close their stores at the same time as the Europeans. This step has been taken without any pressure, and we consider that it is one in the right direction and worthy of imitation by British Indian merchants in other towns. Indeed, as it is, they have got a very strong case, but this latest move on the part of the Potchefstroom Indians makes their position much stronger. We hope that Mr. Abdool Rahman's request for "some reciprocation of the sentiment from the European British subjects who, for better or for worse, have to rely upon protection from the same flag that covers the British Indian" will meet with the response it deserves.

Indian Opinion, 17-9-1904

59. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,
September 19, 1904

TO

THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENSINGTON ROAD
LONDON, S.E., ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

From the Blue book received this week on the Indian position, I notice that Mr. Lyttelton has laid stress on the question of the sites for Indian bazaars.

As you will have seen from the British Indian representation² in reply to Sir Arthur Lawley's dispatch, the statement is reiterated, and lest the matter may be overlooked, I again emphasize the fact that most of the sites are certainly unfit for trade. The statement has been made not without totally independent testimony from Europeans of standing and all those reports have been furnished to His Excellency. In Krugersdorp alone is the site chosen at all good, and therefore, without any compulsion, those who wanted Stands have applied for them. In other places where new sites have been established, practically no applications have been made.

The chief thing, however, is to avoid compulsory segregation. So far as the principle of Bazaars is concerned, people may be induced to take up sites by setting apart Bazaars in suitable localities and the problem will solve itself.

I hope you will see the leader in the *Indian Opinion* on the Cape Administrator's Proclamation, prohibiting the entry of Indians into the Transkeian Territories without permits. This is a fresh restriction the reason for which it is difficult to understand, and the

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji reproduced the text of this letter in a communication which he addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Secretary of State for India. (C.O. 291, Volume 79, Individuals N., and C.O. 291, Volume 75, India Office).² *Vide* "Memorial to Colonial Secretary", dated "Prior to September 3, 1904".

Territories mentioned in the schedule to the proclamation are the dependencies of the Cape.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the typewritten original : G.N. 2261.

60. MORE ABOUT SIR ARTHUR LAWLEY'S DISPATCH

The Blue book received this week from London shews very forcibly how His Excellency has been less than fair in dealing with the position of the British Indians. Sir Mancherjee resented the general description of the Indians in South Africa as "Asiatics of a low type". His Excellency, therefore, has in reply appended to his dispatch the correspondence that was published in *The Rand Daily Mail* during the plague epidemic, signed by some Indians. When the cordon was drawn round the Location, it is not surprising that a few of them, considering themselves to be better-living than the rest, thought that, by throwing mud at the latter, they would gain some advantage for themselves, and so wrote the letter in question. But His Excellency, who knows the exact position personally, might have made use of his knowledge in order to correct the exaggerations of the frightened correspondents. His excellency ought to have known that the reference was directed to the Indians who were living in the Location, who undoubtedly, as a rule, are below those who are living outside the Location. He might have known that they did not and could not represent the whole of the Indian community; and the correspondence itself shews that even the writers who were living in the Location resented the idea of being classed in the same category as some of the lowest-class Indians, and be cooped up in the Location. From that point of view, they were perfectly correct, because we have seen and known many decent-living people in that locality, some of them having well-built, substantial residences. With due deference, therefore, to His Excellency, it may still be said that to describe Indians in South Africa as "Asiatics of a low type" is "unfortunate".

Our contemporary, *The Natal Advertiser*, has controverted Sir Arthur Lawley's description of Natal, namely, that "the moment one crosses the Natal border, he loses the impression that he is travelling in a European country at all". Our contemporary calls it "an exaggerated description", and we cannot but echo the sentiment. Except at the railway stations between Pinetown and Charlestown, you see very few

Indian faces on the main line, and, if you see a few porters at the stations, it is because the railway authorities find it convenient to employ indentured Indian labour. If, therefore, it is an evil, the Colony has courted it itself, and in spite of His Excellency's sneer, it will continue to do so.

Mr. Lyttelton required definite observations on the statement furnished to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji that "the sites for the Asiatic Bazaars were utterly useless for trade". His Excellency has dismissed the matter in a few lines thus:

The British Indian Association maintains that these sites are quite unsuitable, but they have, in my opinion, overstated their case. The objections raised by the townspeople have been also unreasonable. I think that the selections have been well made.

Now we make bold to say that His Excellency has not seen the new sites in the majority of cases. The British Indian Association has reite-rated the charge and it is, to say the least of it, very unfair that, without having seen the localities, His Excellency should have made the state-ment he has, as against the testimony of eye-witnesses who are, more-over, Europeans of standing in their own towns, either merchants or medical men, quite competent to pronounce a dispassionate judgment. It is they who have condemned the sites in the majority of cases as totally unfit for trade, and often unsuitable even from a sanitary stand-point. In any case, it cannot be denied that in not a single instance have streets or wards been assigned for Bazaars, but in every case, Locations have been set apart and miscalled Bazaars.

If we have dwelt at some length again on His Excellency's dispatch, we have done so in order to shew how much more difficult the position of Indians is rendered by the head of the State taking up a biassed view of the situation. Important negotiations are still going on. The question is undecided, and we think it right to lay stress upon the fact that the British Indians have in no case overstated the position, and that wherever they have been able to do so, they have shown a willingness to yield to European sentiment.

Indian Opinion, 24-9-1904

61. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS

RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,

September 26, 1904

TO

THE HONOURABLE MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI

22, KENSINGTON ROAD

LONDON, S.E., ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

I have your two letters, for which I thank you. Mr. Omar, too, told me what you had advised in your letters. I shall endeavour henceforth to divide my communications whenever it becomes necessary. I have written to Mr. Nazar to send directly *Indian Opinion* with the marks as you suggest. The Government has written saying that it does not propose to introduce legislation along the lines laid down in the latest representation submitted by the British Indian Association. This shews that the Government is not going to be satisfied with merely accomplishing its object, to restrict future Indian immigration and to regulate the issue of licences to new applicants. It evidently intends to establish the principle of legislation applicable to British Indians as such. If so, it is a most dangerous doctrine and it will be a reversal of Mr. Chamberlain's policy. If differential legislation is sanctioned for the Transvaal, the Cape and Natal will certainly follow suit.

*I remain,
Yours sincerely,*
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original : G.N. 2262.

62. THE GRAND OLD MAN OF INDIA

The number of *India* to hand by the last mail contains a graphic account of the reception given to Mr. Naoroji at the recently held International Socialist Congress which met at Amsterdam.

The special correspondent of *India* states:

The President, Herr Van Kol, called upon the Congress to rise and stand in silent reverence. . . . There then followed a wonderful and most inspiring manifestation. As Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji walked slowly to the centre of the platform, the great audience that filled the vast hall stood silently and uncovered before him. Simple as was the deed, the earnestness and unanimity of its performance rendered it most impressive, particularly when it was borne in mind that the same homage was rendered by the representatives of so many and such very different peoples and nationalities. Then, after a sorrowful tribute had thus been paid to the people whom Mr. Naoroji represented, a tremendous and enthusiastic demonstration was made in honour of the representative himself. From the people of India, the thoughts of the great audience centred on the dignified person of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. They remembered what had been said concerning his life-long endeavours, and awakened the echoes by their cheers, by the clapping of hands and shouts of welcome and applause. Long and earnestly was the ovation continued, and it made an indelible impression on all who witnessed this great manifestation of that international solidarity which has spread, not merely from nation to nation, but from continent to continent.

It must be a matter of pride to every Indian to know how the revered father of India, as Mr. Dadabhai is endearingly called by the Indians, is held in esteem by the people of Europe. Mr. Dadabhai, having been born on the 4th of September, 1825, celebrated his seventy-ninth birthday on the 4th September last. May he live still for many years to come to stimulate the younger generation to deeds of self-sacrifice and service of their country is our prayer.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

63. *THE TRANSVAAL WHITE LEAGUE*

In another column we publish the prospectus of the Transvaal White League, formed in Pietersburg. The objects are

to make a united stand by all the white inhabitants of this country against the Asiatics, to promote legislation to regulate and control the issue and renewal of licences to Asiatic traders, and to force them to vacate the towns and country districts and to reside and trade in bazaars specially set aside for them.

The other three objects are intended to further the two we have just quoted. The League, except making a blustering noise, will be simply beating the air, because there is no influx of Asiatics into the country unless, of course, it would bestir itself towards preventing the entry of thousands of Chinese indentured slaves who are flooding the country; for the free immigration of Asiatics, British and otherwise, has been effectually prevented by Lord Milner, even to the extent of

stopping the entry of those who have paid to the old Government the sum of £3 as the price of being allowed to remain in the Colony. As to the regulation and control of the licences, the British Indian Association has offered it to them. And as to forcing the Asiatics to vacate the towns and country districts and to reside in Bazaars, we could hardly conceive that it is seriously required, if the gentlemen can get full control of the licences. It is worthy of note that on the League is represented very prominently the Town Council of Pietersburg. Side by side with this establishment of the Transvaal White League, preparations, so the Johannesburg papers say, are now being made to canvass signatures to the Petition, which emanated from the Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, and it has already appeared in this paper. Supposing that it is signed by every adult European male in the Transvaal, would it make the proposal for confiscation—and it is nothing else—legal or justifiable? Or would it be the clear duty of His Majesty's Government, in spite of the Petition, to protect the vested interests and rights of the British Indians ?

THE ENGLISH PRESS AND THE BRITISH INDIAN BLUE BOOK

In sharp contrast to the above, one finds a perusal of the almost unanimous opinion expressed by the English Press on the Blue book very refreshing.

To take away from them the right they enjoyed under the Kruger regime, of trading outside locations, would be to stultify ourselves in the eyes of the world, and to sanction an act of injustice to men who are as entitled as are the white inhabitants of the Transvaal to equitable treatment at the hands of the Imperial Government.

Thus says the conservative *Morning Post*, and adds that

the adoption of Lord Milner's proposal would furnish just cause for resentment among the three hundred millions of His Majesty's Indian subjects, whose rights and feelings cannot be ignored.

The Times is no less emphatic. It shews, therefore, that outside, unbiassed opinion is absolutely on the side of the British Indian. There are, indeed, very few instances in which the weight of authority has been thrown so forcibly against the cause, and yet its justice has remained supreme.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

64. THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRE AT POTCHEFSTROOM

We take the following from the *Transvaal Leader* to shew how the fire in an Indian store at Potchefstroom originated.

The Town Police are evidently perturbed at the outbreak of fire which recently occurred on the stoep of a coolie store, and the Chamber of Commerce has been asked to assist in the protection of property from incendiaries. Captain Johns' letter stated:

'The plan adopted in this case was the throwing of paraffin over the verandah, shutters and doors, and setting same alight with wax matches'.

No traces of paraffin were found inside, and Captain Johns was convinced that the attempt was made by some malicious person from without, which person, being still at large, and having been frustrated in his efforts in this case, may extend his energies to other parts of the town.

The letter continued:

'In view of this idea, I have increased the number of police on night duty; but I suggest that you advise your members to employ their own watchmen, as it is impossible for me, with the few men at my disposal, to give absolute security against a determined incendiary'.

A reply was sent that it was not considered that any danger to white merchants' stores existed.

Captain Johns of the Fire Brigade deserves the thanks of the community for being on the alert, but what are we to say of the reply returned by the Chamber of Commerce to his letter asking the Chamber to keep a watch? The Chamber knows too well that there is no danger involved for the white merchants' stores, and, therefore, it considers that it is no concern of the Chamber to busy itself about fires in Indian stores, even though fires may take place owing to malicious intention.

We understand that a similar occurrence has taken place at Pietersburg, where an Indian store has been burned down. We are not yet in full possession of the facts, but we draw the attention of the Transvaal Government to the curious coincidence at both places. At Potchefstroom, the activity of the Vigilance Association synchronises with the fire in an Indian store there. At Pietersburg, the formation of the White League is immediately followed by a fire in an Indian store, and the activity at both these places is, we venture to think, a direct

result of the dispatches by Sir Arthur Lawley and Lord Milner. They have given the mischief-makers extraordinary encouragement.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

65. WARMBATHS IN THE TRANSVAAL

A correspondent from Warmbaths in the Transvaal writes to us in Gujarati, complaining that the authorities do not provide facilities for British Indians to make use of these famous healing waters. He says that, if any Indian wants to make use of them, he is merely directed to go to the rooms set apart for the Kaffirs. It appears that he offered to build a place for Indians, but the offer was not entertained. We are sure that, if there is any truth in the statement made by our correspondent, the Government will remedy the difficulty at once, and provide suitable facility for those Indians who may wish to make use of these waters.

We draw the attention of the British Indian Association of the Transvaal to the letter in question.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

66. INDIANS AT THE CAPE

We reproduce in another column a letter written by the Cape Government to Mr. A. Kadir, Secretary of the British Indian League at Cape Town, in connection with the complaint made by the League regarding the working of the Immigration Restriction Act. The letter is courteous enough, but beyond that we cannot say much for it. In not one essential particular has any concession been made by the Government, and shelter has been taken behind the legislation passed from which relief was asked for. The League made a very reasonable request that some facility should be given to the resident merchants for importing servants from India in place of those who might return to India. The answer given is that such a servant, if he does not know a European language, cannot enter the Colony. A similar reply has been given with reference to minor brothers of persons who may be domiciled in the Colony, but the answer merely begs the question. If the Government is really anxious, as is stated in the opening paragraph of the letter, "that the law should be administered so as not to cause unnecessary hardship to any individual, or to any particular section of the community, irrespective of class, creed or colour" there is

ample power given to it to give relief in the desired direction. A clause in the Cape Act provides for special exemptions being made, and we certainly think that, if the resident merchants are to be at all considered, they ought to have the right to import servants. Whether they may be able to write in a European language or not, the servants might be allowed to enter the Colony under restrictions, and without being given the full rights of citizenship, but if total prohibition is enforced, it means that the position of the domiciled Indians would become more and more difficult as days go by, and as the indigenous supply of servants is exhausted, as it is bound in time to become; we hope that the Secretary of the British Indian League will not leave the matter until full justice is done.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

67. A GOOD EXAMPLE

We extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Omar Hajee Amod Zaveri, who has returned after a long absence from the country, and after a prolonged visit to Europe and America. We think that Mr. Omar was well advised in paying a visit to these continents. The more our merchants go to these countries, the better able they would be to succeed in business, as also in other departments of life. After travelling in Europe and America, not merely for the sake of pleasure, but for the sake of gaining knowledge and broadening one's mind, one is able to cope with many difficulties, especially such as face an Indian in south Africa, and Mr. Omar has set in this respect an example worthy to be followed by other merchants. We hope that Mr. Omar will make full use of the knowledge he has gained during his travels and, wherever necessary, put it into practice.

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

68. AN UN-ENGLISH ENGLISH MAGISTRATE

A globe-trotter, who styles himself "An English Magistrate", has been travelling in Natal, and has given his impressions to the public through the columns of *The Natal Mercury*. After speaking in a flattering tone of Durban, "An English Magistrate" proceeds:

Notwithstanding this, however, knowledge of Durban is, in my view of it, accompanied with one or two regrets. How is it that so marked a position has been acquired in a white man's city by Indians and Arabs? They are fellow-subjects with us of His Majesty the King, to be sure, but white is white and black is black, all the same. I was told—whether legendary or not I cannot

say—that the proprietor of one of the most palatial stores in Durban, wishing to acquire honourably the store of a small Arab trader at his corner, sent his solicitor to inquire if he might be allowed to buy the business and at what figure. The Arab replied that he was not just then disposed to sell, but that, if his neighbour would name the price for his store, it would be at once considered.

The other regret that the writer expresses is that there should be any Kaffir policemen in Durban. If the traveller had enquired sufficiently about the history of Durban, he might have known that though a white man's city, as he calls it, it owes its beauty and grandeur to the presence of the Indian; he might have known that the Durban Corporation employs a very large number of indentured Indians in order that travellers like "An English Magistrate" may find all the modern comforts of life. As to the other regret of his: in deference to the poor Kaffir constable, we cannot help saying that Durban owes its comparative freedom from crime to his presence, not because the Kaffir police are more efficient than the European police, but because it is impossible for the Borough to afford the necessary number of policemen [except] by employing the lower-paid Kaffirs. But for the presence of the Indian and the Kaffir police in white man's or otherwise. Why, then, such un-English jealousy? Or is there something insidious in the South African climate itself which makes a man forget his traditions?

Indian Opinion, 1-10-1904

69. LETTER TO G. K. GOKHALE

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
October 3, 1904

DEAR PROFESSOR GOKHALE,

I have purposely refrained from writing to you from time to time as I know how busy you are, but in view of the approaching session of the Congress, I can no longer do so, and I beg to enclose herewith a copy of the Blue book published in London on the situation. That deals with the Transvaal only, and it is to the position in the Transvaal that all effort has to be directed. Contrary to all expectations, Lord Milner, who, on the eve of the war, was the champion of

the oppressed including the British Indians, has completely turned round and, as you will see from his dispatch, is quite prepared to deprive the Indians of even what little rights they possessed in the Transvaal before war. I enclose the representation of the British Indian Association in reply to the dispatches which would shew how far the Indians are prepared to go. You will see that therein the Indians are willing to concede almost all that the Europeans would want, namely, restriction of Immigration and regulation of licences by local authorities in exchange for the right to own landed property, but the proposal has been rejected by the Government as unsatisfactory, simply, I fear, because it wants to establish the principle of differential legislation. The British Indian Association says the legislation, whatever it may be, should be applicable to all; the Transvaal Government wants to pass a measure which would be applicable only to Asiatics, whether British subjects or not. Such legislation, as you are aware, has not been sanctioned even for self-governing Colonies, as, for instance, the Cape and Natal, although at both the places Government intended to pass such legislation.

In Sir Mancherjee's representation in the Blue book (Statement A), the registration fee of £3 is stated to be an annual payment. As a matter of fact, it is a payment once for all.

As to the licences, the test case since brought¹ puts the Indians on the same footing as the Europeans.

The institution of photographic passes has been done away with.

In the Orange River Colony, the legislation is most drastic and nothing has yet been done to remove it.

In Natal, the Dealers' Licenses Act, which gives arbitrary powers to the local authorities without the right of appeal to the Supreme Court, is causing a great deal of hardship.

I hope that you have been following *Indian Opinion* which gives most accurate information.

The Times and other newspapers in London think that the effect of the harsh treatment in the Transvaal will be very bad on the Indian mind and that it will be a great strain on Indian loyalty. This shews that there ought to be in India articulate and persistent agitation in favour of justice being done to the British Indians in South Africa. The Congress, therefore, should, I think, pay much more attention to the matter than has been paid hitherto and public meetings, too,

¹ *Habib Motan v. The Transvaal Government: Vide "A Well-deserved Victory", 14-5-1904*

should be held all over India protesting against a continuance of the ill-treatment.

I hope you are keeping good health. I shall very much appreciate a line from you.

*I remain,
Yours truly,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original : C.W. 4103.

70. THE JOHANNESBURG LOCATION

Elsewhere we publish the report of the Public Health Committee on the much-vexed Location question in Johannesburg. Our readers will remember that this is the 4th report of the Public Health Committee, and in the 4th, the Committee has made a clean breast of all the hypocrisy, and it has come out in [its] true colours. The report is indirectly a complete answer to Sir Arthur Lawley's contention that the Asiatic Bazaar sites have been well chosen, and that they afford scope for both the Native and the European trade. The Public Health Committee at first fixed upon a site very near the Malay Location. It then recommended the site which was chosen by the Boer Government, and now it has fixed upon the site which was used as an isolation camp during the plague outbreak, and which is situated thirteen miles away from Johannesburg. And it is there that about five thousand Indians, including hawkers and traders, with the exception of a few old established merchants, would be removed, if the Committee's recommendations are carried out, and here are the reasons :

If, says the Committee, the existing state of things is allowed to be continued, certain kinds of industry, as, for instance, that of small tradesmen and artisan class, which would otherwise afford a means of livelihood to a considerable number of Europeans, will inevitably fall into the hands of Asiatics, and the growth of the self-supporting European population will consequently be materially impeded.

It is wonderful how arguments which were never thought of before are being now found to support what is, in naked terms, a policy of slow confiscation. We say, without the slightest fear of contradiction, that the Indian artisan class in Johannesburg simply does not exist. It is true that there are a few indifferent carpenters and fewer bricklayers, but they do not wish to enter into any competition whatsoever. The present Indian population of Johannesburg has been resident there since at least 1896, because it was then that the census

was taken and the number is now about the same as then. And yet, the Indians have not been able to oust the Europeans in any department whatsoever. White Johannesburg is still white, and yet the Public Health Committee has suddenly found out that the presence of the Indian population will “materially impede the growth of the self-supporting European population”, although the European population is ever on the increase, whereas, owing to the misapplication of the Peace Preservation Ordinance to the Indians, the Indian population is and must be on the decrease. The census statistics produced in support of the contention are utterly misleading, and could only be meant for consumption in England, for they cannot possibly mislead the people on the spot. The statement that the Coloured population of the Transvaal already outnumbers the white population by 77.83 to 22.17 is a misrepresentation, for which, we must confess, we were not prepared from a representative body like the Public Health Committee of Johannesburg. What possible connection there can be between the vast Native population of the Transvaal and the Coloured population, we cannot understand, and if the Public Health Committee had only taken the trouble to deal with the Indians for whom alone the Location is to be established, it could have shown conclusively that the fears about the Indians cutting out the Europeans are imaginary, for the Indian population is hardly more than 7,000 as against 84,000 whites in Johannesburg, and the Indian population of the Transvaal is hardly over 10,000 as against the European population of 300,000. On the one hand, to talk of Indian competition ruining the whites and, on the other hand, to dangle before the English public figures including the Native population, and then shew the terrible disproportion, is hardly worthy of a great public body. Then, the Committee has gone into a comparison of the position as between Johannesburg on the one hand, and Natal and Pietersburg on the other. This is a second edition of Sir Arthur Lawley’s comparison. We have already dealt with this phase of the controversy,¹ and humbly endeavoured to shew that it is all in favour of the Indians. The Committee now boldly states that the British Indians should not have any share in the European trade at all, and that “the Bazaar should be kept completely apart from any neighbourhood inhabited by Europeans”, and it is for that reason that the Committee has chosen the wilderness at Klipspruit for dumping down the Indians, who can neither do any hawking nor any trade, except among themselves and the few Kaffirs. But the Kaffirs cannot

¹ *Vide* “The Transvaal”, 10-9-1904 and “More about Sir Arthur Lawley’s Dispatch”, 24-9-1904

be any customers of the Indians because, being most of them workmen, they will have to go to town early in the morning and return probably about eight o'clock at night. They are, then, not likely at that time to go to the Asiatics and make their purchases there; they will naturally make them in town. The charge of insanitation has also been dished up again. "It is impossible", says the Committee, "by any method of supervision to insure the observance of the Public Health Bye-Laws by these people". We challenge the Committee to produce statistics in support of the contention, we ask for figures shewing how many prosecutions under the Public Health Bye-Laws have taken place against the Indians; in how many cases they have neglected to conform to the regulations. So far as we are aware, and we know Johannesburg Indians a bit, we would be much surprised if there have been six prosecutions against British Indians throughout the year, and we make bold to say that in hardly a single instance has there been a second prosecution against the same man. Sanitary inspectors throughout South Africa have laid stress upon the docility of the Indian and his willingness to comply with lawful orders. The Committee says: "The recent outbreak of plague, and the events connected with it, proved the difficulty of effectively isolating a Location situated within the town itself". Either, therefore, Dr. Pakes, who in his report shewed that he had successfully cordoned [off] the Indian Location and thus stamped out the plague, was wrong, or the Public Health Committee is wrong. Dr. Pakes has been congratulated upon his splendid work, and it is offering an insult to him to imply that effective isolation was impossible, owing to the Location being situated within the town. We deny the reckless statement of the Public Health Committee that the Indians are particularly susceptible to smallpox. The experience in Natal shews that such has not been the case. And as to the plague, too, we question very much that the Indian is necessarily more susceptible. The plague, which originated in the Indian Location, and for which the Public Health Committee alone was responsible, remained confined to the Location, and if the number of cases in the Location be eliminated, it will be found that the Indians were not more attacked than others. The last reason given by the Public Health Committee is the miserable plea of social intercourse between the poorer whites and the poorer Indians. In the first instance, there is absolutely no social intercourse between the two, and, in the second, we would very much like to know in what way the presence of the Indian has contributed to social deterioration of the white man; what is the particular vice of the Indian community which the white man has contracted during the last seventeen years. And the phenomenon of the two classes living side by side is by no means peculiar to

Johannesburg. They have been doing so in Cape Town, in Kimberley, in Durban, in Mauritius, in Ceylon, in India. Nowhere has this charge been brought against the Indians; nowhere has this plea been urged for the complete isolation of the Indians. Better by far that, instead of such slow torture, as is proposed by the Public Health Committee, the Indians should by legislation be bundled out of Johannesburg, once and for all. Either the resident population should be well treated or it should be driven out of the country. The latter operation, though drastic, would be far more merciful than the process of slow but sure arsenical poisoning, in the shape of cooping the community up within an enclosure miles away from its scene of activity, and letting it die for want of nutrition.

Indian Opinion, 8-10-1904

71. THE DEALERS' LICENSES ACT

The Natal Licensing Act still continues to remain the Damocles' sword hanging over the heads of the Indian store-keepers in Natal. So long as this un-British law disfigures the Statute-book of the Colony, so long will the Indian stores be without any value as a mercantile asset. Mr. Hoondamal, a silk merchant of long standing depending entirely on high-class European custom, having received notice to vacate premises in a principal street of Durban, removed to another shop in West Street. He holds the usual trading licence which enables him to trade up to the 31st December next. He, therefore, did not suspend business until the transfer of premises was registered by the Licensing Officer. The Officer refused to register the transfer. He still continues his business and lodged notice of appeal. In a court of law, such notice would leave things in *status quo*. But the Licensing Officer, who holds autocratic powers, felt that his dignity was hurt by Mr. Hoondamal continuing his business. He, therefore, brought him before the Magistrate, who considered quite improperly, we submit, that the defendant traded in defiance of the authorities, and imposed the maximum penalty of £20. Notice of appeal has been lodged and we, therefore, refrain from making any further comment on this extraordinary decision. We would only remark that, if the decision is sound, no subject of the King may with impunity act upon his interpretation of the laws of the country. We commend this case to the attention of the Government as showing that, until the law is altered, there can be no rest for the poor Indian merchants of Natal.

Indian Opinion, 8-10-1904

72. SPEECH AT A DINNER

The following extract is from a report of a dinner given in honour of Gandhiji and other leaders of the Indian community in Durban.

[October 10, 1904]

Mr. Gandhi spoke on self-sacrifice and, citing the example of the Emperor and the people of Japan, remarked that the uplift of a nation depended on the sacrifices made by its individual members.

He clarified many points raised in the questions put to him on the subject of his speech by those present on the occasion.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 15-10-1904

73. HOONDAMAL'S LICENCE

The last has yet not been heard of this most important case. Since we wrote about it in our last issue¹, it has entered upon the second stage. It will be remembered that the defendant, Hoondamal, when he was charged before the Magistrate for trading without a licence, applied in vain for adjournment, pending judgment on his appeal to the Town Council against the Licensing Officer's refusal to sanction transfer of his licence from the Grey Street premises to West Street. The appeal was heard on Friday, October the 7th and, after the farce of a formal hearing and a great speech by Mr. Binns on behalf of the applicant, was dismissed. For his refusal, the Licensing Officer gave two reasons, namely, that the applicant already held five licences, and that it was not desirable to add to the number of Asiatic merchants in West Street. Mr. Burne, the only lawyer-Councillor of the Council, was bold enough to expose the *suppressioni veri* that the Licensing Officer, in his zeal to serve his masters, thought fit to practice. He was able to get an admission from the Officer that the five licences were not shop licences but hawkers' licences. Asked as to the reason why he did not mention the fact in his statement of reasons, he said he did not consider it necessary. Mr. Burne thought, as many people have done, that the omission to mention such a material fact savoured very much

¹ *Vide* "The Dealers' Licenses Act", 8-10-1904.

of an attempt to mislead the Council and the public. The other reason given by the Officer was, we say with all deference, no less discreditable to West Street, which has only eight Indian stores as against about 100 European stores. If, therefore, it were a question of bare proportion, the time can hardly be said to have arrived for a total prohibition of Indian licences in that street. But the facts that Mr. Binns conclusively proved before the Council show how cruel has been the injustice done in the case, and how clearly the question has been treated purely on racial lines. For it was proved that the appellant had been in trade in Durban off and on since 1895, that his business, which consisted of the sale of Indian and Japanese silk and fancy goods, in no way competed with the European houses, that his custom was entirely European and that of the better class, that the premises he occupied were, in point of elegance and sanitation, suitable in every way, that he was himself cultured and of high standing in the Indian community, and that over a dozen European firms testified to his being in every way a desirable and fit person to receive permission to trade in the premises in question, and that over forty European householders strongly supported the application, and that he had already carried on his business in West Street¹, which he was obliged to leave because his lease had expired, and because his landlord wanted the premises. The only ground, therefore, for robbing the man of the opportunity of earning a decent livelihood was that of the colour of his skin. We do not wonder that Mr. Binns indignantly protested that what would be treated as a laudable enterprise in a European was deemed a cause of unfitness in his client. And here, be it noted, there was little regard shown for the interests of the Indian landlord. The taunt has been often flung against him that he does not keep pace with the times and builds only shanties. Now, in the present case, he has gone to the expense of several thousand pounds in building stores which would compete with the best of their kind in West Street, even in ornamental design. And lo! the reward for his pluck is a prospect of ruin, and for the applicant who has been endeavouring to live up to the best western standard, a prospect of insolvency. This, moreover, is one of those cases which the late Mr. Escombe thought could never be touched by the Licensing Act. We quote below extracts from his speeches at the time of introducing the measure, as also the late Sir Henry Binns' prophetic remarks thereanent. We shall have to deal with the

¹ Evidently, a mistake for 'Grey Street'

further aspects of this tale of injustice in a future issue, as the appellant, we understand, is raising before the Supreme Court the question of the Council's right to regulate transfers from place to place.

Indian Opinion, 15-10-1904

74. TRIBUTE TO MADANJIT

Gandhiji spoke at a function held in Durban to bid farewell to Mr. Mandanjit, the proprietor of Indian Opinion, on the eve of his return to India. The following is a brief report.

[October 15, 1904]

Mr. Gandhi gave a brief account of Mr. Madanjit's career since the latter landed in the country in 1894, and praised him for the patience and perseverance with which he had been conducting *Indian Opinion* for the benefit of the Indian community, exerting himself physically, mentally and monetarily, and undergoing hardships arising from the financial difficulties of the press. In addition, Mr. Gandhi apprised those present of many of the facts concerning the printing press.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

75. THE JOHANNESBURG TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council has considered the very important report of the Public Health Committee, and adopted, with painful unanimity, the operative suggestions made by the Committee. Under it, the Indians, as well as the Malays, are to be housed, should a compulsory segregation ordinance be passed, on the Klipspruit Farm, near the Native Location, a distance of 13 miles from Johannesburg. Mr. Quinn, in commending the proposals to the Town Council, justified them on the grounds that the Indians did not conform to the sanitary regulations, that, if the Kaffirs were to be removed to Klipspruit, the Indians should be removed *a fortiori* because they were worse neighbours than the former, that the Indian trade was confined to the Indians and Kaffirs, and that, therefore, it would be no hardship to them to be located at such a great distance.

Now, the first objection is no founded on any data whatsoever. Mr. Quinn stated in support that, even if there were prosecutions against Indians, they returned to their old practice. We venture to contradict the gentleman and publicly state that there has hardly been a sanitary prosecution against an Indian without producing a lasting effect. We would also add that, wherever proper supervision has been

exercised, the Indian has proved most amenable to such regulations. To go no further, we would cite the instance of the Location at Pretoria, as also the condition of the Indians in Heidelberg. In the one case, owing to kind but firm supervision, the sanitary condition of the type of Indians living in Locations is all that can be desired. In the other case, that of the Indian store-keepers living in the heart of the town is equally so. The second objection raised by the speaker is no less flimsy than the first. For, if the Indian is amenable to sanitary control, surely there can be no objection against him as a neighbour. He has no war-dances, nor does he drink Kaffirbeer. The third is merely a travesty of facts. It is unfair to state that the Indian trade is confined to the Kaffirs and the Indians. The pioneer Indian settlers in the Transvaal could not have entered the country with a view to trade among the Indians, for there were none, and it is a notorious fact that the Indians have a large trade among the Dutch people and the poor whites. Underlying the objection is the important admission that the Klipspruit Farm is not suitable for the white trade at all. It should, moreover, be remembered that the proximity of the Kaffir Location does not necessarily mean that the Indians will have any trade among the Kaffirs if only for the simple reason that Kaffirs would remain in the Location during night time only and arrive from town after business hours. If, then, it is totally unjust to house the Indians at such a great distance, it would be doubly so to disturb the inhabitants of the Malay Location. There may have been some ground for condemning the old Indian Location from a sanitary standpoint; but not a whisper has been uttered against the dwellers of the Malay Location. The vast majority of them are, as the name implies, Malays, a clean-living, industrious and perfectly loyal people. They have been in possession of the place now a number of years. An attempt to dispossess them during the Boer rule was frustrated owing to the efforts of the British Government: are the poor people now to be summarily ejected and forced to live in a wilderness in the name of the British Government? The idea is simply repugnant, and we hope that Mr. Lyttelton would not be a party to such wholesale confiscation of the rights of people whose only crime is that they wear a brown skin.

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

76. DR. PORTER "TOUCHES THE SPOT"

The energetic Dr. Porter is again busy writing academic reports on the insanitary condition of several places in Johannesburg. As in the case of the late Insanitary Area, so in the present instance, he has

drawn up a most lurid and sensational picture of what is known as the township of Ferreira's in Johannesburg. He informs the Town Council in the strongest terms possible that the area described by him should be overhauled without the slightest delay. He says:

There are within these areas numerous houses, shanties, rooms, courts and alleys, which, on account of the bad arrangement, crowding on area, want of proper sanitary conveniences, and their wretched and dilapidated condition, are not only dangerous and injurious to the health of inhabitants in the vicinity, but are a very serious menace to the municipality generally.

Now, it is admitted that the area, such as it is, has been allowed to exist for the last two years, at any rate. If it is so insanitary, and we do not deny it is so, why has not the matter been dealt with before this? We very much fear that, for months to come, the report will merely remain on the shelves of the Town Clerk's office, and things will continue to go on much as they are today, though what we want in the face of the present danger is not words, but deeds. The report is undoubtedly interesting, also painful, reading. It is also probably calculated to alarm old women, and to put them on their guard as to the condition of their houses and surroundings. If the township is so dangerously insanitary, it is ill-adapted for half-measures. The buildings comprised within it should be burnt down without a moment's delay. We, however, very much fear that the experience about the Insanitary Area will be repeated in the case of the township of Ferreira's. It will be interesting to learn that the population of the whole area is 1,812, of which 288 are Indians, 58 Syrians, 165 Chinese, 295 Cape, 75 black, and 929 (or more than half) white. The population of the insanitary Stands is 255 coolies, 17 Syrians, 126 Chinese, 192 Cape, 31 black, and 241 white.

Thus, in this neighbourhood, it is the whites who are more to blame than the Indians, and the Town Council, most of all. And although it is the whites who have to be dealt with more than any other class of people, we do not for one moment suppose that any such thing will happen. The report will be used for advocating further disabilities on the British Indians. The Public Health Committee has already begun to press it into service in order to compel them to reside in a locality nearly 13 miles from Johannesburg. As a matter of fact, the report is a condemnation of the inaction of the Town Council in not attending to the proper sanitation of the place. When the Insanitary Area Commission was appointed, this township was considered dangerous to public health. But as nothing is done in Johannesburg except on the sky-scraper scale, proper sanitary control was a thing beneath the dignity of the Town Council.

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

77. LORD MILNER

It seems pretty certain that Lord Milner is about to leave South Africa for good. What the verdict of history will be on His Excellency's work in this sub-continent, it is difficult to say. That he brought the war to a successful issue ensures His Excellency's title to glory as a destructive statesman. He, of all the men, was the one strong hand at a most critical period, and, in spite of reverses and gloomy despatches from the generals who were conducting the war, he remained absolutely firm and unshakable in his determination to see the thing through. The invincible faith that he had in his own pre-vision regarding the issue has not, we fear, been the guiding star in the much more difficult task of reconstruction. Nor, indeed, could it be said that His Excellency took the correct view of the times that were to follow. Forming expectations which were never to be realised, Lord Milner framed a top-heavy structure on a weak foundation. The result has been enormous expenditure on the administration of the country without an adequate return. In spite of His Lordship's unceasing attention to every detail of administration, and his great industry, the difficult problems, such as the labour question, the Native question and the Asiatic question, could not be said to have been solved in a satisfactory manner. The importation of Chinese labour is yet in the experimental stage, and it would be too early to pronounce a definite opinion one way or the other. The vacillating policy adopted regarding the Native and the Asiatic questions has satisfied neither party, and with respect to the latter, even "national honour" has suffered in His Lordship's hands. Thus, it is doubtful whether Lord Milner will rank as a first-class constructive statesman.

If it be true, as the London papers inform us, that there will very soon be a change of power in England, it would be interesting to know what the outgoing government intend to do for Lord Milner's services to the Empire and the Conservative Party. We know that, some months ago, it was given out that His Lordship was a very likely successor to Lord Curzon at Calcutta. He would then be no doubt perfectly free from interference by the Liberal ministers and, apart from the Imperial view of bestowing such patronages, the Conservative Government have nothing better to offer to His Lordship. The speculation, therefore, is of more than passing interest to the British Indians in South Africa. We wonder whether the author of the despatch to Mr. Lettelton, in the recently published Blue book on the British

Indian question, will retain strong anti-Indian prejudices which have been allowed to colour that document, when he has been translated to the Viceregal throne.

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

78. LYDENBURG INDIANS

The authorities at Lydenburg have given notice to the Indians to remove to the Bazaar for sleeping, within seven days, on pain of being prosecuted for disobedience. A similar threat was held out in Potchefstroom some time ago and nothing came out of it. In view of the emphatic dictum of the Chief Justice of the Transvaal¹, one would have thought that the Indians would be left undisturbed. But evidently, it is not to be so. The only remedy for our countrymen under the circumstances is to sit still and watch events.

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

79. INDIAN INTERPRETERS

The Natal Farmers' Conference is hard put to [it] for excuses for wiping out the Indian interpreters from the Colony. It would not tolerate even a few Indian interpreters in the Government employ, though it wants the indentured Indians very badly. The Government has replied to a previous resolution of the Conference that it is unable to obtain the services of Europeans who can speak more than one Indian language, which is insufficient for the requirements. It has thereupon passed the following resolution.

That this Conference re-affirms its opinion, that provided adequate salaries are given, European interpreters can be obtained who can speak more than one Indian dialect, and that the Government should give the same inducement to the European youth of the Colony to acquire a knowledge of the Indian dialects as is accorded to students of the Zulu language.

The Government has again replied saying efforts are being made to employ Europeans wherever possible, but that the difficulties do not appear to diminish. Thus, the Indian interpreters have to thank not the Government, but the paucity of Europeans having knowledge of Indian languages, for the safety of their positions.

Indian Opinion, 22-10-1904

¹ *Vide* "The Test Case", 21-5-1904.

80. NATAL LICENSING ACT

Mr. Hoondamal's case can no longer be looked upon merely as a personal question, but it is one involving wide interests. By the time this is in print, the appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision of the Magistrate may have been decided. Last week's proceedings, however, deserve more than a passing notice. Mr. Hoondamal, in spite of the Town Council's decision, but under legal advice from a premier firm of solicitors, had continued to trade on the strength of the licence issued to him to trade in the Borough. The Licensing Officer, therefore, again issued a summons, charging him with the crime of trading without a licence in respect of the premises in West Street. The defendant applied for an adjournment, pending the hearing of the appeal. The Magistrate granted the adjournment and repudiated the suggestion of the prosecution that the defendant was trading in contempt of Court. And yet he made a most extraordinary order, namely, that the store should be forcibly closed down, unless the defendant received permission to trade.

What, therefore, he granted with the one hand, he attempted to take away with the other. For what could be the value of the adjournment if the store was to be closed? If the Magistrate was so certain of the decision of the Supreme Court, why did he adjourn the proceedings at all? But this point, important as it is, pales into insignificance before the question whether the Magistrate had any right to make the order he did. We understand that Mr. Hoondamal's solicitors have written to the Magistrate, informing him that he has acted beyond his authority, and that he would be held personally liable in the event of the forcible closing of the store. We have always considered Mr. Stuart to be an impartial, sober, and fair judge. But, with great deference, we must state that our confidence in his knowledge of the authority possessed by him is much shaken. We cannot conceive that he has consciously committed what, in our humble opinion, is a grave error of judgment. For the effect of his decision, if carried out, would take us back to the Middle Ages, when the liberty of the subject was dependent on the mere caprice of the judges whose jurisdiction and authority were circumscribed only by their good sense.

Why, however, should there be this unseemly feeling between the great Town Council and a humble burgess of the town? Surely, there is no principle at stake in not interfering with the poor merchant for a few days. He could not by taking a few shillings in sales every

day materially reduce the takings of the other West Street merchants in the same time. They have raised no objection against him. We put it to Mr. Ellis Brown and the other Councillors whether it befits the dignity of the great corporation thus to persecute a poor man.

We do not question the right of the Council to regulate trade. We have always considered it a privilege to render our humble assistance in guiding Indian opinion and smoothing it whenever it has been necessary. We think that the Council would be perfectly right in generally reserving special areas for special trades. But all such reservations, unless they are elastic enough, defeat their own end. We would gladly co-operate with the Council in reconciling the Indian mind to the idea that West Street should be very largely in the hands of European merchants. But there is an important and necessary proviso that the Indians already carrying on trade there, as also Indian landlords, should be fully protected, and that those Indians who are prepared to satisfy the sanitary and ornamental requirements in keeping with the best stores in West Street, and whose trade is mainly European, should not be prohibited from trading there. Indeed, they should be encouraged, if it is true that the objection is not against colour, and that, if the Indian conformed to the European standard, he would be welcomed as a desirable citizen. Now, the facts are that there are very¹ Street, and that the case under consideration satisfies all the tests above laid down. May we not appeal to the Town Council to stay its hands and free itself from the suspicion that, in prosecuting Mr. Hoondamal, it is persecuting him and, through him, the Indian storekeepers and landlords, who are anxiously watching the dramatic stages through which this case has been passing.

Indian Opinion, 29-10-1904

81. PIETERSBURG INDIANS

News comes from Pietersburg to the effect that the Indians living and trading in the old Indian Location, lately converted into a Native Location, are being summarily evicted. The history of the struggles of the poor men is very simple, though intensely painful. They were threatened with ruin last year. The matter was brought to the notice of the higher authorities and the Pietersburg Local Board stayed action. The Board's power was limited, and nothing more could be done to the men. Early this year, the Board requested the

¹ Apparently, the printer has missed out some words between "very" and "Street".

Government to de-proclaim the Indian Location and change it into a Native Location. This was done without regard to the rights of the Indians. The Native Locations regulations prevent any but Natives from living or trading in Native Locations. Under this power, the Board has been trying to evict the Indians. Owing to the intervention of the Protector of Asiatics, Mr. Chamney, its action was stayed temporarily. But the Board seems to have triumphed in the end. And by a process of indirect legislation, it is in a position to confiscate we know no other term to adequately explain the action the property and rights of the inoffensive traders. They have spent many thousands pounds in building good stores. We know that the cost of labour is in South Africa. The people are to receive no compensation! It is true they may remove their buildings. The veriest novice in trade knows the value of wood and iron thus removed. The action of the Board spells ruin for the men. And the Government protest helplessness !

Indian Opinion, 29-10-1904

82. *THE LATE MR. DIGBY¹, C.I.E.*

By the death of Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., India has lost a champion whom it will be difficult to replace. His advocacy of the Indian cause was strenuous and well-informed. His unrivalled experience of India always stood him in good stead in answering his opponents. He was the founder of the Indian Political Agency, and the first Editor of *India*, which has been doing eminent service, and without disparagement, we may say that the editing of that journal by the deceased gentleman has never been equalled. By his voluminous writings, the late Mr. Digby ever kept the different Indian questions before the public. We offer our sincere condolences to the deceased gentleman's family.

Indian Opinion, 29-10-1904

¹ Mr. William Digby (1849-1904), authority on Indian economic problems, author of *Prosperous British India* and a member of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.

83. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,

RISSIK STREET,

JOHANNESBURG,

October 31, 1904

TO

THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI

22, KENNINGTON ROAD

LONDON, S.E. ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter of the 19th September enclosing copy of letter received by you from Mr. Lyttelton regarding my letter² of the 4th April last on the plague outbreak. His Excellency Lord Milner's reply is, in the light of what I know, very painful reading. I am taking the liberty of addressing a communication³ to His Excellency in the matter, but in the meanwhile I may state that I have nothing to withdraw from my letter of the 4th April last and I write this under a full sense of my responsibility and deliberation. I enclose a copy of *Indian Opinion*⁴, which gives the whole of the correspondence between Dr. Porter and myself and shews in my humble opinion conclusively how the plague broke out. The expropriation by the Town Council took place in September 1903. The plague was officially declared as having broken out on the 20th March last that is, six months after the Council took possession. The first note of warning⁵ was given, as will be seen from the correspondence, on the 11th of February. On the 15th February, definite suggestions⁶ were made in order to ward off the calamity, and I venture to state as emphatically as I can, though with the greatest respect, that nothing was done after that date to set matters right. Indeed, even after the 18th of March last, plague cases were being dumped down in the Location and the

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji quoted the bulk of this letter in a communication he addressed to the Secretary of State for India on November 22, 1904. (C.O. 291, Volume 75, India Office).

² This letter is not available, but it is very likely that Gandhiji sent Dadabhai Naoroji a copy of his article "The Plague", 2-4-1904.

³ *Vide* the succeeding item.

⁴ The issue of 9-4-1904; *Vide* "Letter to Johannesburg Press", April 5, 1904.

⁵ *Vide* "Letter to Dr. Porter", February 11, 1904.

⁶ *Vide* "Letter to Dr. Porter", February 15, 1904.

intimation of same was given by me to the Town Council. The Town Clerk informed me on the 19th March that he was unable to take charge of the patients or incur any financial responsibility until after the 21st, beyond giving the Government Entrepot to be used as a temporary hospital and providing one nurse. This was originally a Customs Depot. Thirty volunteers were put on to it. The place was thoroughly cleaned and voluntary Indian nurses worked night and day, taking charge of all the patients that were being received. Drs. Pakes and Mac Kenzie, when they visited the hospital, now realised the gravity of the situation and they took most effective steps on the 20th. Every bed, all the medical comforts, food, and everything were in the interval supplied entirely by the Indians. It is but fair to state that the Town Council has since paid the expenses incurred. All this, however, is beside the point, and if I have laid stress upon the work done by the Indians, it is in order to shew that I am speaking from bitter experience and not without feeling. If the facts set forth in the correspondence herewith sent are correct, and they have not been challenged, although the conclusions I have drawn have been repudiated I would not be serving the truth if I said anything less than I have done in my letter of the 4th April last, namely, that, "but for the criminal neglect of the Johannesburg Municipality, the outbreak would never have occurred." It and it alone must ever be held responsible for the awful death-roll of March. All honour to it that, after the situation was realised, it spent money like water in dealing with the calamity, but that work could never undo the past. It is true that, as early as the year 1901, long official reports were drawn up condemning the Location as insanitary. and yet, in that state it was allowed to remain up to the 26th of September 1903, and that without any outbreak of plague. Strange as it may appear, it was only after the Town Council came into full possession, got what it wanted and, with it, an opportunity of keeping the Location in a thoroughly sanitary condition, that the plague broke out. I am afraid that His Excellency has been totally misinformed with reference to the genesis of the plague. The thing is now finished. The Indians have suffered undeservedly but the statements made by me could easily be verified. Dr. Pakes' repudiation has, I suppose, reference to the following occurring in the leader in *Indian Opinion*: "Evidently when Dr. Pakes said that the measures which were being taken in the outlying districts were taken more in order to eradicate the Indian than to prevent the plague, he spoke truly"¹. Whether Dr. Pakes actually said so or not, he was certainly reported in

¹ Vide "Plague in the Transvaal", 9-4-1904.

the newspapers to have made such a statement and the remark in question is based on the newspaper report.

I beg to draw your attention also to the fact that the contention that the Town Council was responsible for the awful visitation is practically borne out by Dr. Turner, the Health Officer for the Colony and member of the Legislative Council.

You may make what use you think fit of this communication.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2263

84. LETTER TO HIGH COMMISSIONER'S SECRETARY

[JOHANNESBURG,]

October 31, 1904

TO
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
HIS EXCELLENCY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

I shall be obliged if you will kindly place this communication before His Excellency.

The Honourable Mr. Dadabhai has sent me a copy of a letter received by him from Mr. Lyttelton in reply to his letter enclosing a communication addressed to him by me on the 4th April last on the outbreak of plague in Johannesburg. Mr. Lyttelton has quoted a portion of His Excellency's dispatch on the subject and, as it deals with the statements made by me, I venture to trespass on His Excellency's time by offering an explanation in defence thereof.

His Excellency has said :

I consider the statement that the recent outbreak of plague would not have occurred but for the neglect of the Johannesburg Municipality to be absolutely unjustifiable. So far from having been negligent in the matter, the Johannesburg Council has displayed considerable foresight in anticipating and making preparations for the outbreak of plague more than a year before the disease actually appeared.

It has never been denied that the Council made preparations in anticipation of the outbreak in that a hospital was established at Rietfontein, etc., but, with the greatest deference, it is submitted that

the one preventive measure that was necessary was totally omitted, namely, to look after the sanitary condition of the so-called Insanitary Area.

His Excellency has also stated in his dispatch that

it was in a great measure due to opposition on the part of the owners and inhabitants of the Location that its expropriation and clearance was delayed until the outbreak of plague had occurred.

May I humbly draw His Excellency's attention to the fact that expropriation was effected more than five months before official declaration of the plague that is, on the 26th September last year and that clearance was, therefore, absolutely within the power of the Town Council. Since that date not only was there no opposition on the part of the Indians concerned either against expropriation or clearance, but I myself on their behalf frequently appealed for a new site both to the Town Council as well as the Colonial Secretary. His Excellency has evidently been informed that the expropriation was effected after the outbreak of the plague. For His Excellency in his dispatch again says:

Up to the date of expropriation the Indians were their own landlords, and the statement that the conditions of overcrowding existing in the Location were due to the general negligence of the Johannesburg Town Council can only be described as a gross perversion of the truth.

Had expropriation taken place after the outbreak of the plague,

I should plead guilty to the charge of having been the means of perverting the truth. As a matter of fact, however, as already stated, the Council expropriated the Location as well in law as in fact on the 1st of October last year, and, contrary to the suggestions made by the inhabitants of the Insanitary Area, and in spite of the fact that the Council was not in a position to look after the proper sanitation of the Location for want of men, it became immediate landlord to each tenant, established rent collecting offices, and took over the fullest control. The condition under the new regime became so unbearable that the inhabitants, against whom the charge of uncleanness was repeatedly brought in official reports, to which His Excellency has made reference, came to me with complaints and I, therefore, wrote to Dr. Porter on their behalf on the 11th February this year that is, more than a month before the actual declaration of the plague:

I venture to write to you regarding the shocking state of the Indian Location. The rooms appear to be overcrowded beyond description; the sanitary service is very irregular and many of the residents of the Location have been to my office to complain that the sanitary condition is far worse than before. There is, too, a very large Kaffir population in the Location for which really there is no warrant. From what I hear, I believe the mortality in

the Location has increased considerably and it seems to me that if the present state of things is continued, an outbreak of some epidemic disease is merely a question of time.

On the 15th of February, in a second letter to Dr. Porter, I elaborated the points mentioned in the first letter and even ventured to offer suggestions, but up to the 18th of March nothing was done, although on the 1st of March a note was addressed by me to Dr. Porter saying that in my opinion the plague had actually broken out.

I beg to enclose for His Excellency's perusal copies of all the correspondence in this connection which was published in the papers. The main facts to this day remain unchallenged, and knowing personally as I do every phase that the inhabitants of the Location have passed through since the beginning of last year, with deference, I feel bound to say that I have stated the barest truth in saying that, but for the criminal neglect of the Johannesburg Municipality, the outbreak would never have occurred. The immediate work lying before it was totally neglected by it in favour of large schemes for shifting the whole of the population within the Insanitary Area.

In conclusion, I may state that, in writing to Mr. Naoroji, I had no other desire than that of serving the truth and of guarding against unwarranted charges against my countrymen.

I trust the importance of the subject-matter of this communication will be considered sufficient excuse for my encroaching upon His Excellency's valuable time.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

From the office copy : C.W. 2264-2,3,4,5.

85. TELEGRAM TO COLONIAL SECRETARY

[JOHANNESBURG,]

November 3, 1904

TO

COLONIAL SECRETARY

[PRETORIA]

MR. ROBINSON INFORMS LORD ROBERTS WILL BE PLEASED RECEIVE
AN ADDRESS FROM INDIAN COMMITTEE DURING HIS STAY PRETORIA.

86. *FARMERS IN CONFERENCE*

The Conference has dealt with a great variety of matters, two of which dealt with Indians. The Conference passed some time ago a resolution to the effect that all the Indians should hold passes, for what reason it is not stated, except perhaps to insult the non-indentured Indian population. The Government have returned a reply saying that they are not prepared to pass legislation of the character wanted by the Conference. The Rev. Jas. Scott, therefore, moved that the resolution should be sent back to the Government. The President pointed out that, if too many restrictions were imposed on the Indians, the Indian Government might have something to say. Mr. Scott, however, said that in that case Natal could tap other sources of labour supply. We wish it were so. It will then be possible to arrive at a reasonable understanding as to the resident Indian population. Moreover, the Colony will learn by experience the economic value of Indian labour. Ruskin has somewhere said that man, as an economic factor, is not be studied simply as a machine, but has to be taken with all his mental attributes. Considered as such, we believe that the Indian is the most efficient labourer in the world. He may be puny, he may be slow, he may be weak, but he is most sober, uncomplaining, patient, and long-suffering. He, therefore, gives no trouble to his masters, and is a reliable worker. If some other labour were introduced, if only temporarily, all the attributes we have mentioned as specially belonging to the Indian will be appreciated, and he will be prized on that account. But as long as the Colony must have Indian labour, it must be satisfied with the restrictions it has already secured, without adding to them the humiliating one of compelling every Indian to carry passes. Mr. McCrystal incidentally said that most of the Asiatic were not British subjects, but Arabians. Some Indians do indeed call themselves Arabian merchants, but there is no excuse for the gentleman betraying the ignorance he has. The term "Arabian" has come to be used in this Colony synonymously with Mahomedan, for the reason that the Moslem faith has its rise in Arabia.

The other matter dealt with by the Conference was the shortage of labour supply. On the one hand, then, the Conference wanted further restrictions on the Indians; on the other, it complained of the paucity of labourers. Even India has its limitations and we must not

suppose that it is an inexhaustible field for recruiting labour. There is a vast system of inland immigration in India itself where there is a continuous stream flowing towards Burma and Singapore. Add to this the other Colonies, including Ceylon, Mauritius, and Fiji. Natal is only one of the many competitors moving¹ the Indian labourer. It must not, therefore, be surprised if it finds itself handicapped owing to excessive restrictions imposed on the labourers. We have no doubt that the new Immigration Act, which imposes an annual tax of £3 on the indentured men and their children after they have regained their freedom, has a considerable effect on the supply. The Colony wants Indian labour, and yet wishes to avoid many of its natural consequences. It is, to our mind, this anomalous position which comes in the way more than the requirements as to the percentage of women to accompany the immigrants, as some speakers at the meeting supposed.

Indian Opinion, 5-11-1904

87. A RIFT IN THE LUTE

The so-called Asiatic National Convention in the Transvaal will have to be held, if it is held at all, without Johannesburg being represented. It will be a case of *Hamlet* being played without Hamlet. Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Trade in the “golden city” have declined to associate themselves with a convention whose object, in the words of Mr. Mitchell, is to confiscate the property of inoffensive people. The resolutions submitted by the conveners of the convention, the Chambers contend, are too drastic to be acceptable to a British community in that they contemplate forcible removal of British Indian traders to Bazaars without compensation, and take no notice of vested interests. The pill offered by Messrs. Bourke and Loveday is too strong even for the Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, which, as our readers are aware, was violently hostile to the Indians when the Blue book on the Indian question was given to the public. We venture to offer our congratulations to the two Chambers and the Potchefstroom Association for daring to be just. It is a relief to recognise, amid the heap of blind, unreasoning prejudice, sober views and sentiments expressed by representative bodies. A little more patience, a little more time, and perfect equanimity on the part of the British Indians will, we doubt not, do the rest. Unwearied reiteration is, as the late Professor Max Muller used to say, the only remedy for

¹ Perhaps a misprint for “wooing”.

driving a new truth home, and for enabling people to remove preconceived notion. Our duty is, therefore, plain. We should continue, in season and out of season, to show that the case for the Indians is invulnerable, and that the Indian has never asked for anything that could not reasonably be granted, consistently with the interests of the white traders and white predominance.

Indian Opinion, 5-11-1904

88. COLOURED PASSENGERS ON THE TRANSVAAL

RAILWAYS

The Johannesburg newspapers publish the interesting correspondence between His Excellency the High Commissioner and the Rand Pioneers on the subject of the Natives of the Transvaal travelling first and second class on the Central South African Railways. Lord Milner has assured the Rand Pioneers that henceforth no Natives, except those holding certificates of exemption, will be allowed to travel first or second class on the railways, and that the inspectors and station-masters have been instructed to separate Coloured passengers from the white passengers. The Rand Pioneers have restricted their demands only to the Natives, but the instructions issued by Mr. Price, the General Manager, cover all the Coloured people, including British Indians, although it is some satisfaction to learn that respectable British Indians are to be allowed first or second-class tickets without difficulty. Special coaches for Coloured passengers are to be joined to the Pretoria-Pietersburg line as an experiment. This is one of the instances how a mountain can be made out of a mole-hill, and if separate carriages are to be provided for different races, logically, there should be compartments for Natives, Chinese, British Indians, Cape Coloured people, Boers, Englishmen, Germans, and so on. It would, indeed, then be a question as to how to make the line pay, but that would be a very small affair compared to the respect that has to be paid to sentiment in the Transvaal, whether such sentiment be reasonable or otherwise. Joking apart, however, if the distinction is to be drawn, we imagine that it will be necessary to have three distinct compartments, namely, for Europeans, Natives and Asiatics. The circular issued by the General Manager is a veritable hornet's nest, and we are quite sure that we have not heard the last of it. The Rand Pioneers have already notified their dissatisfaction, and they do not believe in the Natives of the Transvaal being allowed to travel first or

second class at all, refusing, as they do, to recognise any distinction between those who hold exemption certificates and those who do not.

Indian Opinion, 5-11-1904

89. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522
JOHANNESBURG,
November 5, 1904

TO
THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22 KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter of the 13th October. As a rule I do send the weekly letter to you. Sir William, Sir Mancherjee, and the East Indian Association. I enclose herewith copy of the letter addressed by me to Lord Milner¹ on the plague correspondence.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original : G.N. 2264-1

90. ADDRESS TO LORD ROBERTS²

[November 9, 1904]

The pleasant ceremony of presenting an address to Lord Roberts by the British Indians was performed on Friday, 11th November, at 2.45 p.m., and the signatories to the address were graciously received by the veteran soldier, and the whole of the function passed off satisfactorily. The following is the text of the address :

TO

FIELD MARSHAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL ROBERTS, OF
KANDAHAR, WATERFORD, AND PRETORIA, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I.,
G.C.I.E., O.M.V.G., PRETORIA

¹ *Vide* "Letter to High Commissioner", October 31, 1904.

² This was published as "From our Special Correspondent".

MY LORD,

We, the undersigned, representing the British Indians residing in the Transvaal, beg to tender to Your Lordship, Countess Roberts, and Ladies Aileen and Edwina Roberts, a respectful welcome to this the country of your recent labours for the Empire.

It is a matter of no small pride to us that it is India which has given the Empire the greatest soldier of the present times, in whom are combined the sternness of the soldier and the gentleness of the godly man.

We pray to the Almighty that He may bestow on you and Countess Roberts and family all His blessings, and that the Empire may long continue to receive the benefit of your experienced counsels.

Dated at Pretoria, the 9th day of November, 1904.

*We beg to remain,
Your Lordship's humble and obedient servants,*

ABDUL GANI,
HAJI MAHOMED HAJI JUSAB,
HAJI HABIB HAJI DADA,
M. S. GOOVADIA,
ISMAIL AMOD MOOLA,
AMRITHALINGA CHETTY,
AMOD HAJI TAYOB,
AHMED LATIB,
HAJI OSMAN HAJI ABBA,
M. K. GANDHI

It was illuminated on vellum, and Miss Ada M. Bissicks, in whose hands the work was placed, thought out quite an original design for it. The whole of the left side of the address is taken up with a faithful representation of that most exquisite bird, the peacock of India. The lettering is also very chaste, and the whole illumination is a work of art. The address was enclosed in a solid silver casket, with lotus flowers engraved on it. Both the address and the casket were worthy of the distinguished recipient and the Indian community.

Indian Opinion, 19-11-1904

91. THE ASIATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

By the time this is in print, the so-called National Convention in the Transvaal will have been held. The representative Associations in Johannesburg have now decided to send their delegates, and Messrs. Bourke and Loveday have accepted the amendments suggested by the former. The resolutions, therefore, embody the principle of compensation, but in our opinion, all the amendments put together mean very little indeed. Previous experience warns us against expecting anything from the adoption of such a principle. The Asiatic Commission that was appointed and which, happily, owing to the Test case of *Habib Motan v. The Government*, proved abortive, as may be recollected, rejected the claims of all those who were engaged in trade immediately before the outbreak of hostilities. The Potchefstroom people have made it pretty clear that, according to their notion, compensation should be restricted only to those who at the outbreak of war held licenses to trade outside Locations. To us, therefore, the idea of compensation means little or nothing. What is, then, to be the upshot of all this anti-Indian agitation? If the dictation of the National Convention is to carry the day, we know the result. Every self-respecting British Indian must then be prepared to face the inevitable and leave the country. That is to say, he must be an outcast in his own home. He has been taught from his childhood by, very often, his English schoolmasters, out of books printed and published under British supervision, that the long arm of the British Government protects the weak against the strong. As the late Poet Laureate¹ of Gujarat sang, "Lo! the enmities have died out, the doers of black deeds are for ever crushed and (under the British Government) no one twists even the ear of a lamb". He has been taught also that, in places which are included within the Dominions of the King-Emperor, every one of his subjects enjoys the fullest liberty and all civil rights, so much so, that even the shackles of foreigners fall off on British soil. If, as we say, the National Convention carries the day, the Indian must unlearn all this, the slate must be wiped clean, he must forget all that he has hitherto regarded as beautiful in the English constitution, and he must be content to see the means of his livelihood taken away from his mouth. But we must decline to believe that any such thing can possibly happen so long as the Transvaal continues to prize the Union Jack. We cannot conceive that Mr. Lyttelton is likely to go back upon the policy laid down in

¹ Dalpatram.

his dispatch, and sanction what would, if not in letter, certainly in spirit, be an act of confiscation of the rights of British subjects.

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

92. THE NATAL VOLUNTEER INDIAN AMBULANCE CORPS

Our London contemporary, *India*, has fallen into the error of accepting official figures in connection with this Corps, although it has in its own files the correct figures. The whole of the medal-giving regarding this Corps has been unfortunately bungled up. We may, therefore, state the facts once more for general information. The Corps was formed at first for service at the battle of Colenso. It then consisted of over 25 leaders, not *sirdars*, and over 600 bearers. The leaders did not receive any pay whatsoever even their uniforms were paid for by the Indian merchants. After a short service, the Corps was disbanded. When the first move to Spion Kop was attempted, Colonel Gallwey ordered that the Corps should be re-formed. There were about 30 leaders and at least 1,100 to 1,200 bearers. The Corps was on active service this time for 6 weeks and performed surprising marches, doing as much as 25 miles per day, carrying the wounded. Its work has been specially mentioned by General Buller in his dispatches. Why only eight clasps have been distributed no one knows. Everyone of the leaders is entitled to them, and if the War Office intends to distribute medals among the men, as it certainly ought to, we would undertake to find almost all of them. A complete record was then kept of the names of the bearers, together with their addresses, and it should be in possession of the Superintendent of the Corps. We have not said much about the manner in which the medals have been distributed, because we are anxious that the leaders who worked should not connect themselves with any reward. They undertook the work as a labour of duty, pure and simple, and they should be ever ready to take such duty up again, irrespective of recognition of merit.

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

93. THE EDWIN ARNOLD MEMORIAL

We have received a copy of the circular issued by the Edwin Arnold Memorial Committee. The Committee

think that the most fitting tribute to Sir Edwin's work would be one linking

¹ *Vide* "Indian Ambulance Corps", 13-12-1899

his name with his great services to Eastern literature. It was his privilege by the gift of poetry. . . as well as by his graphic and illuminating prose writings on oriental manners, customs and events, to bring to the peoples of the West in Europe and America, a fuller knowledge of the peoples of the East, thus creating a reciprocal interest and sympathy which cannot fail to contribute to the welfare and happiness of both. . . . They therefore propose to endow a scholarship or scholarships, or found prizes at the University of Oxford for proficiency in oriental literature.

The Committee include the name of the Right Honourable Lord Brassey, as Chairman, His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir M.M. Bhowan-aggree, Sir George Birdwood, the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, the Viscount Hayashi, Mr. Rudyard Kipling and others. Subscriptions may be sent to Messrs. Henry S. King & Co., at 65, Cornhill, London. If any of our readers would send their subscriptions to us, we would be pleased to acknowledge them in *Indian Opinion* and forward them to the Treasurers from time to time. The services of Sir Edwin to the East and West have not yet been sufficiently appreciated. Time alone would show the measure of those services. *The Light of Asia* alone has left on the Western mind an indelible impression for good. It has been said that he missed the Poet Laureateship because of the Oriental turn of his mind. We hope, therefore, that our readers, both European and Indian, will largely contribute to the Memorial Fund.

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

94. LONG LIVE THE KING-EMPEROR!

We tender our respectful and loyal congratulations to His Majesty the King-Emperor on his birthday. His Majesty completed his 63rd year on Wednesday last, and there went up from one end of the Empire to the other the prayer that he might have many happy returns of the day. Of all the European monarchs, there is none that fulfils the ideal as King Edward does. Recognising the limits of a constitutional monarchy, he yet has proved that he can render to the Empire immense service by his tact and gentleness. His work in France, his visit to the Pope, his meeting with the Kaiser all these have promoted the cause of peace. It is an open secret that His Majesty was largely instrumental in securing a termination of the Boer War. His liberality and his sympathy for his subjects are well known. His visit to India

when he was Prince of Wales won for him the personal veneration of the Indian nation, for whose welfare he has always evinced very great regard. May His Majesty be long spared to the Empire is our humble prayer to the Almighty.

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

95. *BRITISH INDIANS IN THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY*

The reactionary and anti-Indian policy is being consistently followed by the Government as well as the people in the Orange River Colony. We publish elsewhere some extracts which show in what manner the Indian is being hunted down. It would appear that, not being satisfied with insisting on the declaration of the Indian desiring to settle in the Colony that he will always during his stay remain in service under someone or other, the Government now insists on his making a fresh declaration each time that he changes masters or the nature of his work, and then, it would depend entirely on the will of the authorities as to whether he should stay in the Colony or not. A situation such as this requires prompt ending or mending. We have often drawn attention to the drastic legislation in the Colony against Asiatics, but we have seen hitherto no relief being granted. Are we to understand that this humiliating treatment of British Indians in the Orange River Colony is to be perpetuated, and that the India Office is to sit still ?

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

96. *LORD ROBERTS AND THE BRITISH INDIANS*

We congratulate our countrymen in the Transvaal on having presented Lord Roberts with an address with a silver casket. We give the text of the address and the description of the casket in another column¹. It was a very graceful act on their part. As the signatories to the address have said, it is a matter of no small pride for the Indians that the greatest soldier of the times has been given to the Empire by India. Lord Roberts has a very great deal of humaneness in him, in

¹ This was actually published in the issue of 19-11-1904 with the remark: "We regret that the following report was omitted from our last issue". *Vide* "Address to Lord Roberts", 19-11-1904

spite of his stern soldiership. His treatment of the prisoners during the Boer War was marked by very great consideration. He has always taken a sympathetic interest in the Indian soldiers and all that pertains to India, and it was but fitting that the Indians in the Transvaal should do honour to His Lordship during his visit to the country.

Indian Opinion, 12-11-1904

97. CABLE TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

[JOHANNESBURG,
November 18, 1904]

TO
INCAS
LONDON

CROWDED MEETING BRITISH INDIANS ALL TRANSVAAL.
RESOLUTIONS PROTESTING PROCEEDINGS ASIATIC CONVENTION
BECAUSE NO DISTINCTION OBSERVED BRITISH SUBJECTS AND OTHER
NATIVES AND THEMSELVES [AND] CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS
IF CARRIED MEANT CONFISCATION RUIN ASKED PUBLIC INQUIRY
ALLEGATIONS CONVENTION, ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE RESTRICTION
IMMIGRATION GENERAL NOT RACIAL LINES, SUGGESTED REGULATION

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji, whose telegraphic address was “Incas”, forwarded a copy of the cable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. (C.O.291, Volume 79, Individuals N). *India* published the following edited version of the cable in its issue of 25-11-1904:

JOHANNESBURG,
November 18, 1904

A crowded meeting of British Indians from all parts of the Transvaal has been held in Johannesburg, and has adopted resolutions protesting against the proceedings of the “Convention” held at Pretoria, on November 11, with reference to the immigration of Asiatics into the Transvaal.

The ground of the protest is that the “Convention” in question observed no distinction between the natives of South Africa and Indians, who are subjects of the British Crown.

The meeting declared that the resolutions of the “Convention”, if carried out, would mean confiscation and ruin to Indian traders.

The meeting further asked for a public enquiry into the allegations of the “Convention” accepting the principle of restriction of immigration in general, not on racial, lines. It was suggested that a Regulation might be framed providing for the granting of new trade licences by Local Boards, subject, however, to an appeal to the Supreme Court.

98. *THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND BRITISH INDIANS*

Sir Henry Bale the other day remarked that the Indians entering the Court-house were seemingly disrespectful, in that they did not shew any outward mark of respect to the Court. The turbans or the caps they would not take off, because of their custom to the contrary, and the boots could not be taken off, because it would be inconvenient to do so. His Lordship ruled that, unless every Indian on entering the Court salaamed, the omission would be treated as contempt of Court. We respectfully draw His Lordship's attention to the fact that the very wearing of the turban or the Indian cap implies a mark of respect, for just as on entering a place the European custom requires the taking *off* of the hat, Indian custom requires that the turban and the cap, as the case may be, should be kept on. Want of respect is not an Indian characteristic, and we venture to assure His Lordship that in the omission to salaam there can be no disrespect meant. The salaaming presupposes the meeting of the eyes of the person salaamed and the person salaaming, which is hardly possible in a Court-house where the judge is absorbed in the case before him. The only feasible course, in our opinion, is that, on entering the witness-box, the Indian should certainly be made to salaam, but we think that such a caution is hardly necessary, as every Indian on entering the witness-box almost instinctively offers the respect due to the Court. However, it is as well for the Indian litigant who may have occasion to visit the Courts to bear in mind the requirements laid down by His Lordship. We must not, under any circumstances, allow ourselves to be even suspected of any disrespect to the judges or other authorities.

Indian Opinion, 19-11-1904

99. ORANGE RIVER COLONY AND THE BRITISH INDIANS

The Farmers' Congress, which was held on the 8th instant at Bloemfontein, drew from His Excellency the Governor of the Orange River Colony the following remarks about the anti-Indian legislation of that Colony:

With regard to the introduction of Asiatics into the Colony, this is a very delicate question for me to touch upon as there is considerable feeling amongst our people at Home in regard to British Indians, but at present I may say there will be no alteration in the legislation from that adopted by the late Government, nor do we contemplate at present any alteration.

Here, then, we have a definite pronouncement from the head of the State as to the disabilities of the British Indians in the Colony. It would, therefore, appear that there is to be no relief from the galling restraints that are put upon the Indians as soon as they enter the Orange River Colony.

Indian Opinion, 19.11.1904

100. THE LATE LORD NORTHBROOKE¹

We were profoundly grieved to read the news of the death, on Wednesday afternoon, of H.E. Lord Northbrooke. We have been familiar with his name for years now. Lord Northbrooke succeeded Lord Mayo as Viceroy and Governor-General of India after the latter's assassination. Two memorable and historic events took place during his viceroyalty: the Prince of Wales' tour of India² and the deposition of H.H. Maharaja Malharrao Gaekwad of Baroda.³ We mourn him especially because Lord Northbrooke had great sympathy for us. He proffered excellent advice and even extended help, whenever necessary, to the representatives of South African Indians when they were in London during 1897-8. Apart from this, he assured them that, should the need ever arise to ask question about us in the House of Lords he would help to the utmost. Sympathetic letters from His Lordship used to be received even at Durban. The local Congress

¹ Viceroy of India, 1872-76.

² In 1875.

³ On a charge of attempted murder of the British Resident, though the Court of Inquiry could not reach unanimity concerning his guilt.

will, we are sure, discharge its duty by passing a fitting resolution. The Transvaal Indians in Johannesburg have done the right thing by passing an appropriate one, with which we are in full agreement.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 19-11-1904

101. HOONDAMAL'S LICENCE

As we expected, Mr. Hoondamal has won his appeal, and we congratulate both him and his counsel, Mr. Binns, on the victory. It is, however, quite clear from the learned Chief Justice's judgment that the struggle is by no means over. The appeal has been decided practically on a side issue. The judge held that Mr. Hoondamal was wrongly summoned for trading without a license because he held one, but declined to decide upon the issue raised in the appeal as to whether the Licensing Officer had the right to restrict trade to any particular locality. Therefore, the Indian community has to approach the new year with a great deal of anxiety and fear. Such a state of things ought not to be allowed to last in a British Colony, and we trust that before long the law will be amended. The late Mr. Escombe said that he gave wide powers to the Town Council because he had faith in their moderation. The Corporation of Durban has, we are sorry to say, on more than one occasion, belied those expectations, and if the premier Corporation in this Colony has not been able to justify them, what is to be expected from lesser bodies? Everyone recognises that the Dealers' Licences Act is a terrible engine of oppression. May we not, then, appeal to our legislators to take the temptation away from the local authorities? It would be perfectly possible even then to regulate and control the issuing of licences, and probably in a far more satisfactory manner. Another thought that arises from the appeal is that, in spite of his victory, Mr. Hoondamal comes off second best. He has been put to enormous expense simply because of the vagaries of the prosecution and, may we say with deference, the hasty judgment of the Magistrate. It is admitted that the prosecution was wrongly brought, and yet Mr. Hoondamal has to pay for this mistake. The struggle is unequal and the pecuniary aspect of it should never be lost sight of. The least that the Town Council may be expected to do is to

reimburse the poor men the expenses that they might be put to owing to the Council's mistakes.

Indian Opinion, 26-11-1904

102. THE ANTI-ASIATIC CONVENTION AND THE BRITISH INDIAN MEETING

The Anti-Asiatic Convention, held at Pretoria on the 10th instant, has produced some remarkable results probably never anticipated by its authors. With the exception of a few newspapers, even the South African Press has condemned its proceedings as arbitrary and unjust. The London *Times*, which gave the lead, said that they betrayed lack of statesmanship on the part of the delegates, and added that agitation of that nature, however violent, could not be allowed to override Imperial obligations, and that the proposals laid down by Mr. Lyttelton in his dispatch on the question could not be departed from to the detriment of the British Indians. We have read all the reports about the Convention, and what has grieved us most is the fact that, if they are a fair summary of the proceedings, they show, shall we say, an utter lack of knowledge on the part of the speakers. Wildest statements were made regarding British Indians, as also the intentions of the Imperial Government. We hear that the speeches made were most inflammatory, and that the reporters have considerably toned them down. We are told that some of the speakers even hurled defiance at the Imperial Government. Now, just as, as between the Europeans and the Indians, it is admitted that the former should remain the predominant partner, is it not a fact that, as between the Imperial Government and the Colonies, the former has the dominant voice? If the members of the Convention claim that they must have all they want, as was said by one of the Boer delegates, it opens out a most serious question as to the value of the tie wherein one party must have all, and the other must give all. The Empire has been built up as it is on a foundation of justice and equity. It has earned a world-wide reputation for its anxiety and ability to protect the weak against the strong. It is the acts of peace and mercy, rather than those of war, that have made it what it is, and we make bold to say that the members of the Convention are much mistaken, if they think that, for their selfish ends, the established policy of the Imperial Government is going to be suddenly changed,

and that an act of spoliation, as Mr. Quinn termed it, would be committed by the Imperial Government at their bidding. Though, therefore, the violent proceedings of the Convention. need cause no fear among the British Indians, it was well that the British Indian Association promptly convened a public meeting¹ of Indians throughout the Colony, in order to consider the proceedings of the Convention. The full report we published last week shows that the meeting was very largely attended, that representatives went to it from all parts of the Colony, and that the proceedings were quite moderate, though, at the same time, sufficiently emphatic. Mr. Abdool Gani made it clear in his speech that the gathering at Pretoria assumed a state of things that never existed and then proceeded to apply a remedy. It was well, too, that he laid stress upon the fact that the distinction between British subjects and non-British subjects was entirely disregarded by the Convention, as also the distinction between the natives of South Africa and the British Indians. More harm has been done to the Indians by overlooking these two fundamental facts than [by] anythings else. It may suit those gentlemen, whose interest lies in driving the Indian out of the Transvaal, to confuse the real issue by including the Indian among all the Asiatics, and then bracketing the latter with the natives of South Africa. They have some justification for doing so, as even Sir Arthur Lawley in his despatch has succumbed to this view, but we trust that now that the real intentions of the majority of those who attended the Convention are made clearly known, we would have the distinction Mr. Abdool Gani has insisted upon drawn by the authorities at Home. We commend to their attention also the proposals of the British Indian Association reiterated at the meeting. They offer at once a complete and, if we may say so, a statesmanlike solution of the intricate question.

Indian Opinion, 26-11-1904

103. A PLAGUE SPOT

We reproduce Dr. Porter's graphic report on Ferreiras Township, and it would appear that this place is infinitely worse from a sanitary standpoint than the old Indian Location at Johannesburg. It is at

¹ Held on November 17, to protest against the proceedings of the Anti-Asiatic Convention. (*Indian Opinion*, 19-11-1904.)

once the strength and the weakness of the British Constitution that nothing can be done under it, not even if it be clearly in the public interest, except under legal authority. The Johannesburg Plague Committee find that, whether plague breaks out in this place or not, they are not authorised by law to apply, what Mr. Quinn has termed, the fire cure, and that therefore, Johannesburg must run the risk of another outbreak during the rainy weather. We hope that a remedy for this difficult position will be found, and that the area within Ferreiras Township will be quickly dealt with, as it should be. The figures given by Dr. Porter provide food for interesting study. The population of the whole area is 288 Indians, 58 Syrians, 165 Chinese, 297 Cape, 75 Kaffirs and 929 whites. Of these, the Insanitary Area proper contains the following distribution according to Dr. Porter: Indians 255, Syrians 17, Chinese 126, Cape 192, Kaffirs 31 and whites 241. Thus we see that the lowest class in all the communities is more or less the same. We think, however, that the real culprits are the landlords. So long as they get a fat rent, they do not mind in the slightest degree what happens to the poor tenants or how they live, and the landlords, have been able to perform a blood-sucking operation, because of the laches of the Johannesburg Town council, which might have dealt with the place long ago. It is worthy of note that the landlords in this connection are not Indians at all but Europeans. Not that by making this statement we wish to imply any particular merit in the Indian landlords of the same class as the European landlords who infest Ferreiras Township. It is merely a proof of human nature being more or less alike, whether it is covered by a white skin or a brown skin.

Indian Opinion, 26-11-1904

104. BRITISH INDIANS IN BOKSBURG

The following Notice has been received by the British Indians residing in the Indian Location at Boksburg:

NOTICE

Asiatics residing in the Asiatic Location, Boksburg, are reminded that their Tenancy is Temporary only, and subject to a Month's Notice as ordered in Government No.1379 of 1903. Persons erecting Permanent Buildings, therefore, do so at their own risk, and should the position of the Location be changed at any time, they will be entitled to no consideration for any loss incurred.

It was hardly necessary to remind the residents that their tenancy is temporary, but the notice bears some meaning which is ominous. Why the poor people should be driven from pillar to post, it is difficult to understand. The condition of the Location is unexceptionable, it is not overcrowded, and is isolated from the town. The people have been allowed to live there prior to the war, and what the Republican Government never did, or could do, is now being threatened or done under the British Government. Although all such tenancies were, during the late Mr. Kruger's regime, temporary, nobody ever thought of disturbing the tenant's occupation. The Notice does not say that the people will have to remove at a definite time, but warns them against building permanent structures. Many Indians, wishing to live better, have begun to erect suitable buildings, and the Notice is the result. Thus, conditions unfavourable to the better mode of life are artificially created, and then the people who have to labour under such disabilities are blamed for any results that flow therefrom. The Boksburg Vigilants will still be able to point the finger of scorn and say the Indians do not spend on building, and do not live in decent style, forgetting that they are in that position by force of circumstances. When will such an ominous situation end? Even if the Government intend to remove the people, why should it be impossible to give them a clear, long, definite notice? What do they propose to do with reference to those who, before the Notice, had already built expensive premises? We appeal to the Government for justice and fair play.

Indian Opinion, 26-11-1904

*105. "ANGLO-INDIAN" ON THE BRITISH INDIANS IN
SOUTH AFRICA*

We have had on our table, for review, an interesting article that appeared on the 10th November in *The Rand Daily Mail*, entitled: "The real Indian danger" by "an Anglo-Indian". The writer of the article has advanced most astonishing arguments in favour of shutting out the Indian entirely. The writer says,

For the sake of the future of the Transvaal as a white man's country, it is to be hoped that no Gotham-like system of restrictions will be considered sufficient to shut out the Indian trader.

He then says:

It is not from any racial feeling, or from views of health or sanitation, or morality, or any other semi-sentimental ground. Those who know the Asiatic believe it is better for South Africa that he should remain outside. It is a precaution dictated by the instinct of self-preservation.

The writer then adduces reasons why he considers the Indians as dangerous, and this is the reason:

Place 100,000 natives of India on an uninhabited South-Sea Island and 100,000 Kaffirs on another. Leave them alone for a century to work out their own salvation. At the end of that period, you would find the Kaffirs indulging in a beer drink in a mud village, and the Indians would have founded a kingdom, have built some cities, have formed a fleet of ships, and opened out trade with other lands, and evolved a civilisation and a religion equal in many ways to any found in the West.

Now, this kind of argument is very seductive. The writer has evidently overlooked some important facts, as also the experience of history. We have it on Mr. Lyttelton's authority that South Africa is not the white man's country, and so long as the great numerical inequality between the Europeans and the Kaffirs continues to remain in favour of the latter, it is passing strange how any man could call South Africa a white man's country. Mr. Lyttelton, only the other day, said that, had it not been so, he would never have consented to introduce the Chinese into the Transvaal. It cannot be denied that, rightly or wrongly, the white man wishes to begin and end as a boss in South Africa. He would not perform manual work. Under the circumstances, the Kaffirs must play a very important part in the economy of South Africa, and so long as such a condition of affairs prevails in South Africa, the brown man must find a place. Had it not been so, he would certainly never have come to South Africa. The writer has instanced East Africa to show how it has been overrun by

Indians. The statement is mis-leading in that it is not true in the manner it is intended. That is to say, there has been no displacement of the white man by the Indian in East Africa. There the nature of the climate and the soil has failed to attract white settlers, and so the Indian has been encouraged to develop the country. The praise showered on the Indians by the writer is flattering to the Indian mind, but it is utterly misleading. We would indeed wish that all the praise was well deserved. While there is a great deal of truth in it, we must confess that, when the Europeans and the Indians have come in contact, the former have shown superior organising ability, probably superior communal spirit, and superior foresight. The result is that the Indian has occupied, as a class, a subordinate position. Why has not the writer taken Europe first as an example? There Indian immigration is totally unrestricted, and yet the Indian has not been able to displace a single white man. The reason is obvious. There is no use or demand for him there. In South Africa, on the other hand, there are things which the white man would not do, and the Kaffir could not do. It has, therefore, been possible for the Indians to live in South Africa. There may be overlapping in some instances, but as a rule each of the races has found its own level and its vocation. It is to our mind preposterous for any one to contend that there is any grave danger in the Indian displacing the white man. Alarming arguments such as the one under review are calculated to confuse the real issue and to retard a reasonable solution of the problem. It is the province of prudence to anticipate the future and provide for or against it. But it is prudence run amuck to assume danger where there is none. No one has contended that immigration from Asia or, for that matter, from any part of the world, should be totally unrestricted in South Africa. Reasonable restrictions have been proposed, and if they have not been carried out, it is simply the fault of the people who share the views expressed by the Anglo-Indian, who, of all the people in the world, must know, having lived in India, that the danger foretold in his article is a mere phantom.

Indian Opinion, 3-12-1904

106. PETITION TO LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

JOHANNESBURG,
December 3, 1904

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY THE ACTING LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

PRETORIA

THE PETITION OF ABDUL GANI, CHAIRMAN OF THE BRITISH INDIAN
ASSOCIATION AT JOHANNESBURG

HUMBLY SHEWETH THAT,

Your Petitioner begs respectfully to approach Your Excellency in connection with certain British Indian claims filed with the Rand Plague Committee in respect of goods destroyed at the instance of the Committee during the outbreak of the bubonic plague in the Colony this year.

After the discovery of the plague in the late Indian Location at Johannesburg, its inhabitants were cordoned [off] for a few days and subsequently removed to an isolation camp at Klipspruit. The removal to Klipspruit was effected on very short notice. When the inhabitants of the Location removed to Klipspruit, they were, as a rule, prevented from taking with them anything beyond their beddings. All their valuables, furniture and even bedsteads were ordered to be left behind.

On the people protesting, they were assured by Dr. Pakes, the Special Plague Officer, that all the goods destroyed should be paid for by the Committee, and that, therefore, the Indians need not have any anxiety. It was on this understanding that the Indians removed to Klipspruit without taking anything with them. Even the domestic animals, such as the dogs and cats, were ordered to be destroyed, in spite of the protests made by the owners; so, too, were most of the birds. In spite of the assurance given by Dr. Pakes, the Rand Plague Committee has repudiated its liability in the matter on the ground stated in its letters to the claimants. The Assistant Secretary of the Committee in repudiating the claims writes as follows:

I am directed to advise you that, acting on the opinion of Council, the Committee cannot accept liability for payment of the amount. In terms of the Plague regulations, any articles which are likely to be or become infected with, or spread infection of bubonic or oriental plague, may be disinfected, and in case, disinfection is impossible for any reason, may be destroyed, and the Committee are advised that no compensation is payable in respect of any

act done in execution of their powers or duties under the regulations.

My Association respectfully submits that, irrespective of the legal position of the Committee, it is morally bound to respect the plighted word of its only Officer who was at the critical time responsible for the public safety. Had no such promise been made, it is doubtful whether the inhabitants of the Location would have left their belongings as they did, without a murmur, in order to carry out the wishes of the Special Plague Officer. Among the goods destroyed were whole bags full of dry cereals and pulses and tinned foods which, according to the Vienna Convention, have been held not to carry infection. There was also household furniture, both wooden and metallic, destroyed. It could not be said that such articles were incapable of disinfection.

After protracted negotiations, the Committee has seen its way to accept claims for goods actually used by it out of the Location stores. At one time, even these claims were practically repudiated. It has been admitted that the goods that were used were of the same class as some of the stable goods that have been destroyed. The reason given for destroying the other eatables, instead of using them, is that it was the intention of the Committee to avoid among the inmates of the isolation camp the possibility of the slightest risk of infection. As a matter of fact, some goods were even sent to Klipspruit. The inmates themselves were quite willing to use up the stores that were in the Location.

It is worthy of note that the distribution of the orders for goods was by no means even or impartial, the purchase by the Committee being mostly confined to a few store-keepers only. Thus, it has happened that, while a few lucky men who were able to get rid of all their stores in so far as their claims are confined to stores have received full payment, their less fortunate brethren have received little or nothing.

Many inhabitants have, by reason of such wholesale destruction of their goods, become practically penniless.

My Association, therefore, humbly ventures to approach Your Excellency for intervention and trusts that Your Excellency will be pleased to secure a favourable consideration of the claims of the inhabitants of the late Indian Location for the value of their goods which were destroyed under orders of the Rand Plague Committee.

And for this act of justice and mercy, your Petitioner, as in duty bound, shall for ever pray, etc.

(Signed) ABDUL GANI
CHAIRMAN
BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 10-12-1904

107. LETTER TO "THE STAR" ¹

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
(JOHANNESBURG,)
December 9, 1904

SIR,

With reference to the letter published in your issue of the 8th inst. over Mr. T. Kleinenberg's signature, I take the liberty of joining issue on his statement.² I do not admit the figures quoted by Mr. Kleinenberg. I deny that there are at present 49 Indian traders in Pietersburg; there are only 28 stores owned by Indians within the township, as distinguished from the Location, and of these, some are held by the same Indians. I have not in any way endeavoured to amend my original statement, which was a denial of the allegation that there was a great disproportion between the numbers of Indian traders trading in town before war and after. Those who were trading without licences before war could hardly be called law-breakers, especially, by Mr. Kleinenberg, who knew the exact position, and probably be it said to his credit helped to create it. They traded without licences, it is true, but under legal advice, with the knowledge of the Republican Government, on tenders of licence money and under the protection of the British Government. If this was law-breaking, I must confess that I do not know the meaning of the term. Within the township before war, there were at least 23 Indian stores: the names are as under.³ The probability is that there were more, but I have indisputable proof as to the names and the numbers I am now giving. The original list from which the names are taken was prepared in March, 1903, in order to be produced before the Government. I think I have given enough for Mr. Klenenberg to investigate. If my figures are incorrect, I shall be

¹ This was published as part of an item under the heading "Mr. Kleinenberg and the British Indian Association" with the prefatory note: "The following correspondence to *The Star* was crowded out from our earlier issues. Though belated, we publish it as showing the truth of the statement made by Mr. Abdul Gani at the great Indian Mass Meeting recently held in Johannesburg".

The text of Kleinenberg's letter to which the above is a reply is here omitted

² The letter challenged the Chairman of the British Indian Association to produce evidence in refutation of certain figures given by Kleinenberg at the National Convention.

³ Listed in the following paragraph.

glad to admit the correction. If, on the other hand, they cannot be challenged, and if you think that my statement has been verified, I hope you will be good enough to collect the sum of £50 from Mr. Kleinenberg and hand it to the Nazareth House. One word more and I have finished. My object in troubling you is merely to place the truth and nothing but the truth before the public. Mr. Kleinenberg is well known to the British Indians in Pietersburg. I doubt not that he is guided by honest motives, and it is because I feel that want of information is the greatest mischief-maker in this controversy, that my Association has felt it to be its duty to take up statements made at the National Convention and refute them, wherever it was necessary.

The stores referred to above are:

Hassim Moti & Co. (3), Tar Mahomed Tayob (2), Ahmed Moosa Bhayat (2), Ahmed Ebrahim Wadi, Abdul Latif Ali, Cassim Suliman, Cassim Tayob, Osman Mahomed & Co. (2), Gane Hassim, Haji Mahomed, Tayob Haji Khan Mahomed (3), Janellahomed Osman, Harsim Mahomed, Abhechand, Ebrahim Mahomed and Gadit.

I am etc.,

ABDUL GANI

Indian Opinion, 31-12-1904

108. THE RAND PLAGUE COMMITTEE

We reproduce in another column the petition of the British Indian Association addressed to the Acting Lieutenant-Governor,¹ with reference to certain claims filed with the Rand Plague Committee for goods that were destroyed on its instructions, on the outbreak of the plague in Johannesburg in March last. The petition discloses a story of meanness and callous disregard of all moral obligations on the part of the Rand Plague Committee. According to the petitioner's version, before the goods were destroyed, Dr. Pakes had made a definite promise that compensation would be given to the owners, and if it be true that furniture, metallic things, and whole bags of dry food were burnt down, the destruction must have been more in order to fire public imagination and to conciliate sentiment than to guard against danger to public health. It would be monstrous to suppose that iron bedsteads or even wooden furniture could not be properly disinfected. It will be remembered that, when the plague outbreak took place first in Natal, the Natal Government sounded the views of the Indian Government as to the ability of rice and such other food-stuffs to

¹ *Vide* "Petition to the Lieutenant-Governor". December 3, 1904.

carry infection, and the expert opinion sent by the Government of India was that there was no danger in receiving rice bags and such other foods from even plague-infected districts in India. Again, the inmates themselves, it would appear, were quite willing to have the eatables found in the Location served out to them. We, however, very much question whether public safety was at all advanced by the wholesale destruction of the goods. Be that, however, as it may, if the Rand Plague Committee chose to have the luxury of burning down the belongings of the poor men, it cannot escape liability to pay for them. The attempt to avoid payment under legal protection in the circumstances above mentioned is, in our humble opinion, simply scandalous. We must repeat for the tenth time that it was due to the gross neglect of the Johannesburg Municipality that the plague broke out. The Indians, it is admitted, behaved during that critical time in a most exemplary manner. Relying on promises made by its responsible officer, they quietly moved away to Klipspruit with the quickest dispatch, and without giving the authorities the slightest trouble. Repudiation of the just claims of such people is tantamount to an unwarranted confiscation of their property. To saddle the few men, who had the ill-luck to be in the Location at the time the cordon was drawn round, with the loss of all they possessed is a heartless procedure unworthy of a great corporation like the Rand Plague Committee. Those who went out to Klipspruit, and were practically kept under restraint, and were prevented from following their daily vocation, deserve sympathy and better treatment, and we hope that His Excellency will give careful consideration to Mr. Abdul Gani's petition, and do justice to the British Indians by ordering payment of compensation.

Indian Opinion, 10-12-1904

109. INDIANS IN PIETERSBURG

Mr. Kleinenberg, of Pietersburg, has written to *The Star*, challenging the statement made by Mr. Abdul Gani regarding the number of Indian traders in Pietersburg before and after the war in the course of his address to the recently held mass meeting at Johannesburg. In support of his statement, Mr. Kleinenberg produced certain figures, and triumphantly declared that, if they could be disproved, he would forfeit to the Nazareth House the sum of £ 50, provided that a like sum is forfeited by the other party, in the event of his figures being proved true. Mr. Abdul Gani has written to *The Star*, promptly taking up the challenge. We are surprised that, with Mr. Kleinenberg's experience, he should have allowed himself to be misled by the

figures supplied to him. Indeed, if the number of licenses issued to British Indian traders before the war were any test of the actual number that carried on trade, we would find that there were hardly 100 Indian traders in the Transvaal, whereas everybody who knows anything about the country knows that there were far more than 100 British Indian traders carrying on trade in the Transvaal before war outside Locations. Such a state of things was possible because of the strong hand of the British Agent affording protection to unlicensed Indian traders. The incident thus shows the proof of the statement, made at the Indian meeting, about the best men in the Colony in the Transvaal being ill-informed and not studying their facts well before forming their judgment. Mr. Kleinenberg, again, forgets that the number of Indian licenses supplied to him by the Revenue Office includes Indians trading in the Locations at Pietersburg of which there is a large number. Now the Indians who are trading in Location do not enter into the controversy at all. The proceedings of the Convention were directed against trades established outside Locations or Bazaars. We hope, then, that either Mr. Kleinenberg will acknowledge his mistake as an act of fairness and justice or proceed to substantiate his proposition, if he does not accept the explanation offered by Mr. Abdul Gani.

Indian Opinion, 10-12-1904

110. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
December 10, 1904

TO
MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON S.E.
ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

Indian Opinion has entered on a third stage in its career.¹ I would not weary you with the important step that has been taken in connection with it. You will see the full particulars² published in it in

¹ The reference is to the shifting of the office to Phoenix

² *Vide* "Ourselves", 24-12-1904

the course of this month. It is now intended to have a weekly or a fortnightly letter from England of general interest but also dealing particularly with the Indian question in South Africa, as it may have effected [*sic*] from time to time in London. Could you recommend anyone who would undertake the work and if so, at what rate? I have nothing special to report on the question this week.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: S.N. 2265.

111. THE HOONDAMAL CASE¹

December 14, 1904

Mr. Gandhi proposed that, if Mr. Hoondamal won his appeal with costs, he should bear the other expenses, if any. Otherwise, the Congress would bear them, provided that it paid no more than £ 50, and that any fine imposed was paid by Mr. Hoondamal.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

112. THE HOONDAMAL LICENCE AGAIN

Like the boy in the tub in a well-known advertisement, the Town Council won't be happy till it was ruined Mr. Hoondamal by robbing him of his licence. A summons was, therefore, again issued against the unfortunate trader; and our political Magistrate, Mr. Stuart, in an extraordinary judgment, found him guilty, and imposed the maximum penalty of £20 fine. Mr. Stuart, forgetting that the defendant was acting under legal advice, asked if the Europeans complied with the law, why should not the Indians? What the interpretation of the law has to do with the distinctions between Europeans and Indians, we fail to see. Again, Mr. Stuart suggests that Indians should follow the Roman saying: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". We wish we were treated like Romans by the advisers. In making these remarks, it never seems to have occurred to Mr. Stuart that the Europeans had no difficulty about the transfers of their licences. However, we understand, a notice of appeal has been lodged. The public, therefore, will

¹ The question of financial assistance to Hoondamal in the test case came up before the Natal Indian Congress on December 14.

again have the opportunity of judging how far the politician has got the better of the judge in Mr. Stuart. As the matter is *sub judice*, we must not go in [to] the merits of the case.

Our contemporary, *The Natal Mercury*, has seen fit to allow itself to make remarks on the case which are hardly in keeping with its usual tone of fairness. Our contemporary says:

The Hoondamal case makes it evident that the Indians are determined to fight the local authorities in the matter of the granting of licences. I have no remark to make upon the case now occupying the attention of the Court, and upon which judgment is to be given this morning. Indeed, it would be grossly improper to do so until that decision is announced, but I may remark upon the general question that it is more than ever evident that the burgesses must demand that the matter shall be so dealt with that their wishes shall be observed. If the Indians are going to defy the desire of the burgesses as regards trading, and as instanced by the wretched Kaffir market in Queen Street, then they must not be surprised if restrictions are imposed of a far more drastic character than have hitherto been contemplated. I have the fullest respect for the rights of British Indians, but the Indians generally must understand that, if they are going to show obstruction, to force their wills upon this community, and to spread over this town *a la* Mauritius, they will have all sections of the whites united against them. It is well that this should be stated plainly. The burgesses of this town, who have built it up and are responsible for it, are not going to be dictated to by the Indians, who are going the right way to bring into existence an organisation that will insist on the Town Council proceeding on such lines, or obtaining such powers, as will leave no loophole of escape, and that will greatly shackle the Indian community. The attitude on the Queen Street Kaffir market is alone sufficient to arouse the anger of the community, and the situation will not be helped by defiance in regard to licences after legal rights have once been settled.

Our contemporary mixes up the Kaffir Market in Queen Street with the Hoondamal case, with which it has not the remotest connection; and it mixes up the Hoondamal case with the whole of the Indian licensing question, and then incites the burgesses against the Indians.

Now the Kaffir Market is an eyesore which has nothing to recommend it; and it has to be dealt with on its own merits. But it would not be proper to blame the whole community for the obstinacy of an individual. Nor is it right to suggest that there is any idea of determined opposition to the reasonable wishes of the burgesses. We admit that the transfers of licences should be regulated. But, in the

present case, we consider that the action of the Town Council is high-handed, prejudiced, oppressive and unjust. Mr. Hoondamal has an exceedingly strong case on merits. His premises are in excellent condition, comparing most favourably with the best of the class in West Street. He is a man of exceptionally clean habits. His trade is high-class European, and commands the confidence of a large number of European houses. Law seems to be on his side. Why, then, should he not fight for what he is justly entitled to? And, if, against the whole weight of the Town Council, which is thrown against him in an unjust manner, the Indians in general rally round the oppressed merchant, it is nothing but their duty so to do. And we think that our contemporary should appreciate rather than deprecate the efforts on the part of the Indians to secure justice. When that proposition has been made good, it would be time to appeal to the Indians to respect the wishes of the Town Council.

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

113. MR. LOVEDAY: STATESMAN!

We have much pleasure in giving the following¹ in our leading columns. The writer was specially deputed by us to report the proceedings of the Potchefstroom meeting, and a Britisher that he is, he resented most keenly the tone and the bitterness that Mr. Loveday thought fit to import into what might otherwise have been a sober meeting, and although, as a rule, we are averse to a trenchant, biting style in our leading columns, we have no hesitation in making an exception in favour of the following which represents the true feelings of a man who witnessed the proceedings, and whose sense of fairness and justice would not restrain him from calling a spade a spade.

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

114. THE KAFFIR MARKET IN QUEEN STREET

We entirely re-echo the chorus of condemnation that has been showered on those who are associated with the keeping up of the disgraceful Kaffir Market in Queen Street. The sooner it is blotted out from our midst, the better it would be for all concerned. We see in the

¹ Not reproduced here.

discussion a tendency to bring in the Indian question. But a little reflection would show that the Indian question has nothing to do with it. It is true that the upper landlord is an Indian. It will be remembered that there were two such markets. One of the landlords, Mr. Omar Haji Amod, as soon as the nuisance was brought to his notice, summarily stopped the Market. That shows the better side of Indian nature. The other landlord is obdurate; and the Town Council must find some way to meet the difficulty. But it may be well to remember that the place is let to European who are managing the Market. It is a question for each community to use the ordinary social pressure, supplemented by law, if necessary. The Indians, as a class, have no more to do with the evil than the Europeans; and it will facilitate the smooth working of the social machinery if this fact is borne in mind, and kept clear of other racial questions that have no bearing on this matter.

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

115. INDENTURED LABOUR ON THE COAL MINES

We print elsewhere a report from the *Witness* representative on the condition of the indentured labour on the coal-mines in Natal. If the allegations are true, they reveal a shocking state of things. Our contemporary demands an inquiry. We join in the request. It should be welcomed by the mine-owners. But if an investigation is held, we trust that it will be open, public and absolutely impartial. The commission, in order to command confidence, should be preponderatingly non-official; and, if we may venture to say so, should include an Indian gentleman of standing. The general condition of the indentured labourer in the Colony is satisfactory; and it can only enhance its reputation if causes even for suspicion are removed.

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

116. THE POTCHEFSTROOM MEETING

INACCURACIES IN THE RESOLUTIONS

We propose to deal now with the resolutions passed at the mass meeting at Potchefstroom, and to show how they are full of inaccuracies.

We will take each of these resolutions in its order.

The first commences with the statement:

Whereas the Government of this country and the Home Government have decided that immigration of Asiatics should only be permitted under indenture, and a Labour Importation Ordinance has been passed regulating the immigration of Asiatics.

Now, neither the Home nor the Transvaal Government has decided that the immigration of Asiatics should only be permitted under indenture. There is no Labour Importation Ordinance passed “regulating the immigration of Asiatics”. What has actually happened is this. On the 11th day of February, this year, an Ordinance, No.17 of 1904, was assented to “to regulate the introduction into the Transvaal of unskilled non-European labourers”. That is a very different proposition indeed, and one that entirely alters the complexion of affairs. Moreover, we read, in Section 34 of this same Ordinance that

nothing in this Ordinance contained shall apply to the introduction into this Colony by the Lieutenant-Governor of British Indians to be employed on the construction of railways sanctioned by the Governor or on other public works; provided always that such introduction shall be subject to such regulations as the Legislative Council may approve of; and provided further that the provisions of this ordinance in respect of the return of labourers to their country of origin shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to such British Indians.

So that not only do the provisions of this Ordinance refer only to “unskilled” non-European labour; and not only are British Indian labourers expressly said to be outside of the working of the Ordinance; but it will be necessary for special regulations to be passed by the Legislative Council dealing with their particular case. Further, the expression “unrestricted immigration of British Indians” assumes that Indians have been entering the country on a large scale. The fact is that the immigration of British Indians has been almost entirely stop-ped, except for those who are *bonafide* refugees.

It will be well within the memory of our readers that, no longer than a few months since, the Chief Secretary for Permits reported to the High Commissioner that no new Indians were allowed to enter the Colony, and that permits were only sparingly granted to *bona-fide* refugees.

In the second Resolution we read:

Whereas, owing to the unrestricted issue of trading licences to Asiatics, Pietersburg has now more than treble the number of Asiatic traders than white.

The facts are that in Pietersburg, before the war, there were 23 Indian stores. The number at the present time is 28. There are, we make bold to say, more than 14 white stores in Pietersburg.

Resolution No.3 refers to the depreciation in value of the properties adjoining stores and land rented by Asiatics. The fact,

again, is that land and stores adjacent to properties rented by Indians have actually increased in value for the simple reason that they pay good rents.

We need not pursue the inquiry further. If the resolutions contain such exaggerations as we have shewn above, the inference is obvious that the speakers to them have not been behindhand in recklessness of statement.

Indian Opinion, 17-12-1904

117. LETTER TO "THE STAR" ¹

[JOHANNESBURG,
Prior to *December 24, 1904*]

TO
THE EDITOR
THE STAR

SIR,

May I venture to trespass on your courtesy with reference to a venomous attack made by Mr. Loveday, M.L.C., on the British Indians, when he delivered his address to the anti-Asiatic meeting held at Potchefstroom on Saturday last. Mr. Loveday condescended to reply to my address to the Indian mass meeting,² and, in the course of his heated remarks, allowed himself to descend to abuse and statements, the recklessness of which I have never seen surpassed in a person holding the responsible position of Mr. Loveday. He has not hesitated to charge me with having made "deliberate, wilful, and wickedly false statements, and Oriental duplicity". However, I have no wish to descend to Mr. Loveday's level, but I repeat again every statement that I have made in my address, and withdraw nothing, and with your permission, I would endeavour to give some of the many proofs in support thereof. Mr. Loveday resents that portion of the address wherein I have complained that he omitted to state at the National Convention, when he was giving the history of the Convention of 1884, the fact that there were at the time British Indians in the Colony, and that Law 3 of 1885 was passed on misrepresentation. If you and your contemporaries reported the honourable gentleman at all correctly, my assertion is perfectly true. Mr. Loveday is reported in *The Star* to have said as follows:

¹ This was published in *Indian Opinion* under the heading "Mr. Loveday and the British Indian Association".

² Held at Johannesburg on November 17. *Vide Indian Opinion*, 19-11-1904.

When the 1881 Convention was concluded, there were no Indians in the Transvaal, and there is little or no doubt that the Asiatic side of the question never presented itself to the authors of that document sitting in Pretoria, and a study of the whole of the provisions of that document clearly shows that the white race and the natives resident in the country alone, were contemplated. It was only after the arrival of the first Indian traders, and after the 1884 Convention had been substituted for that of 1881, that restrictive legislation was proposed.

Thus, Mr. Loveday, if he is correctly reported, has contended that, as no Indians had arrived before 1884, the words "other than Natives" could apply only to the Europeans, whereas the fact is that there were already Indian settlers in the country before the Convention of 1884 was passed. I have taken the trouble of comparing your report with that of the other newspapers, and it is substantially the same. So far, therefore, as I am concerned, my complaint, that Mr. Loveday omitted a material fact in stating the history of the question, is completely justified. As to the misrepresentations on which Law 3 of 1885 was passed, I quote the following from one of the several petitions that were used by the late Government in order to induce the British Government to sanction legislation embodied in Law 3 of 1885:

the dangers to which the whole community is exposed by the spread of leprosy, and the like loathsome diseases engendered by the filthy habits and immoral practices of these people. . .

Again,

as these men enter the State without wives and female relatives, the result is obvious. Their religion teaches them to consider all women as soulless, and Christians as natural prey.

These petitions were signed by responsible and representative men, and it was due to these gross, unfair, and untrue statements that Law 3 of 1885 was accepted. Mr. Loveday has thought fit again to reiterate his statement that an Arab tradesman spends not more than £ 40 per annum. He has quoted the report of the Asiatic Traders' Commission in support, but the Commissioners have said no such thing. At Potchefstroom, he was more emphatic. I, therefore, again deny the assertion, and can only state that I ought to know better than Mr. Loveday as to how much an Indian tradesman spends. Some have to pay in rent alone even as much as £40, not per annum, but per month. Does Mr. Loveday know a single Indian trader? Has he ever examined their books? Has he studied the report of the Asiatic Commission? Will he now go through the books of 20 Indian traders, which I shall have much pleasure in submitting to him? I deny the statement that the Indian employees do not receive more than 20s. per

month, and I am in a position to place before him names of Indian employees receiving more than £100 per annum over and above their board and lodging expenses. Mr. Loveday again states that my statement, that no new Indians were allowed to come into the country, was “wickedly false”. If I have erred, I have erred in the company of the Chief Secretary for Permits, who, you will recollect, only a few months ago, reported to Lord Milner that no new Indians were allowed to enter the Colony, and that permits were only sparingly granted to *bona-fide* refugees. Mr. Loveday, in refutation of the statement, cited Pretoria and Potchefstroom, and he says the population of the Indian Location at Pretoria had been doubled since the war, and, whereas before there were from 15 to 20 traders, there are now between 90 and 100. This is utterly without foundation. The Indian population of Pretoria has certainly increased, but not doubled. The increase is due to the influx of Indians from other parts of the Colony, who are unable to get licences or otherwise to get a living. According to the Permits Officer, there are in the Colony not more than 10,000 Indians. There were in 1896 nearly 10,000 Indians in the Transvaal, and it will not be doubted that the Indian population had increased considerably in 1899.”In Pietersburg,”the honourable gentleman says,”prior to the war, they had 13 Indian stores; today they had 49”. As against that, I venture to state that there were 23 Indian stores before the war in the town alone, and that there are to day 28. Then, again, Mr. Loveday has stated:

The Indians had told them that they had certain rights, what they called their ‘Charter of Liberty’, but was there any social intercourse between Indians and whites in India? None whatever.

The question is gratuitously brought up. The Indians have never clai-med any social intercourse here. All they have claimed is the elemen-tary right of reasonable facilities of trading, reasonable facilities for immigration under general restrictions, freedom of locomotion and of ownership of property; but, for the information of Mr. Loveday, I may state there is a measure of social intercourse also between Indians and Englishmen in India. The balls given by the Maharaja of Kuch Behar attract the best European society. Functions and parties are given by the Viceroy and the Governors, where Indians of all classes are invited. The levees held from time to time in the chief cities in India are open as well to the Indian subjects as to the English subjects of the King-Emperor. If I state this fact, I do so merely to show the lamentable want of knowledge on the part of our oldest legislator, and not in order to excite the slightest desire on the part of my country-men for a share in any of the social functions. We have

no wish to thrust ourselves into the social economy of the white settlers in the Colony. I need hardly go any further with this, to me a painful subject. It was impossible to allow the honourable gentleman's state-ment at the Potchefstroom meeting to go unchallenged, but if he has not rendered himself utterly incapable of seeing things in their true light when the question of colour is under discussion, I would appeal to his sense of justice and fairness, and would merely ask him to study his history and his facts, to study also what I venture to consider are the very reasonable and moderate propositions of the British Indian Association and than to ask himself whether he is not wasting his energy, misleading the people over whom he exercises so much control, doing an injustice to the responsible position he holds in the country, and also doing a disservice to the Empire to which he pro-fesses he is proud to belong.

I am, etc.,

ABDOOL GANI

Indian Opinion, 24-12-1904

118. OURSELVES¹

Indian Opinion enters upon the third stage of its career in the short space of the eighteen months of its existence. The proprietor, being guided by patriotic motives, embarked upon the enterprises on the slenderest resources. He had to depend for the editing of the paper on purely voluntary and unpaid assistance. This he readily received. It was his intention to make the paper self-supporting by devoting the profits from the general printing to meeting the expected deficiency on the paper. But such was not to be the case. Although this journal supplied a real want, what may be termed a commercial demand had to be created. In other words, the paper had not only to find its matter, but its readers also. Moreover, the sending of over five hundred complimentary copies was a great drag. Pecuniary assistance had, therefore, to be called in. The Natal Indian Congress and the British Indian Association came to the rescue, and voted certain funds towards the payment of the expense of printing and posting the complimentary copies.

Still the paper continued, octopus-like, to devour all it received

¹ This was later reprinted in a supplement to the issue of 31-12-1904 with this introductory note: "The following leading article appeared in our issue of the 24th Dec., 1904, and as we were unable then to issue enough copies to meet the demand for it, we issue it as a supplement, and we would supply sympathisers and friends with as many copies as they want for free distribution. (Ed. *I.O.*)"

and wanted more. The situation could only be saved by heroic measures. Patchwork was useless. Palliatives were dangerous. There remained then an appeal to the devoted workers and friends in favour of adopting a novel and revolutionary project. They were to look not to the present but to the future; not to their pockets but to the paper first. And why not? The object of *Indian Opinion* was to bring the European and the Indian subjects of King Edward closer together. It was to educate public opinion, to remove causes for misunderstanding; to put before the Indians their own blemishes; and to show them the path of duty while they insisted on securing their rights. This was an Imperial and pure ideal, towards the fruition of which anyone could work unselfishly. So it appealed to some of the workers.

The plan was shortly this. If a piece of ground sufficiently large and far away from the hustle of the town could be secured for housing the plant and machinery, each one of the workers could have his plot of land on which he could live. This would simplify the question of living under sanitary and healthy conditions, without heavy expenses.

The workers could receive per month an advance sufficient to cover necessary expenses, and the whole profits could be divided amongst them at the end of each year. The management would thus be saved the necessity of having to find a large sum of money from week to week. The workers also could have the option of buying out their plot of land at the actual cost price.

Living under such conditions and amid the beautiful surroundings which have given Natal the name of the Garden Colony, the workers could live a more simple and natural life, and the ideas of Ruskin and Tolstoy [be] combined with strict business principles. Or, on the other hand, the workers could reproduce the artificiality of town life, if it pleased them to do so. One could hope that the spirit of the scheme and the surroundings would have an educative influence on them. There would be a closer brotherly combination between the European and the Indian workers. There was a possibility that the daily working hours could be reduced. Each could become his own agriculturist. The English workers could belie the taunt that the Englishman in South Africa would not cultivate the soil and work with his own hands. He had here all the facilities for such work, without any of the drawbacks. The Indian worker could copy his European brother, and learn the dignity and utility of healthy recreation as distinguished from constant, slaving toil for miserable gains.

The incentive would be threefold to all: and ideal to work for in the shape of *Indian Opinion*; perfectly healthy surroundings to live in, and an immediate prospect of owning a piece of land on the most advantageous terms; and a direct tangible interest and participation in the scheme.

Such in outline was the argument. It has been translated into action. The printing works have been removed to a large piece of ground near Phoenix Station, on the North Coast line. There are already Englishmen and Indians working here under the scheme. It is yet too early to forecast the result. It is a bold experiment and fraught with momentous consequences. We know of no non-religious organisation that is or has been managed on the principles above laid down. If it succeeds, we cannot but think that it would be worthy of imitation. We write impersonally, and no one on the staff of this journal claims any glory over the matter. We, therefore, think it but right to take the public into our confidence. Their support would encourage us very greatly, and no doubt contribute largely to the success of the scheme. We can appeal to both the great communities residing in South Africa and trust that they will assist the management to bring the scheme to the successful issue that we believe it deserves.

Indian Opinion, 24-12-1904

119. A CASE FOR INQUIRY

Our contemporary, *The Natal Witness*, continues to give prominence to the prosecutions that have recently taken place in Ladysmith for assault on indentured Indians. *The Natal Witness* is to be congratulated on giving so much as a column-and-a-half, in its issue of the 16th inst., to the prosecution of a European underground manager at the Ramsay Collieries for assault on an indentured Indian employed on the mine. The manager was found guilty. And according to Sergt. Lempriere's fearless address for the Crown, the assault was serious. The story of the alleged sale of a woman which came up as a side issue is most discreditable, if it is true. It is a matter for consolation that we have in the Colony Crown Prosecutors like the Sergeant, who do not flinch in doing their duty. The whole matter, however, requires careful investigation by the Government. The reading of the report of the case leaves a bad taste in the mouth. An impartial inquiry would bring the truth to light, and it should, as we have said before, be welcomed by the Collieries Company.

Indian Opinion, 24-12-1904

120. THE POTCHEFSTROOM VIGILANTS AND BRITISH INDIANS

The Potchefstroom Vigilants are going mad again. They want to clear their town of the Indians entirely. After their first outburst, it will be remembered, they had cooled down considerably; and, in spite of the opposition of their friends from Boksburg, they had decided that compensation should be awarded to those Indians who might be driven to the Bazaar. But they have evidently repented of their moderation. They would now take the law into their hands, and establish in Potchefstroom a reign of terror. They would disregard the religious feelings of inoffensive, law-abiding people. They would not allow an Indian Mosque to be erected in their town. They would make it hot for all who may have dealings with Indians. The householders are not to be allowed, on pain of social ostracism, to buy from Indians; the merchants, similarly, are not to trade with them; and the landowners are to evict their Indian tenants. From a selfish standpoint, the Indians ought to welcome such hysterical opposition, because it is exhausted by its own violence. But from an Imperial standpoint, the action of the Potchefstroom Vigilants cannot be too strongly condemned. The history of British rule is the history of constitutional evolution. Under the British flag, respect for the law has become a part of the nature of the people. Our friends the Vigilants are belying their profession of loyalty to British rule by treading under foot the very corner-stone of the glorious constitution which enables them to enjoy freedom of speech as it is enjoyed nowhere else in the world. They have mistaken liberty for licentiousness of speech. May we appeal to them for a little sobriety?

Indian Opinion, 24-12-1904

121. A NEW WEEKLY

A new weekly has made its appearance in Johannesburg, called the *Rand Rate-payers' Review*, with its motto "Truth the People". It is well got up. That it must be a very useful and independent journal,

if it continues as it has begun, will appear from its following remarks on the Asiatic question:

Within three miles of Johannesburg post Office an obelisk looks down from a high kopje¹ on several rapidly developing townships. Close to that monument is a small graveyard, containing several large mounds, and one headstone inscribed, 'There is no God [but God,] and Mahomed is His Prophet'. In that graveyard rest the mortal remains of swarthy soldiers of our Indian Empire, whose lives were sacrificed during the war on behalf of liberty for British subjects in the Transvaal. We think of this in connection with the votes that were given by the present Town Councillors at their first meeting on November 2nd; and in connection with a subsequent meeting of delegates from all parts of the Transvaal in the Opera House at Pretoria the following week, when one man after another rose in his place and clamoured for resolutions which would, if enforced, prevent our fellow-subjects from India having any rights in the Colony other than those permitted to the heathen Chinese who are imported as indentured labourers. It seems to us that a little modification of language is required on the part of those who essay to seek a topic; and more than a little thoughtfulness. It is not wonderful, while such prejudices exist, that Lord Curzon declined the opportunity of coming here as the successor of Lord Milner; and if there be one reason stronger than another, which will cause the Home Authorities to delay the grant of 'Responsible Government' to the Transvaal, that reason will be fear lest such a privilege might be used to the detriment of any who helped Englishmen to acquire this Colony. It is common knowledge that the Boers did allow trading Asiatics certain privileges under license, but those privileges were not considered fair or complete. This fact was urged on England as an additional cause for armed intervention. England cannot so soon forget those arguments, as the authors of them seem anxious to do; and through the thoughtless clamour for 'no rights at all' to other than Europeans, the cry of the Uitlanders still rings out clearly in many a bereaved English home. Happily for the Rand, there are many men of worth and wealth who will not permit prejudice to override a strict sense of justice.

We congratulate our contemporary on its fearless independence of thought and for daring to be just, and wish it every success.

Indian Opinion, 24-12-1904

122. YEARLY BALANCE-SHEET

A merchant who does not take a review of his position from year to year would be considered a fool. A missionary hymn-book advises us to "count our blessings one by one" and see how much the Lord has done for us. We would, therefore, be following a good precedent and be strictly orthodox if we attempted a short review of

¹ Hillock

the position of our countrymen in South Africa which has rendered our existence necessary. We, however, regret that we cannot "count many blessings" for our countrymen in this sub-continent and will have to be satisfied with softening the harsh appearance of the dark clouds around us by drawing attention to the silver linings here and there.

To commence with Natal, the position remains much the same as before so far as new legislation is concerned. But the tendency of the working of the anti-Asiatic measures has been decidedly towards restriction bordering often on harshness. The new Immigration Act continues to give a great deal of trouble to the people. The supervision of the incoming vessels bringing Indian passengers is far stricter than it used to be. The interpretation of the term "domicile" has been much narrowed and many deserving Indians, although they have been in the Colony before, are being shut out. The Dealers' Licenses Act has given, and is still giving, a great deal of trouble. The Hoondamal case is still fresh in the memory. A merchant of long standing, having first-class European custom, trading in a store decently kept, has been persecuted for daring to remove his store from one place to another, only a few doors away, for the reason that the change has been made to West Street, which the Town Council wishes to reserve not for European trade but for European store-keepers only. The issue between the Town Council and the Indian community has not yet been decided. The matter is under review by the Supreme Court. But it is abundantly clear that the Natal Licensing Act, if it is to give any peace to the Indian community, must be changed so as to restore to the Supreme Court its inherent powers to review all judicial decisions given by any officer whether he is called a Magistrate or a Licensing Officer. The condition of the indentured Indians now and then calls for remarks. The cases that have recently been tried in Ladysmith and to which prominent attention has been drawn by our contemporary, *The Natal Witness*, require investigation. The question of the education of the Indian children in Natal is a most important one and, as the ex-Superintendent of Education, Mr. Barnett, has well said, they cannot safely be neglected if only for the sake of the white Colonists. Either the ordinary schools should be left open or new schools be established to give a suitable education to the Indian children. And here it may be remarked that it would be a desirable addition to the usual curriculum to require a knowledge of Indian languages. Interpretation that avails in the Colony is by no means satisfactory without the fault of the interpreters and it would be a cheap way of getting suitable interpreters to educate the Indian youths in Indian languages.

As to the Transvaal, it still continues to be the source of the greatest anxiety to the Indian community. Nothing there is yet settled. Law 3 of 1885 is being enforced rigorously. Indeed, the present Government have even gone beyond the Law. They have pressed into service the Peace Preservation Ordinance, which is purely a political measure, in order to keep the Indian out of the Transvaal. Even *bona-fide* refugees are prevented from entering the country. The case of *Habib Motan v. The Attorney-General* has given the Indian traders a sort of relief and has saved them from threatened extinction. But the victory in that case has given rise to a violent, aggressive and uninformed agitation against the British Indians in the Transvaal. It culminated in the now notorious anti-Asiatic convention which recommended drastic and un-English measures and supported them by inflammatory speeches. Mr. Loveday distinguished himself by making a speech which drew from the Chairman of the British Indian Association a sharp reply. Mr. Loveday tried to controvert the statements made by Mr. Adbul Gani. But he has been again baffled by that gentleman. He has sent to *The Star* a complete and categorical retort.¹ Thus, although the British Indian Association is often able to meet unscrupulous statements by true facts, the position remains acute. The people of Potchefstroom and other places have been advocating a boycott and wounding even the religious susceptibilities of the local Indians. In the meanwhile, previous time is being wasted by an ever shifting policy. Lord Milner has failed to be firm on the side of justice and has yielded away the rights of the British Indians to a clamorous and interested agitation. Happily, the Indian Government have shown firmness and it may be hoped that a reasonable solution of the difficulty will be arrived at before long.

The Orange River Colony has remained thorough. That it has also remained un-British does not concern its inhabitants. The war was waged for the Indians, among others. The Union Jack waves over Bloemfontein but it affords no shelter to the British Indian who is shunned like a Pariah.

At the Cape, one notices the curious phenomenon of separate legislation for separate parts of the Colony. Thus, an Indian in Cape Town enjoys the ordinary civic liberty. At East London, he may not walk in foot-paths, and the dependency of Transkei, he may not even enter. We firmly believe that this reactionary policy is a direct result of Lord Milner's Bazaar Notice in the Transvaal. Thereby, he let the world know that the British Indian was not to receive common protection of his rights. No wonder that the self-governing Colony of the

¹ Vide "Letter to *The Star*" dated "Prior to December 24, 1904".

Cape of Good Hope quickly copied the example so far as it could.

Such is the difficult position at the end of the year for the British Indian. But sweet are the uses of adversity. It damages more him who inflicts it than him on whom it is inflicted. A learned divine has said:

It is good for a man to suffer the adversity of this earthly life, for it brings him back to the sacred retirement of the heart where only he finds that he is an exile from his native home.

Rightly used, therefore, the adversity we find ourselves in should chasten us and guide us aright. There is no cause for disappointment. Ours is to work away in behalf of what we consider to be right and just and leave the result to Him without Whose permission or knowledge not a blade of grass moves.

If we may be pardoned for saying it, we believe that the community has in *Indian Opinion* a friend and advocate that would not flinch. We have endeavoured to the best of our ability to serve our countrymen and believing, as we do, in the ultimate triumph of truth and justice and having faith in the good sense of the British people, dark as the cloud appears to be at present, we wish, with every hope of realisation, to our countrymen and all our others readers

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Indian Opinion, 31-12-1904

123. OUR TRIAL

In our last issue, we wrote about the present position of *Indian Opinion*. We also said that among those who work on it are three Englishmen. With a view to giving the readers a clearer idea of the recent step we have taken, we now propose to say who the three gentlemen are, what risks they have taken in joining our press and why they have done so.

One of them is Mr. West.¹ He is quite familiar with the work of a printing press, having had one of his own in Johannesburg. It fetched him a good income, and he had several hands working under him. When *Indian Opinion* was in real trouble, he got ready within 24

¹ Gandhiji First met Albert West at a vegetarian restaurant in Johannesburg. Coming of peasant stock from Lincolnshire, West had an ordinary school education. Later, he went to work with Gandhiji at the Phoenix Settlement, of which his wife, mother and sister, Miss Ada West, also became inmates. Was arrested during the passive resistance movement. *Vide Autobiography* Part IV, Chapter XVI, *et seq.*

hours, gave up his own business and arrived here.¹ Now he takes from us just enough for his bare needs,² but stays on with us in the faith that there will be profits eventually. He toils away from morning to evening looking upon the work as his own.

Mr. Kitchin³ is another. He was an electrical contractor, had a firm of his own and used to earn much. He was greatly moved on learning of the step recently taken. He felt that the objectives of *Indian Opinion* were worthy. As he does not seek mere money and will be satisfied with what he can get from the press for his upkeep, and also because living in Phoenix is simple, cheap and interesting, he has joined us having given up his own business.

The third is Mr. Polak.⁴ He is at present the Assistant Editor of the newspaper, *The Critic*,⁵ and draws a good salary. Since he is a man of much simplicity and believes that he can freely express his feelings against oppression through *Indian Opinion*, he has informed his chief of his intention to resign, and he will arrive here towards the beginning of next year. Meanwhile, he has started writing for this journal. Many [of our readers] must have read a full report, written in English by Mr. Polak, of a big anti-Indian meeting held at Potchefstroom. He also wrote an account of the late President Kruger's funeral.

To our knowledge all the three Englishmen are good, capable, and selfless men. When people of another community do so much for us, we must surely wonder what we are ourselves doing for the venture. Everyone who has a desire to help can do so according to his capacity and without incurring expense. Our work cannot be achieved

¹ The press was set up at Durban and later moved to phoenix in 1904.

² To start with, his salary was fixed at £10 a month with a share in the profits. However when it was found that the enterprise was not self-supporting and was moved to phoenix, £3 was laid down as the monthly allowance per head, regardless of colour and nationality.

³ A theosophist, Herbert Kitchin, edited *Indian Opinion* after Nazar's premature death. Lived with Gandhiji for a time and worked with him during the Boer War.

⁴ Gandhiji met Henry S.L. Polak also at the Joannesburg vegetarian restaurant. It was Polak who gave Gandhiji a copy of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Polak qualified himself to be an attorney at Gandhiji's instance and joined him in his work. Succeeded Kitchin as Editor of *Indian Opinion*. Visited India and England to help South African Indians in their struggle, and went to prison during the passive resistance movement.

⁵ *The Transvaal Critic*.

single-handed.¹ We must look upon this paper as belonging to all Indians, and only if we work in that spirit shall we succeed.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 31-12-1904

124. SOME MORE POTCHEFSTROOM INACCURACIES

We cannot allow certain statements, made at the Potchefstroom meeting, recently reported² in our columns, to pass unchallenged, as we consider it necessary to place before our European friends the true facts, so as to enable them rightly to understand the Indian position.

We would quote Mr. Loveday's own words with regard to the admission of Indians into the Transvaal.

It was only after the arrival of the first Indian traders, and after the 1884 Convention had been substituted for that of 1881, that restrictive legislation was proposed.

Mr. Loveday would, therefore, make it appear that there were no Indian trading in the Transvaal before 1884, and that, therefore, Indians were not contemplated when the Convention was drawn up.

It is, nevertheless, a fact that Indians were contemplated in the working of the Convention, and that Indian merchants were trading in the Transvaal in 1881 and 1882 and, consequently, before 1884. Mr. Loveday's "facts" are thus vitiated, in this respect at least. Moreover, as Mr. Gani has pointed out in a letter to *The Star*,³ Law of 3 of 1885 was passed owing to very grave misrepresentations on the part of a large section of the white population. It will scarcely be denied that such statements as the following,

the dangers to which the whole community is exposed by the spread of leprosy, syphilis,⁴ and the like loathsome diseases engendered by the filthy habits and immoral practices of these people. . . .

and also,

as these men enter the state without wives or female relations, the result is obvious. Their religion teaches them to consider all women as soulless, and Christians as natural prey;

are scarcely in accordance with our normal sense of what is fair and just representation.

¹ The Gujarati original has, "You cannot clap with one hand".

² Vide "The Potchefstroom Meeting", 17-12-1904.

³ Vide "Letter to *The Star*", dated "Prior to December 24, 1904".

⁴ Vide however, the same quotation at p. 318, *supra*.

It is needless trouble to refute such imputations as those that we have quoted.

Mr. Loveday, then, as we have said, has been guilty of sins of omission and of commission, and it will become him to attempt to draw the red herring of personal abuse across the trail.

As for the matter of Arab traders spending no more than £40 per year, it is incorrect to say that an Indian merchant spends no more than £ 40 a year. If, as Mr. Loveday says, he has five assistants, as is not infrequently the case, each at £24 per annum, that must be an initial expense of £120 per annum, exclusive of his own trade expenses, personal expenses, rent and rates. In any case, we do not, from experience, expect Mr. Loveday to accept Mr. Gani's challenge.

In another article,¹ we have already dealt with the number of Indians now in the Transvaal, and the question of their alleged continuous arrival in the Colony. We need only remark that we have the authority of the Chief Secretary for Permits that Mr. Loveday's "facts" are wrong. In referring to the number of stores *in Pretoria*, Mr. Loveday was careless enough to remark that they had increased enormously. It is a fact that, since the war, they have decreased by some *thirty per cent*, the number of white stores having increased in at least a similar proportion *in Pretoria*. The Location is quite another matter, and the subject should not have been dragged in by the hair of the head, for the purpose of creating fictitious impressions. If, then, Mr. Loveday is wrong as to matters relating to his own town, how can he be expected to know the facts concerning other towns of the Transvaal, concerning other Colonies of South Africa, concerning India itself? We propose to deal in a further article with the charge of untruthfulness levelled against the Indian, and endeavour to show that men, perfectly qualified to give an opinion on such a matter, which, we submit, with all due deference, Mr. Loveday is not to hold very different views.

Mr. Loveday stated that the Crown Prosecutor in India had certain powers of re-trying prisoners, quashing sentences, and taking cases to higher courts, because perjury, in India was looked upon as the proper thing. Apart altogether from the question of perjury, it will no doubt surprise Mr. Loveday to learn that the Crown Prosecutor in India has no greater powers than the Attorney-General of the Transvaal and, in fact, his powers are not nearly so wide.

But Mr. Loveday has so far left his information undigested as to

¹ Vide "Letter to *The Star*", dated "Prior to December 24, 1904".

omit to mention the cardinal fact that many of these Crown Prosecutors have been and are Indians. That is an important and a significant omission.

Referring now to the franchise of the Indian, it is a fact that he does possess a very definite franchise. Almost every town of importance in India has its Town Council or Local Board, partially or wholly elected by the rate-payers the majority of whom are Indians. There is, therefore, the municipal franchise to begin with. There is also an indirect political franchise, in that some of the members of the Legislative Councils of the different Presidencies are elected by the members of the Corporations, who themselves are directly elected by the tax-payers. Hence we are quite within our rights in using the expression "Indian franchise". Therefore, also, Mr. Loveday was, as usual, inaccurate in stating that, in India, "there were no forms of representative institutions, and that all present knew the Indian was governed by military rule, aided by religion and caste". As to there being no social intercourse between Indian and white, Mr. Loveday forgets the great viceregal and Governmental receptions, where both sections of the community commingle, and such functions as the balls given by the Maharaja of Kuch Behar,¹ where white and Indian meet on equal terms. But this is all beyond the mark, for the Indian community in South Africa does not desire and has never demanded social intercourse with the whites believing it to be unnecessary and inadvisable, for many reasons.

Certainly Indians are entertained at officers' messes, as witness the case of Colonel Sir Pertab Singh, the King-Emperor's personal friend and aide-de-camp. Certainly, also, white soldiers salute the higher ranks of Indian officers.

The question of a bastard race, resulting from intercourse between whites and Indians, was also brought forward, for obvious reasons, at the meeting. It does not require to be said that anybody with the faintest knowledge of Indian life and Indian customs would never have dreamt of bringing forward such an argument as this, and we will not labour the subject.

We have one word to say, however, with regard to Mr. Loveday's contemptuous reference to Sir M. M. Bhowmaggree:

¹ Cooch Behar, a small former state in north-eastern India, now merged in Assam.

The people at Home had so far forgotten themselves that they had actually elected a black man to the British House of Parliament; they, in this country, would never do it, they would not so far forget their colour, said Mr. Loveday. But what can we say to so ungentlemanly a remark? We think that the electors who sent Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament, despite the gibe of the late Lord Salisbury, fairly represented the accumulated statesmanship of some forty millions of British people. We have but one more inaccuracy to refute. Mr. Sampson stated that Indians made chairs and tables in their own houses in Johannesburg, and sold them on the open market, in competition with the goods of white manufactures. This is, bluntly, untrue. There are no Indian artisans in Johannesburg working on such a scale as this. Surely, the absurdity of such a statement is self-evident enough.

The above statement reminds us of the story of a merchant who, one day, said to his traveller: "Get business, honestly, if you can, but get business". A similar idea seems to have prevailed amongst the speakers at the Potchefstroom meeting. It was as though they had said to each other: "Create a strong anti-Indian feeling, honestly, if you can, but create it !"

Indian Opinion, 7-1-1905

125. MR. KLEINENBERG AND MR. ABDOOL GANI

We have carefully examined the columns of our esteemed contemporary, the Johannesburg *Star*, and, so far, have failed to observe that Mr. T. Kleinenberg has written his acceptance of the challenge thrown out by the Chairman of the British Indian Association. We shall be glad to learn if Mr. Gani's opponent intends to avail himself of the opportunity given to him to refute the statements made at the Indian mass meeting. It seems to us to be most unfair, not only to Mr. Gani and to the public at large, but to Mr. Kleinenberg himself, for the latter to leave the matter where it now stands, and we are sure, knowing what an honourable man Mr. Kleinenberg is, that he has no intention of passing over the challenge issued by the Mr. Gani. We have no doubt whatever but that, if Mr. Kleinenberg finds that he has made a serious error in endeavouring to rebut the facts given by Mr. Gani, he will have the moral courage to acknowledge the correctness of the figures that Mr. Gani gave, and to withdraw his own statement.

Mr. Gani himself has publicly stated his willingness to make the *amende honorable*, should he be found to be in fault. That being the case, we see no reason whatever why a matter, so easily settled by facts offered or rebutted by either side, should not assume some sort of finality at as early an opportunity as is feasible.

Indian Opinion, 7-1-1905

126. *POTCHEFSTROOM CHURLISHNESS*

Even the business people in Potchefstroom, who have only a remote and temporary connexion with the place, are either infected with its unreasonable anti-Indian prejudice, or are being intimidated into the commission of acts of which, in their freer moments, they would be heartily ashamed. An esteemed correspondent informs us that the insurance agents have, suddenly and without notice, withdrawn their fire policies from the Indian merchants. We have never heard of such an instance anywhere else. We are informed that the petty agents, who have succumbed, as we have said, either to local prejudice or to intimidation, represent world-famous insurance companies, and we should be very much surprised if the stupid and unbusinesslike action of their agents be sanctioned by the head officers of these companies. We only hope that both the agents and the managers headquarters will see these lines, and we strongly advise the Indian merchants concerned to make representation at headquarters. The policy that Potchefstroom is developing in this matter is un-British in the extreme, and it remains to be seen how far it will be endorsed in other parts of the Transvaal.

Indian Opinion, 7-1-1905

127. *THE PLAGUE*

News has been received of two whites in East London who have had an attack of the plague. The weather is hot, rainy and favourable to an outbreak of the epidemic. As one of our correspondents says, we have not yet become vigilant about the matter. Dr. Murison¹ is very sympathetic and ready to help us. It is therefore, our duty to avail ourselves of his good offices. If, out of sheer selfishness or indo-lence, we fail to do what we ought to, we are afraid we shall have to repent later on. It is very necessary to appoint a committee, and as on the

¹ Medical Officer of Health, Durban.

previous occasion, inspect residential quarters and try to the utmost to remove all filth, wherever found. We hope our leaders will take immediate steps in this direction.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 7-1-1905

128. SPEECH AT OPENING OF LIBRARY IN DURBAN

The following is a report of Gandhiji's speech at the opening of a library in Durban, started in memory of Shri Lallubhai, the founder of the Natal Sanatan Dharma Sabha.

[DURBAN,

January 10, 1905]

While making a few important suggestions to the organisers of the Library, Mr. Gandhi said that, in a big city like Durban, where there was a large Indian population, a good library was indeed necessary; and to meet that need leading citizens and businessmen of Durban had, some years earlier, made great efforts, and a library known as the Diamond Jubilee Library¹ was started in commemoration of the event. But later, for lack of sufficient care and supervision, it was closed down. He hoped that the new Library would not be reduced to a similar condition but that it would improve from day to day. that the organisers would keep up their present enthusiasm and continue their efforts to ensure its permanent existence.

Mr. Gandhi then made some valuable suggestions regarding the selection of books and the hours during which the library should be kept open. He exhorted the public to visit the library, particularly on Sundays, sit amidst the books, those mute, noble friends, and study them to profit.

He closed his address with a few words about *Indian Opinion*, and the library was then declared open.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 14-1-1905

¹ *Vide* The furniture and books of the Diamond Jubilee Library were made over to the new Library.

129. LETTER TO G.K. GOKHALE

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522
JOHANNESBURG,
January 13, 1905

TO
THE HONOURABLE PROFESSOR GOKHALE
POONA
DEAR PROFESSOR GOKHALE,

The existence of *Indian Opinion* you know. It has now embarked on career when I think I may fairly appeal to you for active sympathy. I propose to write perfectly frankly, as you know me too well to misunderstand me. When I saw that Mr. Madanjit could not carry on the paper without pecuniary assistance and as I knew that he was guided by thoroughly patriotic motives, I placed at his service the bulk of my savings. That, however, was not enough. Three months ago I took over the whole responsibility and management. Mr. Madanjit still remains nominally the proprietor and publisher, because I believe that he has done much for the community. My own office is at present being worked in the interests of *Indian Opinion* and I have already become responsible to the extent of nearly £ 3,500. Some English friends, who knew me intimately and before whom I placed the scheme as described in the enclosed, took up the idea and now it is in full working order and, although it does not show the same measure of self-sacrifice as shown by the founders of the Fergusson College in Poona, I venture to think that it is not a bad copy. It has been a most delightful thing to me to see the English friends coming forward so boldly. They are not literary men but they are sterling, honest, independent men. Each of them had his own business or employment where he was doing well, and yet none of them had the slightest hesitation in coming forward as a worker for a bare living which means £ 3 per month, with a distant prospect of getting profits.

It is also my intention, if my earnings continue, to open a school on the grounds, which would be second to none in South Africa for the education primarily of Indian children who would be resident boarders and, secondarily, of all who want to join the school

but would also reside on the premises. For this, too, volunteer workers are required. It would be possible to induce one or two Englishmen and English ladies here to give their lifetime to this work, but Indian teachers are absolutely necessary. Could you induce any graduates who have an aptitude for teaching, who bear a blameless character and who would be prepared to work for a mere living? Those who would come must be well-trying, first-class men. I would want two or three at least but more could certainly be accommodated, and after the school is in working order, it is intended to add a sanatorium with open-air treatment on hygienic lines. My immediate purpose, however, is in connection with *Indian Opinion*. If you approve of all I have said regarding it, will you kindly send a letter of encouragement to be sent to the editor for publication; also if you could spare a few moments, occasionally write an article ever so small for it? I am also anxious to secure either honorary or paid correspondents who would contribute weekly notes in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. If it becomes expensive, I might have to be satisfied with only English correspondence which would lend itself to being translated in the three Indian languages. Could you recommend any such correspondent or correspondents? The weekly notes should give an idea of what is being done on your side with reference to the Indian question, giving extracts from notices of the question in the newspapers, and should contain matters that are likely to be interesting to the Indians in South Africa. You may at your discretion disclose partly or wholly the contents of this letter in so far as such a course may be necessary in the interests of the subject-matter hereof. I hope you are keeping good health.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

1 Enclosure

Servants of India Society.

130. THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE INDIAN

There seems to be a very general impression current that truthfulness, the outward manifestation of the eternal search after Truth, is a virtue entirely foreign to the nature of the inhabitants of India. Room is not left for the possibility of misunderstanding, allowance is not made for the probability of wrong comprehension, but the Indian is set down at once as a scamp, a rogue, a lying vagabond all said, as a human being destitute of every vestige of honour.

Little or no differentiation is made between the Indians who have come to this country. All are classed indiscriminately as “coolies” or “Arabs”, and all are stigmatised as actual or potential liars. It is forgotten, that generally speaking, there are two main classes of Indians in South Africa, the first being the indentured labourer class, and the second being the trading class. As often as not, the indentured Indian is of low caste, and, consequently, once removed from his accustomed surroundings, and the moral restraints of his place of residence in India, he is liable to fall, in exactly the same way as any other human being situated in similar circumstances, from the ethical standard that he had set up for him when in India. We cannot do better than quote the following from a widely circulated pamphlet:¹

Everyone I have met with in the Colony has dwelt upon the untruthfulness of the Indians. To a limited extent, I admit the charge. It will be very small satisfaction for me to show, in reply to the objection, that other classes do not fare much better in this respect, especially if and when they are placed in the position of the unfortunate Indians. And yet, I am afraid, I shall have to fall back upon argument of that sort. Much as I would wish them to be otherwise, I confess my utter inability to prove that they are more than human. They come to Natal on starvation wages (I mean here the indentured Indians). They find themselves placed in a strange position and amid uncongenial surroundings. *The moment they leave India* they remain throughout life, if they settle in the Colony, without any moral education. Whether they are Hindus or Mahomedans, they are absolutely without moral or religious instruction worthy of the name. They have not learnt enough to educate themselves without any outside help. Placed thus, they are apt to yield to the slightest temptation to tell a lie. After some time, lying with them becomes a habit and a disease. They would lie without any reason, without any prospect of bettering themselves materially, indeed, without knowing what they are doing. They reach a stage in life when their moral faculties have completely collapsed owing to neglect. . . . Are these men, then, more to be despised than pitied? Are they to be treated as scoundrels, deserving no mercy, or are they to be treated as helpless creatures, badly in need of sympathy? Is there any class of people who would not do as they are doing under similar circumstances?²

With regard to the trading classes, we absolutely deny that the Indian trader is more prone to falsehood than any other trader of any other race. Probably, he is less addicted to untruthfulness than most, for, not having so many luxurious habits as his competitors of a more

¹ *Open Letter*, December 1894; *vide* “Petition to Natal Legislative Council”, 6-7-1894 to “Constitution of the Natal Indian congress”, 22-8-1894

² *ibid.*, “The Asiatic Traders Commission in the Transvaal”, 2-4-1904

complex civilisation, he has, therefore, not such great incentives to “lie for the benefit of the firm”.

And here we make bold to assert that it is an unfortunate characteristic of the less cultured Englishman that, when he is brought into contact with what is strange and to which he is unaccustomed, he does not endeavour to investigate its nature, but spurns it contemptuously, as something foreign to his own outlook upon life, and he attributes to it every evil thing that can be imagined.

We think that, at this juncture, it would prove useful to hear what some very eminent white men have said publicly with reference to the truthfulness of the Indian.

Thus, Sir, George Birdwood, a very experienced Anglo-Indian, says:

Moral truthfulness is as marked a characteristic of the Settia (upper) class of Bombay as of the Teutonic race itself. The people of India, in short, are in no intrinsic sense our inferiors, whilst, in things measured by some of the false standards false to ourselves we pretend to believe in, they are our superiors.¹

Mr. Pincott says:

In all social matters, the English are far more fitted to sit at the feet of Hindus and learn as disciples than to attempt to become masters.²

And truth is certainly a social virtue.

Elphinstone says:

No set of people among the Hindus are so depraved as the dregs of our own great towns.

Sir John Malcolm says:

I have hardly ever known, where a person did understand the language, or where a clam communication was made to a native of India, through a well informed and trustworthy medium, that the result did not prove what had at first been stated as falsehood had either proceeded from fear or from misunderstanding. I by no means wish to state that our Indian subjects are more free from this vice than other nations that occupy a nearly equal position in society, but I am positive that they are not more addicted to untruth.

Sir Chas. E. Elliot, K.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, writing in his book, *The People of India*, says:

The natives of India are often said to be altogether ignorant of the truth. I have not found them so. In Court, no doubt, far from the public opinion of their own village, bribed or interested witnesses are guilty of amazing flights of perjury. But in their own villages, among their own

¹ *ibid* “The Plague”, 30-3-1904

² *ibid* “The Plague”, 2-4-1904

people, I have seldom known them tell a lie, even when the truth was to their own prejudice.

Professor Max Muller said that he had been repeatedly told by English merchants that

commercial honour stands higher in India than in any other country, and that a dishonoured bill is hardly known there.

He says elsewhere:

In their punchayets, (Colonel) Sleeman tells us, men adhere habitually and religiously to the truth, and 'I have had before me hundreds of cases', he says, 'in which a man's property, liberty, and life have depended on his tel-ling a lie, and he has refused to tell it'. Could any English judge say the same?

Professor Max Muller points out, with Colonel Sleeman, that whoever is ignorant of the life of the Indian village communities, as is practically every Englishman, is absolutely unqualified to give any opinion regarding the social and ethical virtues of the Indian, for "all the native virtues of the Hindus are intimately connected with their village life".

We think that we have quoted sufficiently from men able, from experience, to give a just opinion, to prove the utter falsity of the general charge of want of veracity levelled at the Indians. Where there is any lapse from strict adherence to accuracy of fact, it is but too often due to the Indians having been removed from all sources of moral control. Indeed, Sir George Campbell is quoted as saying that "the longer we possess a province, the more common and grave does perjury become".

We will conclude with one brief reference to the recent mass meeting at Potchefstroom. Mr. Loveday had much to say concerning Oriental duplicity, falsehood, and cunning, and he even quoted Lord Macaulay as saying, with regard to Clive, that it was "unquestionable that the duplicity of India had left its stain upon his (Clive's) character".

Now, we beg to point out that Macaulay, of all historians, is no longer read for his accuracy or his strict adherence to the simple facts of the case, but rather for his literary style and merit. However, since Lord Macaulay has been quoted, we make no apology for reproducing the following words of his, which apply now, to-day, and for all time, so long as India and England are linked together:

We shall never consent to administer the *pousta* to a whole community, to stupefy and paralyse a great people, whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control. What is the power worth, which is founded on vice, on ignorance, and on misery which we can hold only by violating the most sacred duties

which, as governors, we owe to the governed, which, as a people blessed with far more than an ordinary measure of political liberty and of intellectual light, we owe to a race debased by three thousand years of despotism and priestcraft? *We are free, we are civilised to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilisation.*¹

Indian Opinion, 14-1-1905

131. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND RUSSIAN ZEMSTVOS²—A COMPARISON: 1

The Indians resident in London, together with their European friends, gave a dinner in honour of Sir William Wedderburn and Sir Henry S. Cotton at the Westminster Palace Hotel on November 29, 1904, before their departure from that city. Prominent people were invited to the function, and speeches were made. In his speech Sir Henry Cotton made a brief comparison between the Indian National Congress and the Russian Zemstvos. From a perusal of a later report, this analogy gives rise to a number of thoughts.

Every Indian knows in general and ought to know, if he already does not, what the Indian National Congress is, its origin, its function and its influence on the people as well as on the Government. It is now twenty years since the Congress was founded. The first session was held in Bombay; and such was the enthusiasm, insight, perseverance and courage of our Indian leaders of the time that far-sighted persons felt convinced that the association would certainly be able to breathe new life into this country. It is particularly necessary to remember this origin of the Congress. Lord Dufferin believed that such a body should be founded. He talked about it to Mr. Hume; the idea was very much to the latter's liking and, as a result of his consultations with prominent public men in India, the Congress was ultimately founded. It is necessary to bear this fact in mind, as it would be useful to us in refuting the numerous charges levelled against the Congress by its enemies. The founding of the Congress caused great alarm particularly in the minds of the autocratic, short-sighted and haughty officials. For they foresaw that the Congress would grow in strength day by day; that, looking upon the Congress as their very mother, the people would express their thoughts and feelings fearlessly at its

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Mrs. A.M. Lewis", 4-8-1894

² Local territorial assemblies in Russia regulating the affairs of the districts. They were abolished by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

sessions; and that, consequently, autocracy and arrogance would no longer have their way unchallenged. They were afraid and began to raise an outcry through their Press and made all sorts of unbecoming charges against the loyal Congress, hoping that as a result its life would be cut short. These officers and their journals began heartily to abuse Congress leaders and tried to show that it was a seditious body and that, if the Government did not suppress it, the organisation would prove dangerous to the state. The battle of arguments carried on during Lord Ripon's¹ regime, however, opened their eyes and proved that not only could Indians understand their own interests, but that they could also formulate honest plans for the advancement of their country. On the establishment of the Congress these thoughts recurred to the officials with the same intensity, and pressure was brought to bear on the Government. Moreover, with a view to creating internal dissensions in the Congress, the Hindu-Muslim question was raised and attempts were energetically made to foster disunity within the ranks of the Hindus and of the Muslims by creating distinctions as between Bengalis, Punjabis and Madrasis, etc. In a short time, these obstructionists raised such a clamour that it influenced even a sound statesman like Lord Dufferin, who, speaking at the St. Andrew's Dinner before leaving Calcutta, won Anglo-Indian applause by venting his spleen upon the Congress. It is no doubt true that, when the late Mr. Bradlaugh² expressed his opinion on this subject, Lord Dufferin had thought it fit to write to him [in order to clarify his speech]. But that is another story. What we have at present to consider is just this: that, in spite of such difficulties, our leaders did not lose heart, but went on calmly doing their duty. And thanks to their efforts, the time has now come when even the enemies of the Congress have to admit its stren-gth, and haughty officials have to pay heed to its suggestions.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 14-1-1905

¹ Lord Ripon, Viceroy of India and Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1880-4.

² Charles Bradlaugh, (1833-91), well-known public worker, Member of Parliament, and an avowed atheist. He evinced a keen interest in Indian affairs and drafted, in 1889, a Bill for the reform of the Indian Councils. He attended the third session of the Congress held in Bombay in 1889. While a student in England, Gandhiji attended Bradlaugh's funeral.

132. PLAGUE AND LIQUOR

The Punjab Government Report on liquor states that many people in the Punjab have taken to drink out of a dread of plague, and there has consequently been a great increase in the excise revenue from liquor. The Report, moreover, states that the epidemic has broken out more virulently and casualties have been more numerous in places where people took to drinking in the belief that liquor prevented plague infection, but that rather less harm was done by plague where people did not drink at all. Although this does not prove that abstainers are immune from plague, this much it does prove that drinking leads to utter ruin. Dr. Mellis, who was the Chief Medical Officer in the Plague Hospital in Johannesburg, is also of the same opinion, namely, that drinking does not check, but aggravates the plague.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 14-1-1905

133. PLAGUE IN JOHANNESBURG¹

JOHANNESBURG,

January 16, 1905

Plague seems to have broken out in Johannesburg. A few days ago, the son of a Muslim hawker in Sower Street caught the infection. His doctor informed the authorities on Saturday. On Sunday, he was removed to the Plague Hospital, the young man died to-day and has already been buried. No funeral rites could, therefore, be performed. Normally, the authorities would gladly have handed the body over for this purpose.

Once again the dark clouds are gathering. it will be to the great benefit of our people, if they bear in mind the following rules; otherwise, there would be immense harm. What is more, it might be used as an argument for enacting more severe laws against us.

1. No one should think that the Government will harass the patient after removing him to the hospital.

2. The Government should be immediately informed in case of a sudden attack of fever or asthma.

¹ This appeared as "From Our Correspondent".

3. A doctor should immediately be consulted.
4. Every one should stay where he is without becoming panicky.
5. Those who might have come in contact with a plague patient should not try to conceal the fact, but should come forward to have their clothes, etc., disinfected.
6. One should not, under any circumstances, have one's bedroom attached to the shop in order to save money.
7. One should not stock any goods for sale in one's house.
8. One should keep one's house scrupulously clean.
9. Every house or room should be well lighted and well ventilated.
10. One should sleep with the windows open.
11. The clothes worn by day as well as those used during the night should be kept clean.
12. The food taken should be light and simple.
13. Lavish dinners and feasts should be stopped.
14. Dry earth or ashes should be provided in latrines where buckets are used; and every one should, after easing himself, cover the night-soil thoroughly with these so that no flies sit thereon.
15. Lavatories and urinals should be kept clean.
16. The floor and other parts of the house should be washed clean with disinfecting fluid mixed in hot water.
17. No articles from an infected place should be used elsewhere without being properly disinfected.
18. More than two persons should not sleep in a room of normal proportions.
19. One should never sleep in the kitchen, dining room or the larder.
20. Walls should be plastered with cement in order to keep out rats. Care should, most of all, be taken to see that foodstuffs are kept beyond their reach.
21. Those who always work indoors should go out into the open air and walk a couple of miles daily for exercise.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 21-1-1905

134. LETTER TO J. STUART¹

21-24, COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
January 19, 1905

J. STUART, ESQ.
RESIDENT MAGISTRATE
DURBAN

DEAR MR. STUART,

I venture to bring to your notice the journal, *Indian Opinion*, which has been now in existence for the last eighteen months. During that period I have been intimately connected with it. In my humble opinion, it is discharging a worthy mission in that it acts as an interpreter between the two great communities in South Africa. Its aim is Imperial and though it does and it must lay stress upon the grievances of the British Indians in South Africa, it often tones down the feelings of the Indian community, and it never fails to point out to it its shortcomings in the clearest possible terms, but now in its new garb and in its new abode, it represents much more. It represents a scheme which is briefly described in the enclosed,² and if it is at all successful, it may mark a revolution in business methods. Anyhow the fact that there are four independent Englishmen who were engaged in their own businesses, [who] have given them up in order to work for its realisation and that there is an equal number of Indians who have done likewise³ cannot but commend itself to you. In spite, however, of this band of eight founders the scheme must depend upon public support for success. There are two ways in which, I venture to think, you could assist the enterprises. The first by becoming a subscriber and by occasionally writing for it either over your own signature or anonymously.

¹ Vide "Mr. Stuart the Magistrate", 24-9-1903

² The document is not available; but it appears to have been the same as that which Gandhiji enclosed in his letter to Gokhale, on January 13, concerning the publication of *Indian Opinion* from Phoenix. That it was probably an off-print or a cutting of "Ourselves" from *Indian Opinion*, 24-12-1904, is borne out by Gandhiji's reference to it in his letter of December 10, 1904 to Dadabhai Naoroji.

³ Among the Englishmen were Herbert Kitchin, Albert West and Henry Polak, and among the Indians were Chhaganlal Gandhi, Maganlal Gandhi and Anandlal Gandhi, the last two having accompanied Gandhiji on his return to South Africa in 1902.

The terms of subscription are 12/6 for Natal and 17/- outside Natal. The Offices are at Phoenix, Natal. If the object of *Indian Opinion* commends itself to you and you consider the scheme it represents worthy of support, will you kindly let me have a letter of encouragement which I may pass on to the editors for publication, apart from the two requests above made.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

PS.¹ I venture to think that you could write for the paper now and then on non-political matters.

M. K. G.

From the original: Courtesy, Miss Kellie Campbell, Durban.

135. INDIAN OPEN-HANDEDNESS AND ITS SEQUEL

In another column of this issue will be found the published correspondence between the Potchefstroom Chief of Police and the Secretary of the Potchefstroom British Indian Committee, relative to a subscription from the latter body in support of a scheme for the establishment of a properly equipped fire-brigade. This correspondence passed some few weeks since, and it throws an interesting light upon a side of the Indian character that has been hitherto carefully ignored by the white residents of Potchefstroom. It is to be hoped that other journals will give wider circulation to the facts chronicled in these two letters, for it is eminently desirable that the attitude of the British Indian community in Potchefstroom should be properly understood by our opponents.

We learn that the Municipality found themselves unable to contribute the necessary funds in aid of the fire-brigade scheme, and, so far as we are aware, that scheme fell through.

But the point that we desire to make is this, that, at the time the proposal was made by Capt. Jones and accepted by Mr. Rahman, several of the Indian merchants, and those, too, who would have subscribed most largely to the fund, were already insured against fire.

We wish this to be very carefully understood in view of the sequel, for it throws the disinterestedness of the motives of the British Indian community of Potchefstroom in high relief against the somewhat gloomy background of Vigilance vindictiveness.

¹ The postscript is in Gandhiji's hand, while the letter, possibly a circular addressed to influential persons, is typewritten.

In our issue of January 7th, we drew urgent attention to the action of a fire-insurance agent in Potchefstroom in causing the cancellation, without notice, of certain policies that had been granted to British Indian merchants, covering their premises against the risks of fire, and that did not expire for several months to come. It transpires that this gentleman represents one of the oldest established fire-insurance companies in the world. At least six important merchants are affected, and their premises are no longer insured. We are told, upon the best authority, that this gentleman has, if not actually joined the Anti-Asiatic Vigilance Association, at least been adversely influenced by that body of terrorists. The “fiery cross” has gone forth, and the world now knows that the white people of Potchefstroom have instituted a system of boycott that has, as one of its direct effects, the placing of the premises of inoffensive citizens in jeopardy, and that creates a serious risk to the Indian merchants of seeing the whole fruits of many years of hard, irksome toil consumed before their very eyes. Malignancy could go no further. With no fire-brigade at hand, these unfortunate people are now helpless, and at the mercy of any stray spark that the winds may carry along, or of any incendiary whose morbid Colour-madness may induce him to bring fiery ruin upon the head of the wretched owner of the first inviting store that may present itself.

We do not speak wild words of hysteria, for the danger is a very real one. The dastardly attempt at incendiarism in Potchefstroom, shortly after the virulent anti-Indian epidemic reached a crisis there, will still be fresh in the memories of our readers. We use the word “incendiarism”, in this connexion, on the authority of the Chief of Police himself, and we regret to think that this courteous officer is not in a position to guard every store that is liable to attack in this cowardly way.

From the point of view of the fire-insurance company itself, the Indian stores in Potchefstroom should at least be a favourable risk as those of the European traders, for, from our own intimate knowledge of them, the comparison between the stores of the two sections of the community would not be unfavourable to the Indians. Consequently, we are unable to find any grounds for the inexplicable action of the company in cancelling the policies. There could surely be no question of commercial integrity involved, or the traders affected would never

have been granted polices. Moreover, they are all well-known merchants of established character, and even the most superficial inquiries would have revealed the fact that there could be no foundation for any imputation against their honour and trustworthiness.

The whole affair does not greatly redound to the credit of Potchefstroom, and the scandal thus perpetrated places a stigma upon the fire-insurance company concerned.

It is our intention to call the immediate attention of the headquarters staff of the company to the matter. We are certain that its British sense of justice and of fair play will induce it to make the most stringent inquiries, and we have no doubt whatever but that an intolerable situation will be terminated as speedily as is possible in the circumstances.

Indian Opinion, 21-1-1905

136. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND RUSSIAN ZEMSTVOS —A COMPARISON: 2

Every wise ruler is eager to know the real condition of his subjects, their happiness and their misery, and so are, more or less, our King-Emperor Edward and the Czar of Russia. Both of them have the same desire, but employ different methods. Fortunately for us, the officers in India are not so arrogant as those in Russia; nor have they the same [wide] powers. That is to say, Indian officials have to conform to rules and cannot show the same arrogance and high-handedness as their opposite numbers in Russia. So that, on the whole, officials in India cannot, even if they would, tyrannize over the people to the same extent as in Russia. Even so, some of the sufferings of the Russian and Indian peoples are of the same kind, even if those in India are comparatively less acute. But the people India in do not look upon their hardships as normal-and this is but natural. In Russia there is no difference of colour, creed, caste or language between the officials and the subjects, while in India the officials are in every way different from the people, and some aloofness-though this is hardly necessary-is, therefore, always felt. These grievances naturally cause the people some unhappiness. There, then, exists, in both the countries, a certain coolness and distance between the officials and the people and

the latter smart under it. They believe that the relations between the ruler and the ruled should be very close; that there should be mutual trust, that they should share in the other's weal and woe and treat one another with love and affection. In short, there should be an identity of interest between the king and his subjects, the former being considered happy only if the latter are so. The king no doubt wields power, but if he abuses it, both he and his subjects will suffer. Hence it is that wise rulers are always eager to know the true condition of their subjects, their joy and their sorrow.

The kingdoms of old were generally very small compared to those of to-day, and the king could easily rule over his subjects himself. But, as the kingdoms grew in size, the need of employing officials arose, with the result that in all civilised communities kings have been reduced to the status of figure-heads, and officials have become indispensable and all-important. The officials know quite well that, without them, there can be no king, and they naturally contrive in all possible ways to ensure that their prestige and authority are never detracted from. Consequently, they begin to consider self-interest more important than duty, and sufficient attention is not paid to the welfare of the people. This leads to discontent and as the officials do not have the patience to listen to the complaints or criticism of the people, a cleavage between the two develops. This leads to all possible efforts and plans by the subjects to break official high-handedness and to protect their own rights. Instances are few where the standard of administration is good; more often it is inefficient or corrupt. There is a great deal of difference between the policies of the Governments of Russia and India, and, consequently, between the people's condition and feelings in the two countries. But the officials in both countries have more or less excessive powers and, therefore, the relations between them and the people are not what they should be. It must be clear from the foregoing that the feelings and demands of the people are, in several respects, the same in both countries, though the conditions differ. This is due to the far too scanty contact between the ruler and the ruled. As the causes are similar, so are the results.

Wonderful are the ways of Nature. Last November, there was a public discussion regarding the agenda for the Congress session at Bombay. About the same time, the local assemblies in Russia, called Zemstvos, declared their aspirations and demands. Whereas the resolutions to be moved in the Congress session were first discussed in provincial committees and subsequently published by the Congress

Committee, the resolutions of the Zemstvos were first published in St. Petersburg and thereafter received the assent of 31 out of 34 local Zemstvos.

[From Gujarati]

(*Incomplete*¹)

Indian Opinion, 21-1-1905

137. THE PLAGUE²

JOHANNESBURG

January 23, 1905

Last week I sent you news of the outbreak of plague and outlined preventive measures to be observed.³ Meanwhile, six or seven cases have been reported from Durban, all of them Indian or Kaffir. That the plague does not take long to spread among our people seems to be patent enough. If it spreads further, it will render our movements difficult. No one should fail to observe last week's instructions.

The maternal uncle of the boy who died of plague had come here to see him. He fled to Pretoria in fear, with the result that he got into more trouble. He and his family were inoculated and kept under quarantine for a few days. Had he, instead of running away, stayed here under the supervision of the authorities, he would have been spared all this trouble.

The condition of the Malay Location here has greatly deteriorated in some respects. People have huddled together and some of them pay no heed whatever to any talk of sanitation. A committee has been appointed, which goes out every night to inspect the houses; and it has now been decided that, if the people do not listen to its instructions, the authorities should be informed. Indeed, it is better that this should be so. If we keep our weaknesses hidden over a period of time and plague subsequently breaks out there, the Malay Location, too, will be wiped out like the Indian, and we shall have to wring our hands in helplessness. It is, therefore, necessary to publish the names of those who are willing to get out of the filth for that will only be administering a bitter dose in their interests as well those of others.

The local doctor has accepted our request that our people be informed of any death among the Indians in the Plague Hospital, so

¹ This series was not continued.

² This was published as a despatch "Form our Correspondent".

³ *Vide* "Plague in Johannesburg", 16-1-1905.

that the body could be taken charge of and the funeral rites performed.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-1-1905

138. INDIANS IN POTCHEFSTROOM

We publish in another column a very important statement from our correspondent at Potchefstroom. Two glaring mis-statements were made at the Convention. The one was with reference to Pietersburg, and the other, to Potchefstroom. With respect to both these towns, the speakers boldly alleged that the Indians were swamping European trade, and that their present strength was considerably in excess of what it was before the war. As to Pietersburg, the fallacy has been exploded. Mr. Kleinenberg has not yet shown that the statements, made by Mr. Abdool Gani. *The Star*,¹ are incorrect. Now we have a report from Potchefstroom, and, seeing that our correspondent gives the names of the British Indian store-keepers at present trading within the town limits, we think that this report should be considered satisfactory by the public as it undoubtedly is to us. Even were it true that there is now a greater number of Indian store-keepers in Potchefstroom, or in any other place, that could never be a reason for confiscation of rights, but since sensational statements have been made without any truth in them, it is as well that the public should be placed in possession of facts as they are, and that the Indian said of the question should not be prejudiced by exaggeration on the part of the anti-Indian party. The most painful part, however, of this whole affair is that those who pose as leaders have shown themselves utterly incompetent even to examine the truth of matters that have been placed before them. They have, in their eagerness to make out an anti-Indian argument, accepted any fiction that has been passed on to them.

Indian Opinion, 28-1-1905

139. THE PLAGUE

With the advent of the wet season, we have rumours of plague, as well as actual cases. We must once more draw the attention of our Indian friends to the letter we published in these columns, addressed

¹ *Vide* "Letter to *The Star*", December 24, 1904.

by the Health Officer for the Borough of Durban. We cannot but think that this is an opportunity for the Indians to show their capability, and it is for the leaders to come forward and appeal to the rank and file with reference to strict observance of sanitary regulations. The plague is undoubtedly the off-spring of poverty and filth. We know that the poorer class of Indians are not in a position to do all that may be necessary. They may not, for instance, be able to have well-ventilated rooms or houses situated in healthy localities, but when allowance has been made for all these things, there is undoubtedly a great deal that can be done by proper co-operation and gentle coaxing, and we hope that the community will rise to the occasion and take the necessary precautions. We would, at the same time, draw the attention of our esteemed Health Officer to the condition of the Western Vlei¹ and the Eastern Vlei. These two spots require immediate attention, and with them the Indians are unable to deal. It is for the Town Council to take heroic measures, and either permanently mend the two places or end them. They are, anyway, a reflection on the premier borough in South Africa. The disquieting news from Johannesburg, too, should place us on our guard, and we have no doubt that the British Indians there will do their duty, and assist the authorities in every possible manner to prevent a repetition of the outbreak that took place last year. We are informed that the attention of the authorities has been more than once drawn to the state of the Malay Location, and, although it is kept by the inhabitants in a very good condition, whilst the houses are well built, the fact that practically the whole of the Indian population of the burnt-down Location is now concentrated in the Malay Location should not be lost sight of, and the Town Council of Johannesburg will not be able to free itself from blame if the plague unfortunately breaks out in the Location. It has, certainly, hitherto failed in its duty to provide permanent shelter for those who were dispossessed on the burning of the Indian Location, and, as the custodian of the public health, it will have failed in its duty still further if it neglects to remove the pressure on the Malay Location.

Indian Opinion, 28-1-1905

¹ Vlei is a swamp.

140. DOES A KAFFIR FEEL?

The Johannesburg Town Council has been for some time considering the question of Native cyclists. The Works Committee brought out, last week, a report, and advised that a bye-law should be passed whereby "every Native, holding a cycle permit and riding a cycle within the municipal area, should wear on his left arm, in a conspicuous position, a numbered badge which shall be issued to him, together with his permit". That, in a cosmopolitan town like Johannesburg, the Town Council should, by a large majority, have passed such a drastic bye-law is to us a matter of painful surprise, notwithstanding the fact that colour prejudice is a strong ruling sentiment in South Africa. Mr. Langermann was the champion supporter of the bye-law against the mild protest from Messrs. Mackie Niven and Quinn, and he justified it on the ground that they must make a distinction between Native and white riders of bicycles. "The badge," he said, "must be in front. It was absolutely necessary to distinguish the Native from the white men." This remark naturally excited some laughter, as, unlike Mr. Langermann, the other members were evidently quite capable of distinguishing a Native from a white man without a badge being necessary. Mr. Langermann, in our opinion, proves the truth of the adage that those, who have suffered persecution, instead of sympathising with the persecuted after they have escaped from it themselves, delight in the persecution of others. Mr. Langermann is never slow in protesting against the persecution of his co-religionists in Russia. May not a Native ask the question has he no feelings? However, we are more concerned with the general attitude of the Town Council, as represented by the majority of its members, than with Mr. Langermann's views. The tone of the speeches made at the meeting was, we say with all deference to the Town Council, highly discreditable, and reflects all the greater honour on the minority consisting of Messrs. Niven, Quinn, Rockey, and Pim, who had the courage of their convictions, and did not hesitate to defend the Native against unnecessary and wanton indignity. We are, as a rule, very reluctant about expressing opinions on matters not specially coming within the purview of this journal, but the proceedings of the Town Council are, in our opinion, so scandalous, that we should be failing in our duty if we did not, in

the interests of the community of South Africa, raise our humble protest against them.

Indian Opinion, 4-2-1905

141. THE HOONDAMAL CASE

The Hoondamal case has now entered upon the last stage, or, shall we say, the first stage of a new phase. Hoondamal, the individual, disappears from view, but the Indian trading community replaces him. In the Test Case of *Hoondamal v. Rex*, the Supreme Court has said the final word, and the Durban Town Council has won a momentary triumph.

We use the word “momentary” deliberately. We cannot think that a triumph of prejudice and injustice can ever be permanent. Such a conclusion would be entirely opposed to all the teachings of history and philosophy.

Is there anyone who will dare say that the Town Council of Durban has shown even the slightest desire or inclination to mete out justice to this unfortunate man? Every means has been taken by it to bring about his ruin, because, in the words of the Licensing Officer—which have been officially disapproved of, but which, we have only too much reason to believe, are privately endorsed by members of the Town Council “further Asiatic licences should not be granted in West Street”.

There are times when what is nearest the heart is nearest the lips, and we fear that, notwithstanding the official disclaimer of the Town Council, the Licensing Officer’s opinion is emphatically held by his employers, and the cat has, perhaps unwittingly, been let out of the bag. The effect, then, of the Supreme Court’s decision is to make West Street a close preserve for white traders, and “no Indians need apply” for licences to trade in that select thoroughfare.

But, we ask, can the matter be allowed to remain where it is? Dare such a condition of affairs be permitted to be continued? We think not. We do not now deal with the legal merits of the case, but it appears more than strange that the Supreme Court should have ruled that a man, holding a trading licence, can have his licence nullified by mere removal from one place to another within the boundaries of the same town. However that may be, the matter seems to us to be sufficiently important to be taken to a higher tribunal. It may well be that other arguments can be produced that will entail some modification of the present conditions.

Whilst the drama before the Supreme Court was in process of enactment, a side issue was being considered within the Town Council Chamber. The Durban Corporation has attacked the Hoondamal citadel in West Street from all directions, and it would appear that the sapping tactics have proved successful in undermining its foundations. By these devious methods, the fortress has, seemingly, fallen, but the defender has not been disgraced, for from the ashes of his defence will arise a yet mightier champion, who will wrench justice from reluctant hands, an compel circumstances to his needs.

The side issue, to which we have made reference, was the appeal of Mr. Hoondamal to the Town Council against the Licensing Officer's decision to refuse a licence in respect of the premises in West Street. In spite of the dignified protest of Mr. Burne, the Town Council has upheld the Licensing Officer's decision to refuse the licence, and although dissociating itself publicly from the reason given by the Licensing Officer, it has not substituted a reason of its own for the one repudiated.

But another astounding point arises in connection with this hearing. The Mayor has laid down the extraordinary dictum that the Licensing Officer's discretion is arbitrary, and not, as contended by Mr. Hoondamal's counsel, to be exercised within the four corners of the law. It is not within our province to comment upon the legal aspect of this ruling; we merely place it on record. The struggle promises to be a titanic one. Indeed, the Indian community must either take it up or succumb. It is no mere question of the annihilation of Mr. Hoondamal. Whilst such a result would be deplorable, it would be comparatively insignificant. The matter is of far larger concern than the conservation of the privileges of an individual. The whole Indian trading community is threatened with extinction. What has happened to Mr. Hoondamal may happen to every single Indian trader. So long as the newly-laid-down interpretation of the law holds good, no Indian's business is worth a day's takings.

The net result of the decision of the Supreme Court is this. It is known that the desire of the white population is to stamp out the Indian traders piecemeal. It has been ruled that licences are granted for particular premises only and are not transferable. A landlord may, in consequence, rackrent a tenant trader to the top of his bent, and the trader is abjectly helpless. He must either be ruined by the landlord or

he must seek new premises. If he chooses the latter alternative, his licence becomes invalid, and his trading privileges null and void. He cannot obtain what will then be considered a new licence, for just as it may be (unofficially) judged to be unnecessary to issue new licences for Asiatics to trade in West Street, so every other trading locality within the town limits may be debarred to him, and he will be extinguished as absolutely as a moth in a candle flame.

This is a matter, not for individual consideration, but for the corporate deliberation of the whole Indian community all over South Africa. The battle-ground has been temporarily removed from the Transvaal to Natal. What applies to Durban applies to the whole Colony, and what now applies to Natal may not improbably apply to South Africa as a whole. Evil example is quickly followed.

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

142. IS IT BRITISH?

In past issues, we have devoted a considerable amount of space to the discussion of Potchefstroom's doings. We have done this, not so much because of the importance of Potchefstroom as a centre of opinion, as because we regard that town as typifying much that is evil in South Africa in regard to the attitude adopted towards the Indian community. English people are accustomed to view, with unqualified abhorrence, the taking of the law into their own hands by certain sections of the American people, when unfortunate negroes are martyred under the unorthodox code known as "lynch law". Potchefstroom is evidently anxious to put itself beyond the pale of British civilisation in like manner, for we read, with respect to the building of a Mohamedan mosque in the town: "If the Indians persist in violating public feeling, there will probably be trouble over the matter, as some strong expressions of opinion have been made use of. What is legal is one thing, and what is likely to meet with resentment is another." Thus speaks our contemporary, the *Potchefstroom Budget*. There can be no two readings of this statement. It can only be regarded as a direct incitation to go beyond what is permitted by the law. It has, we believe, been held that the Potchefstroom Town Council is not legally empowered to prevent the erection of the mosque. Can it be that our contemporary has the rash courage to urge that the building of the mosque should be prevented by other than legal means? That is not in

accordance with the great British tradition of fair play-but we are almost inclined to wonder, despairingly, whether South Africans have cast aside the foundation-principle of British national honour.

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

143. PIETERSBURG TRADERS

We publish, in another column, a report from our Pietersburg correspondent, together with correspondence that has passed between the Employees' Association and the local British Indian Committee on the question of early closing. It will be evident, from a perusal of these documents, that there is a rather strong feeling existent in Pietersburg on this subject. We have repeatedly pointed out that invidious distinction is made between Asiatics and Europeans, in matters of trade especially, and again and again have we shown how the white population has endeavoured to saddle the Indian community with a share of responsibility and of penalty, whereas it has carefully refrained from granting them any measure of privilege. Now it happens that human nature is so organised that deprivation of privilege is not considered, by those who are deprived, as an equivalent to equality of responsibility or imposition of burden and it cannot be wondered at that, in such circumstances, the Indian community has frequently refused to accept obligations thrust upon it by the white inhabitants who persist in refusing equality of opportunity. The Pietersburg Indian traders, as a matter of fact, did fall in with the wishes and desires of their white fellow-traders, so long as the latter imposed upon them no special disabilities. But when the white traders commenced their methods of boycott and ostracism, the Indian traders began to perceive that they must consider themselves apart from the rest of the community. The sequel is to be found in this correspondence to which we make reference. The white traders must alter their mode of procedure if they wish the Indian merchants to abide by the convention they would set up. There must be give and take on both sides.

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

144. THE COLOURED FRANCHISE

In another column of this issue will be found an extract from a lengthy report, appearing in the *Johannesburg Star* of the 4th inst., dealing with a meeting of Coloured people in the Transvaal. At this meeting a resolution was submitted, requesting His Majesty's Government not to forget or tamper with the just rights and privileges of the

Coloured subjects of the Crown in the Transvaal, when framing the Constitution that is now in process of being. We can only say that the Coloured community has our fullest sympathy in its endeavour to escape from political oblivion. Time was when the late Mr. Rhodes uttered his famous dictum that the franchise should be given to every civilised man south of the Zambesi. That ideal seems, in these latter days, to be rapidly falling into disrepute. It is unfashionable, now a days, to be guilty of having an ideal, and a crime to be so shameless as, having one, to act in accordance with it. We have seen only recently how a Native Commission has issued an official report, in which the recommendation is made that Coloured people, already enfranchised, should retain their franchise rights only in State elections, but should lose them in the event of elections for a Federal Parliament. The manifest injustice of this needs no emphasis. It is much at one with the general attitude adopted by the white population of South Africa towards the non-white. In matters of Colour prejudice, it is, unfortunately, almost impossible to convince by logical argument. Where blind prejudice rules, of the Transvaal will have to wait long before they succeed in securing the recognition of what we conceive to be their just rights. We trust that they will continue to protest against ill-considered treatment and to urge the inherent justice of their demands.

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

145. ATTACK ON THE KAFFIRS

The Johannesburg Town Council could not bear to see the Kaffirs riding bicycles like the whites, and therefore passed, at its last meeting, a resolution to the effect that a Kaffir who had a permit to own a bicycle must wear on his left arm, while riding in the city, a badge with the number on it, easily visible.

The Transvaal administration is nowadays carried on in such a manner that this resolution causes us no surprise. We write about it to-day only to remind our Indian brethren though we do not think it quite necessary that present-day Johannesburg is far different from the Johannesburg of pre-war days. Most of the people who now hold the reins of power were known, before the outbreak of the war, as Uitlanders, and were always quick to raise an outcry demanding justice for themselves. Foreign nationals called themselves British subjects and made all possible efforts to secure for themselves the rights enjoyed by the British. In this, the English, the Russians, the Germans and

others were all one and united. The Boers were then the rulers, against whom these people used to complain vociferously that they did not administer justice equitably. These were the very British subjects, who first incited the Boer Government against Indians, and later questioned its authority to legislate against them. It was again these British subjects who at last got Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain to go to war with the Boers. It was these self-same British subjects who during the war went about trumpeting that, when the war was over, true justice would be done, and all discrimination based on race or colour would be eliminated from the Statute-book. This was the first act of the dramas.

In the second act, everything was forgotten, and these very British subjects became engrossed in serving their own interests. Then followed the third act, in which open enmity to the Indians began to be manifested. And in the fourth act, which is being staged now, oppressive laws are being passed and put into execution with the utmost rigour.

All this must redound to the credit of these very British subjects. As on the Indians, so also on the Kaffirs and the Coloured people, the attack is bound to come without fail. They should, therefore, take heed that, if the one is attacked, the other, too, is bound, sooner or later, to meet the same fate. It will not be very surprising if the rule enacted today for the Kaffirs is applied tomorrow to the Indians.

The queer thing about it is that those who are clamouring for this atrocious legislation have themselves been aliens who only a brief while ago began to call themselves British subjects. Mr. Langermann¹ spoke at length on this resolution and, in the heat of his eloquence, forgot even the colour of the Kaffir, sending the house into fits of laughter. He argued that the badge should be worn in front, so that the Kaffir might not pass for a white! It is given to Mr. Langermann alone to express such thoughts; and we congratulate him on the suggestion that, in the absence of the badge in front, the Kaffirs might be mistaken for whites! But, for a proper appreciation of what Mr. Langermann said, it would be useful to know something about him. Mr. Langermann feels very deeply for his Russian brethren and, therefore, criticises the Russian Government a great deal. It is the law of nature that a man, brought up under tyranny, forgets, on becoming free, his own miserable days, abuses his newly acquired freedom and even becomes cruel. It is, therefore, small wonder that the gentlemen who came from Poland and have recently been converted into British subjects should lose their balance.

¹ A member of the Town Council.

The only matter for satisfaction during the discussion on the resolution was that Messers. Mackie Niven, Quinn, Rockey, and Pim did not forget that the Kaffirs, too, were human being and raised their voice [of protest] against their unwarranted humiliation. But theirs was a cry in the wilderness. Nevertheless, they deserve our respect for giving expression to their true thoughts unmindful of popular sentiment.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

146. SLAUGHTER-HOUSES IN THE CAPE COLONY

The report by Inspector Keyne on the condition of the slaughter-houses in the Cape Colony, just out, is worth perusal. He says that, of the slaughter-houses inspected by him, one or two were extremely dirty. On the main road in Meadland, he found entrails and fat hung against the wall from a hook. Blood and offal had got stuck to the wall to a height of four feet above the ground. He found that the common practice of the place was to lime-wash the walls over the accumulated layers of waste matter, and this had resulted in solid accretions of lime and refuse on the walls. The men working there were very slovenly, their clothes dirty and covered over with layers of grease. These often came in contact with the meat.

Needless to say, all this has been found in slaughter-houses run and managed by the whites, too. The question arises how such offences have remained undetected all these days. Who can tell the number of people who must have been taken ill by eating the meat produced in such insanitary places? What would be the consequence if Indians were responsible for such a state? The whites would have at once resorted to lawlessness and demanded that not only the offenders, but the entire Indian community should be banished or severe restrictions imposed on it. But, fortunatley for us, such uncleanness has been found in shops belonging to the whites. Let us see how the authorities deal with the matter.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

147. THE CONGRESS AND LORD CURZON¹

Sir Henry Cotton, who presided over the recent session of the Indian National Congress, had requested H. E. the Viceroy for an appointment to place before him personally all the resolutions passed at the Congress session. But the Viceroy refused either to see Sir Henry as the President of the Congress, or let him submit the resolutions. However, to show that he meant no affront to Sir Henry personally, Lord Curzon agreed to see him as a private gentleman. This only means that Lord Curzon feels no compunction in hurling an insult at the Congress. It appears from *India* that the reason for his refusing to see Sir Henry was that, if once the Viceroy saw him, he would have to see his successors, too, in the future. Earlier Lord Lansdowne² had also on similar grounds refused to see the Presidents of the Congress. How, then, could Lord Curzon violate the precedent already established? The thought never occurred to His Excellency that, by his strict adherence to precedent, he was offending the feelings of millions of people. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Congress that has lived these twenty years will live on and grow from day to day.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

148. BYE-LAWS FOR CAPE TOWN BARBERS

The *Government Gazette* publishes the rules and regulations framed by the Cape Town Municipality for barbers. Under the rules every barber's shop is liable a medical inspection. Every barber is required to keep his shop tidy. The scissors, razors and other implements used for one customer must not be used for another without being cleaned. Brushes, etc., should be properly washed and kept clean. A fresh towel must be used for every customer. When a person suffering from disease is given a shave or has his hair cut, the same instruments should not be used again before being washed clean with an antiseptic liquid. A defaulter is liable to a fine of up to £5. Officials have been authorised to inspect and find out whether these rules are properly observed or not. By themselves, the rules are excellent, but it

¹ Viceroy of India, 1899-1905.

² Viceroy of India, 1888-94.

would be very difficult to enforce them. But now that the rules are there, they are likely to exercise some check on the barbers. We see such rules for the first time in the Cape Town Municipality; and they are likely to be introduced in other places also. Indian barbers will be well advised to heed the warning. There is not doubt that the conditions in shops owned by Indian barbers needs to be improved. The implements and towels are not too clean. It does take a little time to attend to their cleanliness, but it does not involve any expense. If the tools and implements are kept free of dirt and in proper trim, they last longer, and clean towels, etc., promote custom. Even many of the white barbers keep their instruments, etc., unclean; but we need not view with them in undesirable matters.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-2-1905

149. "QUESTIONS OF COLOUR"

We quote elsewhere from an editorial in the *Rand Ratepayers' Review* under the above title, and we do so because our contemporary has hit the nail exactly on the head. The article is written by a man who, unlike some petty politicians in South Africa, can keep in mind the true proportion of things when dealing with this matter. It is a momentous one, for, if South Africa endorse an un-British anti-Asiatic policy, the consequences may be very grave. But we cannot believe that our statesmen, in the consideration of local affairs, will lose sight of Imperial interests. We ourselves attach no more importance to the anti-Asiatic crusade than does our contemporary; for one has only to look at the facts of the case to see what little basis there is for agitation of this character. The origin of the whole matter is trade jealousy. It is this petty motive alone that animates the anti-Indian movement; and it is perfectly apparent to all who are not blinded by colour prejudice. The *Review* speaks only simple truth when it says:

The undignified spectacle of villagers holding public meetings to prevent Indian merchants from trading in any part of the Empire is most absurdly foolish.

We presume that the writer had specially in mind Boksburg and Potchefstroom. Boksburg is a village that cannot rise beyond the consideration of its own pump, and Potchefstroom is a small dorp¹ that rose out of obscurity only when it became bitterly anti-Asiatic. And yet it is expected that Indians who, as the *Review* points out, form

¹ Village

half the population of the Empire are to be deprived of their rights as British subjects, at the bidding of small provincial towns !

Granted that Indian traders undersell the European; does not every European trader endeavour to do just this very thing to his competitor? Is not competition the soul of business? Granted that the Indian can live on "the smell of an oily rag"; would not any medical man say that a simplification of diet is exactly what the European needs? Why, then, charge the Indian with this virtue as if it were a crime? The fact of the matter is that the European detests his Indian competitor because he himself is not permitted to gain exorbitant profits by making the consumer pay inflated prices for his commodities. If the anti-Asiatics gain the victory, the person who will suffer most is the white consumer. Let South Africans remember that.

Says the *Review*:

There are plenty of ways whereby white people can safeguard their own interests and preserve their authority without these ever-recurring public sneers by one section of the King's subjects against another. If a few white men hate the Asiatic as a trader, while they compass sea and land to introduce him as a labourer, they are not compelled to trade with him. They can just let him alone and trade with their own kind.

Another argument used to bolster up the anti-Asiatic position is that Indians are a danger to the public health. This may or may not be so; but, most certainly, if they are, the fault lies, not with them, but with the sanitary authorities.

Indians have everywhere in South Africa proved themselves specially amenable to health regulations. This was shewn, beyond all controversy, by the remarkable manner in which the whole community submitted itself to the plague authorities during the recent outbreak in Johannesburg.

Another charge that has been brought against Indians is that they did not fight for the Empire during the late South African war. The ignorance of the framers of this charge is typical; for, with the exception of themselves, the whole world knows that Indians were as ready to fight and, if need be, to die for the Empire as any other of its children, but were not permitted to do so. There are some people who know that the Indians of Natal and the Transvaal again and again petitioned the Natal Government to be allowed to go to the front "in any capacity". And there are some also who know that, of all the best of the British Army, the leaders of the Natal Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps¹ were the only ones who served and refused all remuneration.

¹ *Vide* "Indian Ambulance Corps", 23-12-1899

The fact is, there are men among the Indian community who are more British than the majority of the anti-Asiatics and who have their full share of that patriotic and public spirit which has made the Empire what it is. It is absurd to suppose that men, aware of their status as British subjects, will meekly allow themselves to be relegated to “Bazaars” or “Locations” nay, more, it is criminal to attempt to destroy this patriotic spirit. And it is equally foolish to expect them to be crushed by methods of misrepresentation, injustice, and intimidation. The attitude of the anti-Asiatics in South Africa can be summed up in one word: give a dog a bad name and hang him.

Indian Opinion, 18-2-1905

150. CONCEALMENT OF PLAGUE

We regret that there are still Indian in Durban who do not yet know the serious consequences of concealing infectious disease. On Monday last, an Indian employed by the Durban Corporation was sentenced to pay a fine of £ 20, or, in default, to three month's hard labour, for concealing a case of plague. The sentence is exemplary, and rightly so. The case was that of a girl, who was removed to an empty house by her father, so soon as he found she was sick. The reason he gave the Magistrate was that he did not want the European doctors to take her away from him. That, perhaps, was very natural; but Indians must learn that, in this matter, they are under the same law as Europeans. Each case of infectious disease must be notified to the authorities, whoever the sufferer may be; and everyone, whether he be Indian or European, has to put his own private feelings into his pocket, for the general good. It is too much to expect that every Indian of the indentured class will look at the matter from this point of view, but it is not too much to expect that Indians of the higher class will assist Dr. Murison in dealing with disease. We again call attention to the Health Officer's letter in our issue of Dec. 10th., and to our remarks thereon. Our Indian friends must remember that every prosecution of this kind reflects, however undeservedly, on the whole community. But the fault does not lie only on the side of the Indians. We cannot agree with *The Natal Mercury* that “it is due to the action of certain Indians that the plague is still with us”. It is true that Indians are generally the victims of this dread disease. But, as in answer to the question, “Who breeds our plagues?” a correspondent very pertinently replied in our columns last week, “Who puts the Indian under such circumstances as to make him a breeder of plagues?”

There are “plague spots” in Durban under the direct control of the Town Council: why, then, lay all the blame on the poor Indian, if, as a natural consequence, plague is developed? The matter is, indeed, too important to be lightly dismissed, and we propose to deal fully with the whole question of municipal sanitation in a succeeding issue.

Indian Opinion, 18-2-1905

151. INDIAN LICENCES: NEED FOR VIGILANCES—I

Sheth Hoondamal’s licence has been a subject of discussion for the past several months. Our readers are aware that Sheth Hoondamal has been carrying on trade in Durban for nearly ten years. At first he opened a shop in West Street, one of the principal thoroughfares of Durban. As the landlord wanted to get the building repaired, he had the shop vacated. Not being able to get a place to his liking in West Street, Sheth Hoondamal secured a good shop in nearby Grey Street and started his business there. Some months later, on being required to vacate the premises, he rented from an Indian landlord a better and larger shop in West Street which had been recently vacated by an Indian merchant, and began to trade there. Simultaneously, he applied to the Licensing Officer to have his new address entered on his licence. Not only did that Officer reject his application, but he also charged Hoondamal with trading without a licence. Legal proceedings were instituted against him in a Magistrate’s Court, and Sheth Hoondamal was fined. The latter thereupon appealed against the Magistrate’s judgment. Before this appeal could be heard, the Town Council dragged Sheth Hoondamal to the Magistrate’s Court twice or thrice, and each time the Magistrate fined him, and on one occasion the Magistrate, Mr. Stuart, even exceeded his authority and passed an illegal order, asking Sheth Hoondamal to close down his shop. The latter, of course, disregarded the order as it was illegal; and through his attorney, Mr. Wyllie, sent a strongly worded note to the Magistrate and the police, saying that, if the order was implemented, the executing officials would be held responsible for the consequences. The Magistrate was greatly enraged at this, but he was helpless, the order not being lawful. The appeal was heard by the Circuit Court when it sat in Durban, and Sheth Hoondamal was found not guilty. Thereafter, the police brought another charge against him, and the Magistrate found him guilty.

The appeal against that judgment was heard by the Supreme Court this month, and to the misfortune of the Indian traders, the judges gave their decision against Sheth Hoondamal. Sheth Hoondamal

had applied last month for a licence for the current year, which the Licensing Officer rejected. An appeal was then field before the Town Council. Stating the reason for not granting Sheth Hoondamal a licence, the Licensing Officer said that it was not desirable to issue more licences to Asiatics in West Street ! When this reason for refusal was brought to the Knowledge of the Town Council by Sheth Hoondamal's counsel, the Councillors naturally felt abashed, for the Licensing Officer had also added that such was the desire of the Councillors as well. On hearing this, Mr. Burne, who is a member of the Council and also a renowned lawyer, immediately protested that the Licensing Officer had no warrant to attribute such a desire to the Town Council. At this the Officer got up and answered that he had rejected applications on the same ground in the past, and that his decision had always been endorsed by the Council; his claim could not be proved incorrect. To prevent this dispute from developing further, a Councillor moved that the appeal be dismissed. Another member seconded the resolution, introducing while doing so a further legalistic argument that under the law the discretion to grant or refuse licences was vested in the Licensing Officer. After hearing this point of law, the applicant's counsel answered that even this discretion could only be exercised in accordance with the law, and that it was no discretion which violated the law or transgressed it. The Councillors did not relish this argument. Consequently, Sheth Hoondamal was not granted a licence and has had to close down his shop.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 18-2-1905

152. CORPORATION INSANITATION

There was submitted, at the ordinary monthly meeting of the Durban Town Council, on the 7th inst., a Report by the Inspector of Nuisances relative to the Eastern and Western Vleis. It is noteworthy that this official makes reference to certain areas, the buildings on which are variously described as dilapidated and imperfect as to sanitation and building characteristics, whilst the ground itself is said to be undrained. These buildings, moreover, are declared to be "used for habitable purposes", and also "unfit for human habitation".

We are forcibly reminded of a meeting held, under the auspices of the Natal Indian Congress, in June of 1903, when emphasis was laid upon an allegation made in the Minute, submitted by the Mayor to the Town Council, concerning the insanitary habits of the Indian population, and urging this as one of several reasons why Indians should be relegated to Locations, or, as they have been euphemistically designated, "Bazaars".

Lord Milner, it will be remembered, in his memorable Notice No. 356 of 1903, drew special attention to the exception that was to be made in respect of Asiatics whose habits of life and social qualities were not repugnant to European ideas or in conflict with sanitary laws. We venture to suggest that any doctor or hospital nurse will confirm our assertion that, even amongst higher-class Europeans, scientific sanitation is not always favourably regarded. That, however, is by the way. The real point is that it is not always just that the *general opinion* of Europeans, who are often most ignorant of what they are most assured, and as often prejudiced against conditions and circumstances that are strange to them, should be taken as a reasonable criterion. The opinion of the man in the street is, notoriously, vastly different from, and often opposed to, the opinion of the man in the study, who has greater and more frequent opportunity of collecting, sifting and judging the facts of which he speaks.

There are Indians and Indians; there are Indians who approach absolutely to the scientific European standard of sanitation, and there are Indians who have not yet adopted other modes of sanitation than those to which they have been accustomed, almost from time immemorial, in the remote districts of India. Similar distinctions may, indeed, be made amongst the inhabitants of civilised nations the world over. There is always, and will be for long years to come, this difference between the educated and the ill-instructed.

When, then, we hear the charge so frequently levelled against the Indian that he is insanitary, we are impelled to ask: "Which Indian do you mean? And do you refer to personal cleanliness or to domiciliary sanitation?" For nothing is more important than that those who bring a charge of this impalpable nature should be pinned down to something more definite and less dangerously vague. It is a common observation that a generalisation is often a successful catchword to throw to an unthinking man, whereas a definite statement of fact would crush him.

It is our experience that, generally speaking, the Indian is not insanitary. It must be distinctly borne in mind that we do not assert that no Indians are insanitary. We argue from a knowledge of the national customs and traditions of the various Indian peoples, and can confidently say that, be these Hindus or Mohamedans, their faith, which is a living one to them, inculcates absolute principles of personal cleanliness and, as a corollary, domestic sanitation, even amongst the lowest classes, and this may easily be confirmed by any one who is at all conversant with the normal conditions of Indian life.

But what have we? We have the Eastern and the Western Vleis! We have heard much hard talk of “Bazaars” and Locations, of disinfection and of segregation. Somehow or other, the remaining terms of the proposition appear to have been very carefully-or, shall we say, carelessly-left out of consideration.

For the benefit of the public that takes an interest in sanitary matters and question of hygiene, we propose to quote from the Report of the Sanitary Committee of the Town Council, published in *The Natal Mercury* so far back as 1899, and of which Committee the Hon. R. Jameson was Chairman.

2. We next inspected the compound on what is known as the Western Vlei. Here are two corrugated iron buildings accommodating 22 men and 33 women and children. These structures were found to be in fairly good condition but to bring them within the terms of our sanitary bye-laws, they require to be provided with roof, guttering and down-pipes, more light and more ventilation, and another latrine, the existing one not being sufficient for decency. The fence requires repairs, the houses should be lime-washed internally. There being a water-supply adjacent, a small iron structure should be provided for bathing and washing purposes. The open drains in the vicinity should be well opened up before the summer rains set in, as otherwise this site is swampy.

This is a description of the condition of no less than a “Bazaar,” or Location, or Compound, or what you will, under the direct control of so authoritative a body as the Corporation itself ! Who is responsible, we ask, if Indians domiciled in such buildings, placed in the very midst of insanitary conditions, are insanitary in their habits? The Indians? Surely not! And yet, to all intents and purposes, this unsavoury area remains in much the same condition at this date as at the time when this report was made, now some five-and-a-half years ago!

What is the Corporation doing to remedy such a disgusting condition of affairs? It can spare time and energy for licensing prosecutions; why can it not utilise some of that same energy to do away with this and other centres of disease and death?

We are told in *The Natal Mercury*:

The coolie is not a cleanly individual, and if left to himself he would soon make even a first class villa resemble a piggery more than anything else.

And it goes on to say:

But it is the business of his employer, and particularly of the Protector of Immigrants, to see that he is not left to himself in the matter of sanitation, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of the whole community. It is also a matter for the Medical Officer of Health for the Colony to see to, and if employers are found providing inadequate and filthy accommodation for their coolies, they ought to be made to mend their ways.

With the second of these statements we are in entire accord.

Indeed, it goes far to answer those who insist upon the alleged insanitary habits of the Indians as a whole. The first assertion requires to be examined before being accepted. It is disposed of in the following extract from the Report already quoted:

It was specially noted here (Queen Street Compound) that the compound, being connected with the sewerage system, enabling as it does ample washing, bathing, and latrine needs, was *remarkably clean compared with any of the other places inspected*.

So we have it on record that the Corporation has had the evil pointed out to it; that such evils, being permitted to continue, cast a stigma upon the 'body that condones them; and last, but not least, that the Corporation has, in the cases of the Eastern and the Western Vleis, done practically nothing to remedy them. Who, then, has a right to add insult to injury by urging the insanitation of the Indian community as a reason why they should wiped out of existence? The effect of the Corporation's policy of *laissez faire* is obvious. How long will the cause remain undealt with?

Indian Opinion, 25-2-1905

153. THE PLAGUE

The question of sanitation as a whole, in so far as the Indian community is affected, has been already dealt with¹. We now propose to examine the cause of the particular disease that is claiming its unfortunate victims epidemically, and to discuss the effect of that cause.

In last Saturday's *Mercury*, there appeared a lengthy paragraph dealing with the attitude said to be adopted by "the Indians" towards the authorities, especially in reference to the concealment of plague-sickness. The writer made a number of curiously inadequate statements, upon which he based several somewhat querulous enquiries, and concluded by suggesting that "possibly this conduct (concealment of plague) has much to do with the recrudescence of the disease occasionally".

What are the plain facts? We have a community composed of whites and Indians, the poor of the former section being, proportionately, fewer than those of the latter. It follows, then, that the poorer folk amongst the Asiatic population are more liable, numerically, to disease than are the poorer Europeans. Next, we have an assertion made that "the Indians" seriously hamper the authorities "by refusing to give information and in every way endeavouring to conceal the where

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

abouts of any suffers". Again we ask, "What Indians?" Surely, it is not intended to saddle the *whole* Indian community with the fault of a few of its most ignorant section. Why are these careless generalisations made? Is it not possible to impress upon the intelligent public the fact that there are as many subtle sub-divisions amongst Indians as amongst any other civilised people? It is almost disheartening to observe how these mis-statements continue to be made, with an utter irresponsibility that makes one wonder whether the facts of history are ever conned and become a part of our present-day philosophy.

The higher-class Indians never cease, both by personal example and by precept, to impress upon their less-favoured brethren the necessity of co-operating with the authorities in order that the effort to stamp out the fell disease, that is now rife amongst us, may not prove abortive. Over and over again, we ourselves have, in our leading columns, both in English and in the vernacular tongues, done our best to point the moral that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". And yet we have foolish people asking why "the Indians" do not co-operate with the authorities !

Moreover, if, class for class, a comparison be made between Europeans and Indians, it will, we feel assured, be found that there is no greater frequency of concealment, no greater reluctance to advertise cases of plague, amongst the latter than amongst the former. We do not lay special stress upon this fact, nor do we care to use the *tu quoque* argument. We are, however, compelled to do so in self-defence, for it is distinctly unfair to suggest that such conduct on the part of a few Indians, which no one deplors more than we ourselves, "badly prejudices" the Indian Community "in the eyes of Europeans". There is, however, one important reason why cases of concealment do occur. We are informed that, at the plague hospital, no distinction is made between Indians and Kaffirs, all being herded together indiscriminately. Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of Indian habits and prejudices will at once see how great a factor this negligence is in impeding the good work initiated by the authorities. We can only say that, so long as no separate accommodation is allotted to Indians as such, and so long as no differentiations of creed and caste are made amongst the Indians themselves, with due regard to religious customs and traditional beliefs, so long will the authorities cope in vain with many of the difficulties that could, with a little foresight, be easily avoided.

We have already shown, in part, how and why insanitary conditions are created for the poorer Indians. Plague has again broken out in Durban. Who are the first victims? Indians. But, we ask, pertinently, *what* Indians? Who are these Indians? None other than those

employed, housed, and “cared for” by the Corporation of the Borough that prides itself upon being the model borough of South Africa! These Indians are employed by the Corporation to perform the filthiest work. They are used to clean drains and sewers, and in every possible unsavoury pursuit and are “housed” in “sanitary” quarters like the Eastern and the Western Vleis. What wonder, then, that these unfortunates are liable to contract this and every other dirt disease? The Sanitary Commission’s Report, to which fuller reference has been made elsewhere, describes, realistically enough, the horrible surroundings amidst which these wretched people are compelled to perpetuate a degraded existence. And, when plague not unnaturally breaks out amongst them, although complaint after complaint has been directed to the authorities by the Indian community, and by the experts appointed by those same authorities, the Indians, without distinction, are blamed, for insanitary habits, and “the coolie” is incontinently dubbed a breeder of disease. A man that is made to live in a pigsty is not unlikely to become as filthy in his habits as is its rightful denizen. Dr. Turner, the Medical Officer of Health for the Transvaal, when speaking in the Legislative Council regarding the condition of the Johannesburg Indian Location, remarked:

The coolie location at Johannesburg was in a disgraceful condition, and why? Because those poor people were compelled to live in it, like chickens in a coop, and it was left in a most insanitary condition by the authorities. If Mr. Raitt (M.L.C.) had been compelled to live in it, he would have been just as dirty.

We are obliged to say, with regret, that the culprit, in the case of insanitation, is the Corporation itself, upon which is the guilty responsibility for the awful conditions that are known to exist upon its own property and for the deaths that have taken place from the plague. It is deliberately drawing a red herring across the trail, in the light of these facts, to accuse the Indian community, or even the wretched “coolie”, of insanitary habits and wilful lack effort to co-operate with the powers that be to remedy the evils.

We have to express our acknowledgements to the plague experts that have been employed by the Government and the Corporation. They have done their best to have the evils remedied, and have offered recommendations, but all to no purpose. It is quite useless seizing upon an effect and regarding it as a cause. None the less, it remains an effect, and the cause, being quite other than what it is reported to be, is still to seek.

Notwithstanding all this, we find responsible people approving the introduction of further legislation upon the lines of Lord Milner’s notice, relegating Indians to “Bazaars” there “to stew in their own

juice”, as Mr. J. E. O’ Connor, late Director-General of Statistics to the Indian Government, aptly stigmatised it and so perpetuate horrors similar to those existing *in the Locations on Corporation ground!* It has been held that the true test of good government is that it raises the lowly to a higher conception of duty, never that it degrades them to an even baser servitude. But “a foolish consistency”, a broad spirit of statesmanship, certainly does not mould the sanitary and political policies of the Durban Municipality!

Indian Opinion, 25-2-1905

154. AN APPEAL TO INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

We recommend that our readers carefully study the newspapers coming these days from India, for that will convince them how our brethren there are ready to rush to our succour. At the Congress session recently held in Bombay, there was a very good discussion of the disabilities and hardships we are experiencing here, and the speeches made there by our representatives created such a strong impression upon that august body that the leaders have begun to realise the gravity of our problem and to make efforts to improve our condition. Even the Press has taken up our case with vigour. All this is very satisfactory, and we should be thankful to God that the representatives of the Indian people themselves have turned their attention to the redress of our grievances. We should, therefore, be prepared to discharge our duties with greater enthusiasm. The proverbs go, “God helps those who help themselves,” and “You cannot go to heaven without dying yourself”. Likewise we needs must do our duty and, if we do not, our subject will not be fulfilled. The greater the help we receive from others, the greater should be the intensity of our own efforts; for such help adds to our responsibility. It is but natural that we should struggle to remove our hardships. If we did not, we would be considered worse than beasts. When there are people coming forward to help us, we must also think of our duty towards them, and redouble our efforts and work with greater ardour and enthusiasm, so that they may be satisfied, encouraged and feel that we are not unworthy of their goodness. By proving our worth, we shall add to their zeal, doing ourselves a service in the process. Even an utterly worldly man will realise the truth of this. More so, those who are religious-minded.

It is, therefore, our earnest appeal to all our Indian brethren in South Africa that they should ponder over what has been said above, and be prepared to do their duty. When the Indian leaders are ready to help us, it is our obvious duty to arm them with the means of doing

so; for we must know that, if we do not do so, they will not be able to render us the assistance they would like to. The following three things are at present needed: (1) we should keep up our efforts; (2) we should keep them informed of the true state of our affairs; and (3) we should provide them with sufficient funds to defray the expenses they might have to incur for carrying on any activities on our behalf. All the three things are quite necessary. The first two we are already doing to some extent; that is our own efforts are continuing more or less; and we do publicise the true facts. As for the third item, viz., the funds, we have not done anything so far. It is, therefore, necessary to give full thought to this without delay. Supplying the necessary funds is like arming them with a very potent weapon. In the modern world, money is needed at every step; and if it runs short, one has to face disappointment in the end, however great and noble one's hopes and aspirations might be. Just as man needs food, so does public work require money. Those who would help us would give their valuable time and gladly exert themselves, but if we tighten our purse-strings when they need money, we would be considered mean and contemptible.

We should consider how our leaders can help us; and with our experience in this country, it should not be difficult to think of the means. We have learnt, from experience, how to achieve our aims under British rule. The Transvaalers, when they willed it, forced a war; and now, when they so will it, they can cause us a lot of harassment. How do they do this? They hold meetings at different places to canvass public support for their views; since it is not always possible for the whole community to attend the meetings, they launch newspapers and go on writing, day in and day out, whatever they like; they also issue pamphlets and write open letters to the Press, they draft petitions, get them printed and obtain a sufficient number of signatures on them; and they send out telegrams to publicise their activities. To do all this, money is essential, and their leaders, therefore, do not hesitate to relieve their purses a little. And though these people are powerful, intelligent and united and wield great influence here as well as in England, they always go on making efforts tactfully to gain their objective avoiding obstacles. It is such men we have to contend with. We are weak, less intelligent, and unable to unite, not knowing the full significance of unity. We have no influence with the Government and there is a deplorable lack of thought and the enthusiasm necessary to show our mettle. How, then, can we put up a fight? As against our shortcomings, we have justice on our side; and justice can discomfit the opponent. However, to gain the final victory, we must certainly show our mettle and worth, for, in the absence of these qualities, justice itself gets weakened.

Fortunatley for us, there are in India at the moment several men of position and prestige from this country, through whom help should be rendered to the Indian leaders. We should give all the monetary help possible from every part of South Africa, particularly from Natal and the Transvaal, and so back the Indian leaders that, in conformity with British practice, they might ventilate the people's feelings in the matter and demand justice from the Government. Things do not cost as much in India as they do here. The country being poor, a little money would be enough. But the country is very large. Our leaders here should therefore take all these facts into consideration and do their obvious duty without delay. That is to say, they should immediately send respectable sums of money to India so that the enthusiasm of the Indian leaders might not cool down, and they might carry on ceaseless agitation throughout the country by issuing pamphlets and holding meetings. This would also mean that the Indian Government had the full backing of the people. The British Government would, consequently, be compelled to pay attention to the matter.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 25-2-1905

155. GENERAL DEALERS AT THE CAPE

The Cape *Government Gazette* publishes the text of a Bill to regulate the trade of a general dealer. We can understand the regulation of dealers' licences, but that the Law should regulate the trade of the dealers also is an idea altogether novel. We reproduce the operative clauses of the Bill in another column. It contains in all 35 sections, most of which could, more or less, have been avoided; but we must, at the same time, confess that, though the Bill is drastic enough, it shows on the part of the framers great regard for the interests of the general dealers, and in that respect it is undoubtedly less open to objection than the Natal Act. According to the Bill, all the present licence-holders are protected unless they have committed breaches of the law regarding Sunday trading, the selling of spirituous liquor, or sanitation, or unless the premises have been allowed to become a nuisance to the neighbourhood by reason of the habits of the dealer's customers, his associates or himself. With reference to the new licence, a Resident Magistrate may issue a certificate enabling by the Licensing Court. Both the Magistrate and the Licensing Court have the power to refuse the licence on grounds, *inter alia*, of the character of the applicant, of his inability to write in some European languages, or to keep intelligible records of his transactions. There is, too, the power granted to the

licence-holder, in the event of his licence being cancelled, to appeal to the Supreme Court, except when the cancellation has taken place by reason of conviction under the Liquor Act. The most objectionable clause throughout the Bill is with reference to the European languages. The habitual affront to the millions of British Indians and their cultured languages that such a provision implies renders it necessary for the British Indians at the Cape to oppose the Bill, which otherwise they could have gladly assented to. The importation of such vexatious provisions is not calculated to gain the co-operation of the Indians. We cannot understand why a man, who is a capable merchant, thoroughly honest, and able to keep his books in the English language through outside assistance, should be debarred from obtaining a licence. We could point out scores of miserable shanties, in every way a disgrace to any town of importance, owned by those who have a knowledge of "some European language". Why should they get a licence, and a well-behaved Indian subject, having business premises in a perfectly sanitary condition, and bearing an unexceptionable character, be insulated by having it flung in his face that he is unfit because he does not know a European language? We trust that the British Indians at the Cape will co-operate in resisting this fresh attempt at imposing a burden on them, and that the Government will see their way to expunge from the Bill the objectionable clause, and thus secure the active co-operation of a large body of the traders concerned.

Indian Opinion, 4-3-1905

156. INDIAN LICENCES: NEED FOR VIGILANCE—II

These two defeats¹ are not to be considered as those of Sheth Hoondamal alone, but of all the Indian traders in Natal. We cannot say that the Supreme Court has done deliberate injustice; but we do believe that, if an appeal is preferred to the Privy Council against the decision of the Supreme Court, the result would, in all probability, be favourable to the Indian traders. Had the intention of the legislators been what the Supreme Court holds it to have been, the question arises why the licence form originally required only the name of the town and not the actual place or locality. The practice of mentioning the locality was introduced subsequently, and that fact is by itself an answer to the decision of the Supreme Court. But it is not necessary at present to go into legal niceties. It is, however, necessary to realise that the licensing law is on the whole disastrous to the Indian traders; and

¹ *Vide* "Indian Licences: Need for Vigilance", 18-2-1905.

all possible efforts should be made to get it altered. It has been adequately demonstrated, and all are agreed, that the law is oppressive, that it has caused much injustice, and because of it, many a shopkeeper is faced with ruin. It is, therefore, our clear duty not to sit silent but to make all possible efforts to get the law altered and persist in them till we succeed. It is obvious that the slightest indifference in such a matter may prove disastrous.

Let us now consider what should be done immediately. Perfectly reliable information should be gathered from every place as to whether or not Indians received regular licences at the beginning of the year; and this information should be made as widely known as possible. The leaders of the community should ponder over this information and take the necessary steps in regard to it. All facts should be communicated to those working on our behalf in India and Great Britain, so that, as our local efforts progress, parallel attempts to strengthen our cause might also be made there. Unless and until work proceeds in this way, it is, in our opinion, futile to hope for any improvement in the condition of our traders. We should remember that it was as a result of similar efforts made by us in 1898 that the Colonial Secretary here, acting on Mr. Chamberlain's strong despatch, wrote confidentially in 1899 to all Municipalities in Natal warning them that, if the Indian traders were harassed, the law would have to be altered and the demand of the Indians for the right of appeal to the Supreme Court conceded. Soon after, war broke out and everything came to a stand still. Now that the mischief has started again, there is the greatest need for us to be vigilant. Bearing this incident in mind, we should do our work courageously. If we go on doing our duty properly, we are sure to succeed in the end.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 4-3-1905

157. HINDUISM

[JOHANNESBURG,

March 4, 1905]

Mr. M. K. Gandhi delivered the first of a series of four lectures on the above subject at the Masonic Temple, Plein Street, on Saturday evening last, under the auspices of the Johannesburg Lodge of the Theosophical Society, Major Peacock, vice-president, in the chair.

Mr. Gandhi introduced his subject by remarking that the endeavours of the Johannesburg Lodge to promote interest in the

study of different religious systems were most praiseworthy, tending, as they did, to widen people's sympathies, and enlarge their comprehension of the motives and beliefs underlying the actions of those who were strangers in creed and colour. He himself had endeavoured, during his eleven years' residence in South Africa, to remove the prejudice and ignorance that existed concerning his own people.

Continuing, the lecturer described what was meant by the title "Hindu", referring it to the branch of the Aryan people that had migrated to the trans-Indus districts of India, and had colonised that vast country. As a matter of fact, Aryanism would have been a better descriptive word than Hinduism, is explanation of the faith accepted by so many millions of his countrymen.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the religion professed by Hindus was self-abnegation, and this was obviously shown in the name of the religion itself, for, unlike most of the great world religions, it did not derive its name from any prophet or teacher, although it counted some of the greatest within its fold. The lecturer further instanced the historic siege of Arcot in support of this contention, when the Indian soldiers, at a time when starvation faced the whole British Army, waived their claim to the rice rations in favour of the British soldiers, they themselves being content to have the water in which the rice had been boiled, although it was customary to throw this water away; and also the case of Prabhu Singh,¹ an indentured British Indian, who was chosen for the post of honour of warning the inhabitants of Ladysmith during the siege, whenever a Boer shell was coming, by ringing a bell when perched in a tree, at imminent risk to himself. This man was mentioned several times in despatches by Sir George White.

The Hindus themselves claimed that the date of their scriptures was veiled in the mist of antiquity, the scriptures themselves being God-given. As against that, some Europeans contended that the scriptures were not more than 3,000 or 4,000 years old. Mr. Tilak, a well-known Indian Sanskritist, has, however, calculated that, from certain astronomical observations made in these works, they were at least 10,000 years old, although they were only committed to writing some three hundred years after Christ. The *Vedas*, as these scriptures were known, consisted of separate hymns, each being held to cover a definite period, and quite independent of each other. And, typically, not one author's name had passed down to posterity! The *Vedas* had inspired the thought of many illustrious men of the West, amongst whom

¹ Vide "Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji", 8-10-1900 and *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Chapter IX.

might be mentioned Arthur Schopenhauer and Professor Max Muller.

Over two hundred millions of people professed Hinduism, and this faith entered into their every act. The key-note of Hinduism on the spiritual side was *moksha*, or salvation; that is, the final absorption of the Soul in the Infinite Soul that pervades all things. In regard to religion, pantheism was the chief characteristic, whilst, on the ethical plane, self-abnegation was the most notable quality, with its corollary, toleration. In social matters, the characteristic of caste was predominant, whilst the ceremonial characteristic was the sacrificing of animals. At a time when the faith of the Hindus had become more formal, Prince Gautama Buddha, having learnt the spiritual worth of things during a prolonged period of contemplation, commenced to teach that animal sacrifices were despiritualising, and that the highest form of love was expressed by extending that toleration, which was already a tenet of their faith, in the direction of refraining from killing or otherwise destroying living things. Hinduism had never, as a religion, been missionary, as were Christianity and Mahomedanism, but, under King Ashoka, the Buddhist priests were sent far and wide to propagate the new belief. Buddhism had a reforming effect upon Hinduism, somewhat similar to that of Protestantism upon Catholicism, but there was a great difference in the spirit underlying that reform. No Hindu bore the Buddhist any ill-will, a statement that could not be made in reference to the Protestants and Catholics. Buddhism was sometimes said to have declined in India. This was not really so. The Buddhist priests had endeavoured to propagate their faith too zealously, and had aroused the jealousy, at the time, of the Hindu priesthood, who had driven the Buddhists to the outskirts of the country, to Tibet, China, Japan, Burma and Ceylon. But the spirit of the Buddhists remained in India, and actuated every principle professed by the Hindus.

In this connection, the lecturer briefly referred to Jainism as a most interesting form of faith. The Jains claimed that it was altogether independent of Buddhism, not a growth from it. Unlike others, they did not claim for the faith that it was of Divine origin, recognising that its sacred writings were the results of human workmanship. Jainism was, 'perhaps, the most logical of all faiths, and its most remarkable

¹ Louis Walter Ritch gave up business in 1903 and became an articled clerk under Gandhiji. A Theosophist, he introduced Gandhiji to the Theosophical society. Left for England in 1905 for legal studies and there did much valuable work on behalf of South African Indians through frequent contributions to the Press.

² Of this episode, Gandhiji wrote later: "Mr. Ritch had a large family. He was ready to take the plunge, but I prevented him. I had not the heart to expose him to the risk. So he attended to the work outside the danger zone". (*Autobiography*, Part IV, chapter XV). Whether the speech was correctly reported in *Indian Opinion* or his memory was at fault while writing the above 20 years later, one cannot say.

characteristic was its scrupulous regard for all things that lived.

After the lecture, Mr. Gandhi answered some questions put to him members of the audience, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to him, which he deprecated smilingly, on the ground that they were not yet deserved.

The second lecture of the series will be given on Saturday evening next, the 11th inst., at the same hall.

The Star, 10-3-1905

158. *SPEECH AT FAREWELL TO L.W. RITCH*

This is a brief report of Gandhiji's speech at a Johannesburg function to bid farewell to Ritch.

[March 9, 1905]

Mr. Gandhi said he would like to add his own expression of appreciation both of Mr. Ritch's character and his actual work in the speaker's office. Mr. Gandhi gave a brief history of his relations with Mr. Ritch, describing the sentiment of brotherhood that attached them to each other. Special stress was laid upon Mr. Ritch's self-sacrifice at the time of the plague last year, when he insisted upon tending the Indian plague-patients, regardless of possible consequences to himself.² He regarded the cause of Mr. Ritch's departure for Home as God-sent, and he had no doubt that whatever happened would be for the best.

Indian Opinion, 25-3-1905

159. *A POLITICAL MEDICAL REPORT*

The Medical Officer of Potchefstroom, at the instance of the Town Council, has prepared a report on the condition of the Indian quarters in that town. The circumstances under which it was prepared are rather peculiar. As our readers are aware, the Potchefstroom, people are very much exercised over the proposed erection of a mosque by the Indian Mahomedans. At the Town Council meeting where, in spite of legal opinion to the contrary, the Councillors decided to oppose the erection of the mosque, they also passed a resolution instructing the Medical Officer to make an inspection of that part of

the town and report at once to the Council. One would think there is absolutely no connection between the erection of the mosque which is purely and simply a building devoted to religious worship and which is never used as a dwelling place and the sanitary condition of the surrounding houses. However, the Town Council of Potchefstroom, like the wolf in the fable, wanted some charge to go on with. The Medical Officer, Dr. Friel faithful servant that he is to the Town Council has risen to the occasion and submitted a report, according to their desire, which is a curious document. The Doctor says:

The premises were on the whole fairly clean, but if any epidemic broke out, it would be very difficult to disinfect them, as they largely consist of a patchwork of shanties of all shapes and sizes.

The question naturally arises: what has the Officer been doing all this time? The plague has been in the Transvaal now for a year, and these premises have not been found a source of danger. To-day, they are found to be an urgent danger to the town, and must be dealt with at once, not to prevent the plague, but the building of a mosque! This would be ludicrous, were it not so openly dishonest. The doctor says there were sanitary conveniences in each of the premises; but as a statement of this description is very damaging to the cause of the Town Council, he must, forsooth, add that in most cases the bath water is thrown on the street. He does not say how many of the European in Potchefstroom also throw their bath water on the street, and on our own part we strongly suspect the Indians who do so have no other course open to them. The Doctor, however, still could not make out a transgression of the bye-laws, and so he adds:

Although they may not actually transgress the bye-laws, still the minimum of air space was closely approached in every case, and the rooms were badly ventilated.

We wonder whether the Potchefstroom Municipal bye-laws allow of bad ventilation being tolerated. If so, why does not the Municipality ask for an amendment of the bye-laws, so that they might satisfy the requirements of hygiene and sanitation? As a matter of fact, we happen to know that the public health bye-laws framed by the Government have been adopted by the Municipality of Potchefstroom, and that they are stringent and exacting. The Doctor concludes the medical portion of the report, by saying that, taken as a whole, their manner of living is not up to the present-day standard, and that houses and their residents in the centre of the town are a continual source of danger to public health. We see nothing in the report, which is so frankly contradictory, that would warrant the opinion given by the Doctor. And, as if the medical report made by him were not

enough, he goes on to give a legal opinion, and suggests that the Government should be approached to compel all Asiatics other than duly licensed traders to reside in the Bazaars.

Although this report is in our opinion self-condemned, it might be worth while producing an impartial opinion about the very dwellings on which Dr. Friel has given his verdict. We are, fortunately, in possession of a report prepared at the instance of the Indians in Potchefstroom by Dr. Thomas J. Dixon, the District Surgeon. He says:

In going through the various premises I am pleased to say I was greatly impressed with the general condition of each place I visited, both internally as well as externally. Taking all things into consideration, the backyards are all perfectly clean and sanitary. I saw no accumulation of rubbish; this, I understand, is being carried away daily by the contractor. The bucket system is in force, as in other parts of the town, which is also attended to by the sanitary department, and I can find no fault from what I saw. There appears to me to be no fault as regards sleeping accommodation. At the back of each business, in addition, I noticed a kind of mess room capable of seating about 5 to 8 persons, and each has its own kitchens, which are also well kept.

We have before us a detailed report of each of the dwellings examined by the Doctor. Here, then, is an unbiassed medical report given by a gentleman having no master to please, and who finds that the Indian dwellings are not open to objection from a sanitary standpoint.

Dr. Friel's report, we notice, has been referred by the Town Council to the Government, and we await what it has to say to it. It is palpably the effusion of a man whose inclination runs counter to his conscience.

Indian Opinion, 11-3-1905

160. THE HEALTH OF EDUCATED INDIANS

When we compare educated persons in India with those in other countries, we are sadly disappointed. The formation of a new Liberal Ministry in England is now under consideration. The ages of the leaders of this group are very significant for us. Mr. Bryce and Mr. John Morley are 67 years old, Lord Bracey and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman are 69, Earl Spencer is 70, the Duke of Devonshire is 72 and Sir Henry Fowler, 75. Even Sir Charles Dilke, whose inclusion in the Ministry is not very probable, is 60, and Lord Rosebery, 57. Some at any rate of these gentlemen are bound to be in the new Ministry.

Now, if we look round among Indians in any walk of life, we are unlikely to come by many elderly persons who can boast of sound health and vigour. One might attribute it to the Indian climate, but this

can be valid only up to a point. Our men of earlier generations enjoyed long life, full of health and vigour. They were so tall and well built that our contemporaries look diminutive beside them. If the Indian climate of old was so healthy and bracing, it cannot be that it does not now favour a good physique. The real reason is that we are unmindful of the maxims of good health. This attitude of negligence, which begins at school or college, continues into maturity. We remain engrossed in our work, in earning money and in improving our lot. We then hardly stop to realise that it is only natural for the body to wear down under severe strain. Most educated Indians do not have the habit of regular physical exercise. They seem quite innocent of the fact that the mind needs rest and recreation as well. One might find stray clubs and societies [among Indians,] but very few participate in their affairs actively. Some of them, who have little to do at home, prefer low types of pleasure to a chat or a game or two of billiards. Again, unlike Europeans who have an intelligent appreciation of the importance of health and happiness, they do not go to parties, balls, plays nor have they other pastimes. Their lives are dull and monotonous, if we leave out of account the variety of business that demands their attention. Such ways spell the ruin of a whole people; but, unfortunately, no one can as yet foresee their deleterious consequences. Not yet conscious of any ill-health themselves free from disease. And because they can do their work, digest their food and do not feel any manifest ailment, they consider themselves healthy. All of a sudden, this sense of well-being ceases; they find themselves in the grip of some serious disease, and they despair. We must learn from the example of those who have earlier fallen a prey to this habit, and beware. But then we are too slow and careless to profit by such examples. That is why we do not find among educated Indians persons of ripe old age. This defect is by no means peculiar to any individual or family, rather the entire Indian nation suffers from it. A countrywide effort is most essential in order to save Indian youth from being blighted prematurely.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-3-1905

161. A WAR OF GIANTS

JAPAN AND RUSSIA

From the news received from the front, it appears that the battle now being fought between Japan and Russia near Mukden bids fair to be considered the greatest in all ancient or modern history. To call the battle of Mukden, now in progress, the greatest may be dubbed an exaggeration. It is natural that, as a result of the frequent publication of sensational news in the papers, the people in general develop a dislike for such reports and, consequently, calling the battle of Mukden the greatest might be considered an exaggeration. Nevertheless, we must point out that tens of thousands of men are now being annihilated on both sides in the battle. Japan has here attacked Russia from east, west and south, that is, the attack is not frontal, but on the flanks of the Russian army. If it is possible that, if the flanks succumb, the van also might give way.

At the helm of all these manoeuvres of the army stands the heroic figures of Marquis Oyama of Japan. The battle covers an area of a hundred miles, and a million men have entered the field. The weapons of destruction used range from the smallest rifles to the biggest guns. No effort possible for human talent has been spared to bring about the quickest destruction of men. Courage and endurance have not been found wanting under any test. A hundred thousand men have been utterly destroyed. If Japan defeats Russia in this battle, there is strong reason to believe that the end of the war is near at hand. Having lost Port Arthur,¹ Russia no more holds any sea power; and it is improbable that she will send more men to Manchuria by land. The people in Russia have already begun to detest the war; if, therefore, the army at present in Manchuria sustains a defeat, it will not be necessary for Japan to make any further sacrifices.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 11-3-1905

¹ On August 10, 1904.

162. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O.BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
March 11, 1905

TO
THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON

DEAR MR. DADABHAI,

This will serve to introduce to you Mr. L.W. Ritch of Johannesburg. Mr. Ritch and I have known each other intimately for several years. Mr. Ritch holds very decided pro-Indian views and in order, among other things, the better to serve the Indian cause he is proceeding to England to study for the Bar.

I shall esteem it a favour if you will be good enough to give him the benefit of your assistance. Mr Ritch has studied the Indian question in South Africa.

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2266.

163. HINDUISM

[JOHANNESBURG,
March 11, 1905]

Mr. Gandhi delivered his second lecture on "Hinduism" under the auspices of the Johannesburg Theosophical Lodge, at the Masonic Temple, on Saturday evening. The hall was well filled.

The lecturer, after giving a short resume of the previous lecture, said that the second lecture would be devoted to what might be termed the second epoch of Hinduism. After the reformation that took place from within, under the influence of the teachings of Buddha, Hindu-

ism was very largely addicted to idolatry. Several explanations were offered in extenuation, but the lecturer could not deny the fact that the Hindus seemingly worshipped stocks and stones. The Hindu philosophers easily recognised and worshipped God as the purest spirit, and Pantheism took them to the highest flight. It similarly brought down the ignorant masses to the lowest depths. If the infant mind could not realise God as a pure spirit, it had no difficulty in worshipping Him through His various manifestations. Many worship Him through the sun, the moon and the stars, and many worship Him through stocks and stones also, a mode of worship to which philosophical Hinduism, with its tolerant spirit, had no difficulty in reconciling itself. So the wheel of Hindu life went merrily on, until there arose in the desert of Arabia a power that was destined to revolutionise ideas and to leave a permanent impress. Mahomet, whilst yet a boy, on seeing around him people given to idolatry, to lustful indulgences, and to drunkenness, burned within himself with rage. He saw also Judaism prostrate and Christianity debased. He felt, even as did Moses and Christ, that he was a man with a mission. He decided to deliver his mission to the world, and he chose the members of his own family as the first recipients. The lecturer was not one of these who believed that the religion of Islam was a religion of the sword. Washington Irving, in his work on Islam, had asked a pertinent question, namely, "Where had Islam, in its first stage, found men to wield the sword?" He believed that the success of Mahomedanism was largely due to its simplicity and to its recognition of human weaknesses. He [the Prophet] taught that God was One and only One, that he was His Messenger. He taught also that prayer was absolutely necessary as an uplifting influence, and in order to bring together his followers, if only once in a year, he instituted the pilgrimage to Mecca, for those who could afford it, and recognising that people would amass wealth, he enjoined upon his followers that they set apart a certain portion of it religiously for charitable purposes. The key-note of Islam was, however, its levelling spirit. It offered equality to all that came within its pale, in the manner that no other religion in the world did. When, therefore, about 900 years after Christ, his followers descended upon India, Hinduism stood dazed. It seemed to carry everything before it. The doctrine of equality could not but appeal to the masses, who were

caste-ridden. To this inherent strength was also added the power of the sword. The fanatical raiders who, from time to time, found their way into India, did not hesitate to convert by the sword if they could not do so by persuasion. They more or less overran all parts of India, breaking idols after idols, and although the Rajput valour was at the disposal of Hinduism, it was powerless to afford protection against the Mahomedan inroad. In keeping with the spirit of Hinduism, an attempt was made at first to bring about reconciliation between the two faiths, and in the city of Benares, there arose a holy man about the 13th century, by name Kabir, who endeavoured, by keeping intact the chief tenets of Hinduism and by borrowing somewhat from Mahomedanism, to bring about a fusion, but the attempt was not quite successful. The Punjab, through which the Mahomedan conquerors poured into India, and which bore the first brunt, produced Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion who drew upon Kabir of his doctrines and added to it militant Hinduism. He offered the olive-branch by respecting the Moslem susceptibilities, but if that were not accepted, he was equally ready to defend Hinduism from the Moslem aggression, and thus Sikhism was a direct result of Islam. It was well known how brave the Sikh was and what service he had rendered to the British Government. The influence of Mahomedanism on Hinduism was that it gave rise to Sikhism and it brought out one of the chief characteristics of the religion, namely, toleration, in its true light and fulness. When there were no political influences at work, there was no difficulty about the Hindus and the Mahomedans living side by side in perfect peace and amity, each respecting the prejudices of the other, and each following his own faith without let or hindrance. It was Hinduism that gave Mahomedanism its Akbar, who, with unerring insight, recognised the tolerant spirit and adopted it himself in ruling India. Hinduism, moreover, showed its elasticity in that, in spite of the fierce struggle, the classes as well as large majority of the masses were left totally untouched, and Hinduism arose out of the struggle braced, as we would rise out of a cold bath, with warm glow. The first shock was, no doubt, severely felt, but the Hindu religion soon asserted itself. The lecturer also mentioned the Fakirs and the Yogis, and said that they lived almost the same kind of life, although the former belonged to the Islamic faith and the latter to the Hindu faith.

At the end of the lecture several interesting questions were put, and the proceedings terminated after the usual vote of thanks.

The third lecture¹ of the series will be given next Saturday at 8 o'clock in the Masonic Temple. The synopsis is as follows: The advent of Christianity in India; comparison between Mahomedanism and Christianity as they appeared to the Hindus; influence of Christianity on Hinduism; a mixture of Christianity and modern of western civilisation; the direct failure and indirect success of Christianity in India; Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayanand; Theosophy, the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj; the state of Hinduism to-day; its vivacity and the secret of its great staying power.

The Star, 18-3-1905

164. LETTER TO COLONIAL SECRETARY

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
March 14, 1905

TO

THE HONOURABLE COLONIAL SECRETARY
PRETORIA

SIR,

My Association ventures respectfully to draw your attention to the enclosed cuttings² from the *Potchefstroom Budget*, giving a report on the anti-Asiatic demonstration that took place on Saturday the 4th instant a Potchefstroom in front of the Indian stores on the market square.

My Association has been informed by the British Indian living in Potchefstroom that the proceedings were violent and that speeches were made such as to arouse the worst feelings of the populace. After the speeches were finished, some mischievously inclined people began to throw stones at the shop windows of the Indian stores, and had it not been for the efficient manner in which the police had prepared

¹ The reports of the third and forth lectures in *The Star*., if any did appear, are not available. A summary of the four lectures, however, was later published in *Indian Opinion* Vide "Lectures on Religion", 15-4-1905.

² Not available

themselves for such emergency, it is difficult to say to what extent the violence would have gone. As it was, the injury done was restricted to the breaking of a few plate-glass windows.

It is worthy of note that the demonstration was headed by some of the principal men in the town, such as the President of the Potchefstroom Chamber of Commerce, a prominent member of the Town Council, and others holding public or semi-public positions. It was the proposed erection of a mosque in the town that was used to inflame public prejudice against the Indian community, but my Association is informed that the site for the proposed mosque is

- (a) not in the centre of the town,
- (b) not in a main thoroughfare,
- (c) is some distance from and not, as alleged, next door to a new hotel said to have cost £30,000,
- (d) the site is in a back street and the proposed buildings would be invisible from any of the neighbouring streets,
- (e) the buildings immediately surrounding the site are nearly all wood and iron and of far inferior construction to the proposed mosque buildings.

My Association, therefore, respectfully ventures to submit that the British Indian community at potchefstroom is entitled to a declaration from the Government, disapproving of the manner in which the anti-Asiatic agitation is being carried on at Potchefstroom and to an assurance that their persons and property will be fully protected. Probably the Government may be aware that the Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, and such other bodies in the Colony, carry on the agitation with a view, as they have stated, to strengthen the hands of the Government, who, they say, are prepared to fall in with their "Demands" and who are in their opinion at present engaged in negotiations with the Home Government, having that end in view.

My Association cannot conceive that such can be the intentions of the Government, but in its humble opinion the absence of a clear declaration to the contrary by the Government is likely to be misinterpreted and thereby to accentuate the violence of the agitation.

My Association, therefore trusts that the Government will be pleased to take such steps as may be necessary for protecting the

rights of the inoffensive British Indian in Potchefstroom and other towns in the colony.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDOOL GANI

CHAIRMAN

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Pretoria Archives: L.G. 93, Miscellaneous Files 97/3 Asiatics 1902/1907

165. THE NATAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL

We have before us the Natal *Government Gazette* of the 21st February, 1905, containing a "Bill to amend and consolidate the law relating to the Municipal Corporations". We give in another column the clauses that bear directly or indirectly on the British Indian question. This will be the second attempt of the Government to introduce this Bill and pass it into law. The definitions given of the terms "Coloured person" and "uncivilised races" are very unsatisfactory, and are calculated to incorporate into the Bill the mischief that has been already created by the definition of "Coloured person". According to the Bill, the term includes, among others, "any Hottentot, Coolie, Bushman or Lascar". Now the terms "coolie" and "lascar" themselves require defining, and it is exceedingly dangerous to leave their interpretation to the administrators of the measure, from the Attorney-General down to Kaffir policemen. How, for instance, is a Kaffir policeman to know who is a "coolie" and who a "lascar"? Why, again, should the term "coolie" be at all retained in the Bill, when it is well known how offensive it has become?

The definition of the term "uncivilised races" is an insult to the Indians concerned, and more so to their descendants. An infallible test of civilisation is that a man claiming to be civilised should be an intelligent toiler, that he should understand the dignity of labour, and that his work should be such as to advance the interests of the community to which he belongs. Apply this test to the lowest indentured Indian, and he will satisfy it. Why, then, should he be called a member of an Indian labourer uncivilised because he undertakes to serve the Colony under indenture, why should the ban be placed upon his descendants? The Higher Grade Indian School, about whose pupils the Governor and the late Administrator have spoken in flattering and eloquent terms, contains many children of Indians who have been under

indenture. The children would do credit to any community. They are intelligent and receive a liberal education. Is it right that they should be labelled members of "uncivilised races"? The distinction between such Indians and others would be based purely on an accident, for we assure the framers of the Bill that there are many indentured Indians who are quite as good as some Indians who have paid their own passage and entered the Colony as free men. Indeed, the indentured Indian deserves if anything, better treatment than the free Indian, because the former has been invited and induced to come to the Colony and has contributed not a little to its prosperity.

Coming to clause 22 of the Bill, contrary to the declarations made by the late Mr. Escombe and the late Sir John Robinson, -who, at the time of introducing the political franchise Bill, commended it to the Legislative Assembly on the ground that it left the municipal franchise alone-we find the provisions of the Parliamentary Franchise Act being applied to the municipal franchise, and if the Bill, as it stands, become law; no person who is disqualified for the parliamentary franchise by Act No. 8. of 1896, shall be eligible as a municipal voter. That is to say, persons belonging to the races which have not hitherto enjoyed representative institutions would be disqualified from being voters at municipal elections, although they may have enjoyed representative municipal institutions in their own country. It is well known that India possesses elective Municipalities in all the chief cities, that there are hundreds of such Municipalities and that there are thousands of Indian voters who elect members to them. Why should they be disqualified? The framers of the Bill have taken no note whatever of the great self-control that the Indian community has exercised in connection with municipal elections. They have refrained from having their names placed on the burgess roll, and the clause in question is the one offered to the community as a reward. We consider the clause to be a deliberate insult, and we hope that the members of the Assembly will not lend their support to the putting of such an affront upon the Indian community.

In clause 182, the Municipalities are to be given the power to frame bye-laws regulating the use of pavements, foot-paths and rickshaws by Coloured persons. It is here that the interpretation of the terms "coolie" and "lascar" is necessary, and it is not difficult to imagine what an engine of oppression the bye-laws are likely to be, if the present definition is retained. This clause, evidently, is a result of the agitation that is still going on in the Transvaal with regard to the use of foot-paths by Coloured people, and of the vacillating policy of the Government of that Crown Colony.

Clause 200 makes provision for registration of persons belonging to uncivilised races, resident and employed within the borough. One can understand the necessity for registration of Kaffirs who will not work; by why should registration be required for indentured Indians who have become free, and for their descendants about whom the general complaint is that they work too much? Is the son of an indentured Indian, seeking employment as a clerk, to be registered?

There are other objectionable clauses in the Bill, but we refrain, for the present, from adverting to them in this brief notice of the Bill. It is merely one of the many proofs of an attempt that is being made all over South Africa to crush the Indian, because the whole of the agitation that is at present going on, though nominally directed against the Coloured man, is in reality directed against the British Indian. The policy that is being followed is the policy that was ascribed to the Boers by Lord Milner with reference to the Uitlanders, in his famous Kimberley speech before the war. His Lordship described it as a pin-prick policy; yet it will not be doubted that the Uitlanders, in spite of the political disabilities to which they were subject, were infinitely better off and better able to put up with them than the Indians. If the treatment of the Uitlanders be described as a policy of pin-prick, what shall we say of the policy that is being followed in connection with British Indians in South Africa? As a member of the Legislative Assembly of Natal once said, the Colonial ideal should be to make the position of the British Indians in South Africa as uncomfortable as possible, so that their patience would be exhausted and they would leave the country.

What, now, is the duty of the British Indians under this trying ordeal? The answer is simple. Patience is the badge of the Indians, and they must not on any account forget that fact. It is a precious heritage, and if they would only add to it a large fund of industry, well-sustained and combined opposition to a usurpation of their rights as subjects of the King-Emperor, they might still gain the victory, even though the odds may be against them. They must have the faith of the undaunted prophet who, with the courage born of a living confidence in his God, was wont to defy the hordes of the enemy, and who, when reminded by his disciples that they were only three against the enormous numbers of the latter, retorted that they were not three but four, because the invisible presence of the Almighty was with them.

Indian Opinion, 18-3-1905

166. *THE CAPE GENERAL DEALERS' BILL*

We are glad to see that the British Indians at the Cape have not allowed the grass to grow under their feet with reference to the Dealers' Bill, which is to be introduced during the present session of the Cape Parliament. An Indian deputation, headed by Sir William Thorne and the Hon. Edmund Powell, has already waited on the Hon. The Attorney-General. We must, however, confess to a feeling of disappointment about the lame reply given by Mr. Sampson.¹ It is all very well for him to say that "a Resident Magistrate was not bound to take into regard the question of keeping books in a European language. The Bill said he might or might not." We all know what these discretionary powers mean. They have been abused before and there is no guarantee that they will not be abused in future. We are quite willing to accept the assurance that the Bill is "not a hit at the Indian", but so far as the latter is concerned, it would amount to it, if it is capable of being so used. We make bold to say that this is undoubtedly a Bill that will lend itself to a great deal of persecution. Again, the Attorney-General totally missed the point when he contended it was a question of keeping books in a European language. The Bill goes much further, and authorises a Licensing Officer to refuse a licence on the ground of the applicant's not knowing a European language. We should have no objection to the books being required to be kept in the English language, which could be done by competent book-keepers, but it is a totally different proposition to require the applicant to know some European language. If the clause is meant to prevent fraud, we cannot understand why the books should be kept in any other European languages than English. Such an alteration, if confined to book-keeping and not extended to the licence-holders, would take away from the clause the sting of insult to the great Indian languages. The learned Attorney-General then proceeds to read a lecture to the Indians, and says:

He was not talking of things that he did not understand. He was a fair man and knew the position. Take Indian trading on Sundays, for instance. Did they mean to tell him that the Indian traders did not carry on trading on Sundays?

With great deference, we submit that they do not, and that if, in isolated places, they do, what is his Department doing? Is there no

¹ The Attorney-General.

Sunday trading law at the Cape? Could not illicit Sunday trading be stopped with a heavy hand? And, if we may use the *tu quoque* argument, is illicit trading confined to Indians? Moreover, it is painfully surprising to see that the leader of the legal profession at the Cape so far disregards the traditions of law as to bring in support of his no bearing on it, for what possible connection can there be between illicit Sunday trading and knowledge of a European language on the part of an Indian trader? How would he prevent Sunday trading by requiring of an applicant for a licence a knowledge of a European language? The honourable gentleman proceeds:

There was another difficulty in regard to Indians. They often came out with their families, and the whole of them carried on a business. If the trader became tired, then his wife looked after it for a while, and when she got tired, the children could look after the shop. They would find European people had to live in a different way. They had to send their children to school for a very large portion of the day, and they could not compete fairly with people not under the same obligations.

We have no hesitation in saying that, in making the statement, the honourable gentleman was thinking of people other than Indians; for we speak with knowledge when we say that there are very few Indians whose wives assist at the sales. That the sons of the poorer store-keepers may do so, we are not prepared to deny, but that would be due more to jealousy regarding education of Indian children than to anything else. It is hardly fair to place every obstacle in the way of Indian education and then to say that the parents would not educate their children. It is this inequality, if such it be, to be avoided by requiring knowledge of a European language by an Indian store-keeper?

It would have been far better, and more dignified, if Mr. Sampson had effected a compromise and shewn some respect for Indian sentiment. The principle of the Dealers' Licenses Act is such as would commend it to all right-thinking men under the present circumstances of South Africa. The whole argument of the Attorney-General, so far as it is applicable, goes to show that the books of all store-keepers should be kept in English. If so, it should be so stated in the clause. It would then disarm criticism, and would considerably help the Law Department in enforcing the provisions of the Bill, as they would then be accepted by a majority of those whom it is likely to affect.

In passing, we would draw the attention of our readers to a curious sidelight that has been perhaps unconsciously thrown by Mr. Sampson on the attitude of the Government. He said:

Although Yiddish was accepted as a European language for immigration

purposes, it did not apply in that way to books which were to be kept in a European language.

Apparently, the Government when it suits them can Europeanise a language for enforcing one law, and de-Europeanise it for enforcing another.

Since the above was written, the full report of the interview with the Attorney-General has come to hand. From this we learn that the objectionable clause relating to a knowledge of some European language is to be withdrawn.

Indian Opinion, 18-3-1905

167. LAWYERS AT THE CAPE

The Incorporated Law Society at the Cape wishes to promote a Bill whereby they intend to prevent any Coloured men being admitted to the Cape Bar or the Side Bar. We are not aware of such legislation having been undertaken in any of the British Dominions. The Cape has hitherto enjoyed the distinction of being the most liberal among the South African Colonies, and the freest from colour prejudice. That in a Colony having such traditions there should be a body of men, supposed to be the most intellectual portion of the community, who wish to promote class legislation of the worst type is very remarkable, for there appears to be absolutely no justification for a step of that description. We wish to bring the proposed Bill to the notice of the Inns of Court in London as also to the Incorporated Law Society. We wonder what they will have to say in connection with this most extraordinary proposal. It has been hitherto assumed that, to a barrister passing out of one of the Inns of Court, the whole of the British Dominions are open for practice. Is the Cape Colony, flying the Union Jack, to set aside the rules framed by the Inns, and shut out barristers from those Inns should they happen to wear a coloured skin?

Indian Opinion, 18-3-1905

168. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26 COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,
March 20, 1905

DADABHAI NAOROJI, ESQ.
22, KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON
ENGLAND

DEAR SIR,

A reactionary policy is being followed throughout South Africa regarding the British Indians. I commend to your attention the current numbers of *Indian Opinion* wherein you will find that at the Cape they are trying to introduce a general Dealers' Licenses Bill which is calculated to do a great deal of harm to the British Indians settled at the Cape. In Natal, as you will see, a Fire-arms Bill has been published in the *Gazette* which needlessly insults British Indians. There is, too, a reproduction of the Transvaal anti-Asiatic legislation in the district of Vryheid which has been lately annexed to Natal and the Municipal Corporation Bill contains clauses which are most objectionable. In the Orange River Colony disabilities upon disabilities are being imposed upon Indians through the instrumentality of bye-laws, and I venture to draw your attention to the fact that, while a great deal has been done there regarding the Transvaal legislation as also the Natal legislation, I have not yet seen a question out in the House of Commons regarding the Orange River Colony. I, therefore hope that this matter will also be taken up. The current number of *Indian Opinion* deals with the Natal Municipal Bill among other things and the next number will deal with the other matters referred to in this letter.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2267.

¹ A copy of the letter was forwarded by Dadabhai Naoroji to the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The letter was also published in *India*. 14-4-1905.

169. THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY AND ASIATICS

We have more than once drawn attention to the violently anti-Asiatic policy of the Orange River Colony. In such policy, the late Boer Government did not nearly approach the present Government, which, in the name of the King-Emperor, is setting the seal of its approval on the prevalent colour prejudice. We have waited in vain for the fulfilment of Mr. Chamberlain's promise that the anti-Asiatic laws of the Orange River Colony would be remodelled in accordance with British ideas. They are certainly being remodelled, but we have yet to learn that the way in which they are being altered is consistent with the traditions that have been always associated with the word "British". The latest instance is to be found in the *Government Gazette* of the Orange River Colony for the 10th inst. In the regulations for the village of Odendaalsrust, which have received the sanction of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and the Executive Council, are contained some clauses regarding Natives with reference to their living in Locations, the sale and manufacture of Kaffir beer by them, the holding of dance parties in the Locations, the keeping of guests therein, the owning of dogs, etc., by them. Now in the regulations, the term "Native" shall be interpreted and taken to apply to and include a man or men, as well as a woman or women, above the age, or estimated age, of 16 years, of any native tribe in South Africa, *and also all Coloured persons and all who, in accordance with law or custom, are called Coloured persons or are treated as such, of what[ever] race or nationality they may be.* In the clearest possible language, therefore, the "Municipality" of the village has been allowed to include in the term "Native" the British Indians and other Coloured people. If such a definition and such regulations were passed in the Legislative Council of the Orange River Colony, they would be subject to veto by the Home Government; but because a village board passes them, and chooses to give an unwarranted definition to the term "Native", the Home Government is not to be consulted, and the accommodating local Government has no hesitation in countenancing wholesale restrictions of the character above mentioned. Apparently, it does not matter to that Government whether such regulations offend the feelings of the Indian subjects of the King-Emperor or not. We draw the attention of public men in England, who cherish the proverbial sense of justice and fair play, to the scandal revealed by the regulations in question which we reprint in *extenso* in another column.

Indian Opinion, 25-3-1905

170. THE ANTI-INDIAN ACTIVITY OF NATAL

In the *Government Gazette* of Natal for the 28th February, a Bill is published regulating the use of fire-arms. Part 4 of the Bill deals with the use of fire-arms by Natives Asiatics. We give all the sections in another column. Evidently the framers of the Bill have associated the Asiatics almost instinctively with the Natives, and it is that attitude of mind against which we have always firmly and respectfully protested. Since distinctions are made between one class and another, justice will never be done to the Asiatic unless he is treated as apart from the Natives. The Native question is a big question in South Africa. The Native population is very large. The Native civilisation is totally different from the Asiatic or the European. The Native, being the son of the soil, has a right to fair treatment, but being what he is, perhaps some legislation, which may be of a restrictive character, is necessary. It can, therefore, never apply to Asiatics. In this instance of the fire-arms, the Asiatic has been most improperly bracketed with the Native. The British Indian does not need any such restrictions as are imposed by the Bill on the Native regarding the carrying of fire-arms. The predominant race can remain so by preventing the Native from arming himself. Is there the slightest vestige of justification for so preventing the British Indian? It is a matter of common knowledge that the British Indian who has settled in the Colony is not a military man. He is most docile. Why should he, then, be insulted by being placed in the same category with the Native? Would not a stranger, visiting Natal, and coming across legislation of this kind, come to the conclusion that the British Indians must be a very troublesome community? There are occasions when British Indians, living in out-of-the-way places, require to have a gun or a revolver. They are then, if the Bill becomes law, to go not to the ordinary authorities, but to the Secretary of Native Affairs, who has not connection with the British Indians, and there beg for permission to own a revolver or a gun, as if the Magistrates were incapable of using their discretion with reference to the possession of fire-arms by British Indians. We do not know that, in feeding anti-Indian prejudice in this wanton manner, the Government are not unnecessarily exasperating the British Indians. We hope that an amendment will be made in the Bill when it comes up before the Natal Parliament.

Indian Opinion, 25-3-1905

171. THE VALUE OF STRAY MOMENTS

Some time elapses in merely thinking about a piece of work before it is actually begun. Such time is known as stray moments. We carelessly allow these bits of time to pass. If we add up these stray moments which are thought to be of little account, they make no mean part of our life; and not to make a proper use of them is to waste life itself.

Each one of us talks, more or less, about his education and improvement. We make plans of how best to use our spare time; but, whenever we get a few stray minutes of leisure, we men and women—particularly women—allow them thoughtlessly to pass away. We go on cherishing dreams of the many things we would do, if and when we have the time. The time we get is just a quarter or half hour or just a few minutes. Then, we say to ourselves, “Well, it does not matter, there isn’t enough time now”. Thus we go on dreaming and the golden opportunities slip away.

What a fool we shall call the person who, needing £10, does not take care of the few shillings he regularly gets! Nevertheless, we behave just like him. We regret that we do not get time; and yet, we idle away the stray minutes, which put together would make a whole day, just as the stray shillings make a Bank-note.

By making regular, daily use of such minutes, a young European lady succeeded in learning Italian. Another was able to collect an astonishingly large sum of money in a year by knitting for charity during such moments of leisure.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 25-3-1905

172. SLEEP (BEST) RESTORER OF ENERGY

When a man feels exhausted and is unable to carry on his work, the best remedy is to lie down and sleep and, if possible, to remain in bed for about a week. This is the best means to regain lost energy, particularly mental energy, for during sleep the brain enjoys complete rest, and the brain cells that are consumed during active work are then restored through the supply of blood. Just as every revolution of the wheel of an imposing streamer is the result of fuel burning in the furnace of the boiler, so also every thought arising in the brain is

caused by the utilisation of its cells during the process of thinking. The brain cells thus spent up can only be restored from the life-giving substance in the blood, which is formed out of the food we eat. The brain is so constituted that it can recover its used up cells only in the quietude of rest or sleep. Intoxicating drinks or drugs cannot give any nourishment to the brain. They only stimulate it and force it to consume more of its cells; so much so that the brain gets ultimately exhausted, and has no strength left even to take in the food needed by it, even as a man about to die of hunger and thirst cannot swallow any food or drink.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 25-3-1905

173. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
March 25, 1905

THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENNINGTON RD.
LONDON S.E.

DEAR MR. DADABHAI,

I have not been able before now to reply to your letter of the 20th January regarding the South African Bulletin. Just at present it is very difficult to give any pecuniary help to the Paper as the funds have been almost exhausted in carrying on the fight locally. However, if you think that the Paper is deserving of support, I think it may be possible to pay £10 towards it.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2268.

174. SPEECH AT THEOSOPHICAL LODGE⁵

JOHANNESBURG,

[*March 25, 1905*]⁶

Gandhiji said he had come to the conclusion that Theosophy was Hinduism in theory, and that Hinduism was Theosophy in practice.

There were many admirable works in Theosophical literature which one might read with the greatest profit, but it appeared to him that too much stress had been laid upon mental and intellectual studies, upon argument, upon the development of occult powers, and that the central idea of Theosophy, the brotherhood of mankind and the moral growth of man, had been lost sight of in these. He did not wish to suggest that such studies had no place in a man's life, but he thought that they should follow, not precede, the absolutely certain course which was necessary for every life. There were certain maxims of life, which they had not only to get an intellectual grasp of, but which they had to weave into their very being, before they could at all follow the great scriptures of the world.

When a man desired to qualify in any science, he had first of all to pass an entrance examination, but they seemed to think that when they took up a religious book, no previous preparation in any other direction was necessary, but that they could read these scriptures untaught and interpret them for themselves; and that attitude of mind was considered to be real independence of spirit. In his opinion it was nothing but sheer licence taken with things of which they had not the slightest knowledge. They were told in all the Hindu scriptures that, before they could even handle these books, they must cultivate absolutely pure and truthful lives, they must learn to control their passions, which took them away from the central point.

The mind had been likened to an intoxicated monkey, and so it was. If they were to analyse their minds, they would find that they had very little reason to think ill of others, and would begin to think ill of themselves, for they would find that they harboured within themselves robbers and murderers—terms used by them so glibly in connection with others. He wished that they would recognize a limitation in regard to their studies, and that such limitation, instead of hampering

their activity, would further their strength and enable them to soar higher.

He did not think it at all a part of their lives to extend their scope, but thought it their duty to intensify it both with reference to their studies and to their activities; for, if a man concentrated his attention on a particular thing or idea in life, he was likely to make much better use of himself and of his opportunities than if he divided his attention between this, that, and the next thing.

Hindu sages told them that to live life, no matter how hampered it might be, no matter with what limitations, was infinitely superior to having a mental grasp of things divine. They had taught them that, until, one by one and step by step, they had woven these things into their lives, they would not be able to have a grasp of the whole of the divine teaching; and so he urged them that, if they wanted to live the real life, it was not to be lived in that hall, it was not to be lived in Theosophical libraries, but it was to be lived in the world around them, in the real practice of the little teaching that they might have been able to grasp.

From a copy: C. W. 11295. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi; also *Mahatma*, Vol. I, pp. 86-7

175. A DOUBLE-BARRELLED CIRCULAR

There is an Act on the Statute-book of the Colony of Natal, No.28 of 1897 which is intended as a protection to Indian immigrants who do not come within the scope of the laws affecting indentured Indians. When it was passed, the Indian community suggested that it was a law which could be used as an engine of oppression. Its purpose was to give those who would apply for it a certificate to the effect that the holder was not an indentured Indian, so that he might not be arrested on suspicion that he was under indenture and had left his employer. It might well be that poor hawkers and such other Indians would really, by taking out a certificate of this description, be protected from molestation. But its effect has undoubtedly been to cause a great deal of trouble and heart-burning; for although the Act is simply permissive, it has been treated as if it were obligatory, and many an Indian has been detained, and called upon to produce a pass under that Act, or otherwise to show that he is not under indenture.

A further complication has been added to this Act by a circular relating thereto, issued from the Colonial Secretary's Office to the

Magistrates in Natal. Mr. C. Bird, Principal Under-Secretary, thus addresses the Magistrates:

I have to request that, when forwarding an application to the Protector of Indian Immigrants for a pass, under Act No. 28 of 1897, you will send with the application, the Certificate of Domicile of the Applicant, or a statement to the effect that this certificate has been produced.

The intention is quite evident. It is to prevent Indians, who may have entered the Colony in breach of the Immigration Restrictions Act, from getting a pass from the Protector under the Act above referred to, and thus defying the Immigration Act. But from reports that we have received, the circular has caused a great deal of mischief. It punishes a whole community in order that a few guilty ones may be found out. It is also calculated to impose an unnecessary fine of two shillings and six pence upon poor people. Those who need a pass, under Act 28 of 1897, have first of all to arm themselves with a certificate of domicile, for which a fee of 2/6 has to be paid, and then, when such a certificate has been obtained, a shilling has to be paid for a pass from the Protector.

Now, as a matter of fact, such cumbersome formalities are totally unnecessary. A pass, obtained under Act 28 of 1897, in no way carried with it immunity from prosecution under the Immigration Restrictions Act; and if a certificate of domicile be necessary, the best thing to do is undoubtedly to repeal Act 28 of 1897, so that those Indians who are in the Colony, and are entitled to remain in it under the Immigration Restrictions Act, may take out a certificate of domicile, should they be afraid of any molestation. To expect them to go through the double procedure laid down by Mr. Bird is hardly fair or just, and we question very much whether it is a proper thing, by means of circulars such as the one to which we have drawn attention, to interfere with the administration of law. There is nothing in Act 28 of 1897 requiring production of a certificate of domicile. We have no doubt that an Indian who insisted could, as a matter of law, compel the granting of the pass by the Protector on application. To require, then, the production of a certificate of domicile is to make an unwarranted addition to the Act. We, therefore, trust that either the circular in question will be withdrawn, or that the Government will take an early opportunity of repealing Act 28 of 1897.

Indian Opinion, 1-4-1905

176. A KINDLY WORD FOR INDIANS

In the current number of *The Outlook*, the organ of the Johannesburg Congregational Church, appears an article entitled "In Justice to the Indians", an abstract of which appears in another column. Our contemporary feels it time to protest against some prevailing views affecting the Coloured sections of the community. It confesses to a feeling of disgust at the sordid character of the opposition to British Indians, and has read reports of anti-Asiatic proceedings at various places "with feelings of humiliation for their unfairness of attitude and inaccuracy of statement". It recognises that some people really believe the presence of Asiatics in South Africa to be detrimental to the public interest, and it strikes the right note when it pleads for strict honesty when the reason for objection is stated. It is not right to bring unfounded charges against Indians when the objection is really based on colour prejudice, or to find them to be a "danger to the public health", when they are merely inconvenient competitors. The Indian fills his own place in South Africa. The prosperity of Natal is very largely dependent upon indentured labour, and, as *The Outlook* says, in trades that he has made peculiarly his own, the Indian is indispensable. His sobriety and respect for the law make him an excellent citizen. We make bold to say that, could the people in this subcontinent view the Asiatic question from outside, the attitude of the Indian community under the most trying circumstances would provoke only admiration. Their confidence in the British sense of Justice remains unshaken, even in the face of harassing regulations such as those to which we have recently drawn attention. Ultimately, Justice will be done them. Indians have an ever increasing circle of friends among the cultured Europeans of South Africa: some day their voice will be heard. We thank our contemporary for this most timely contribution; for, its evident sincerity, moderation and sanity will commend it wherever *The Outlook* is read.

Indian opinion, 1-4-1905

177. A TRIVIAL QUERY

The organ of the Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, in doing us the honour of referring to a recent article that appeared in these columns with reference to the alleged insanitary conditions in which Indians are said to live in the Market Square area,¹ has, at the same

¹ Vide "A Political Medical Report", 11-3-1905.

time, queried the validity of Dr. Dixon's report which we published, showing that no such charge of insanitation could justly be brought against the Indian community in Potchefstroom. We do not quite know why facts are jeered at so frequently by our contemporary, or why reputable statements are often misinterpreted or ignored. It would appear that, if the King can do no wrong, the Indian can do no right. No amount of proof that one can bring will convince those who are obsessed by a contrary opinion, and, to us, it almost seems to be flogging a dead horse to reply to such querulous comments as those to which we draw attention. Our only reason for so doing is that unprejudiced readers may have food for reflection, and that they may the more fairly judge of the rights and wrongs of the cause we advocate. Dr. Dixon, at the beginning of October last, when the anti-Indian feeling began to break its legitimate bounds, made his examination at the request of the Indian community, he being authorised to do so in his own time, at his own convenience, and in any way that he thought fit. Therefore, there could be no possible control over his actions on the part of the Indians concerned, nor did the latter receive any warning as to his visits. Moreover, the District Surgeon made such enquiries, as is evidenced by the report under review, as to disprove the allegation of overcrowding at night. But the whole point of our argument seems to have been missed by the *Budget*. We asserted that, notwithstanding the obvious political animus underlying Dr. Friel's report, even he was unable to prove that the Indians had contravened the municipal regulations. He said they were living in a manner which did not satisfy his own standard. What that standard is no one knows but the Doctor himself. And so far, the *Budget* has not replied to us. Meanwhile, we understand that the Government has hinted pretty plainly that what the Municipality would like to do is *ultra vires*.

Indian Opinion, 1-4-1905

178. ORIENTAL IDEAL OF TRUTH

Lord Curzon has proclaimed in his Convocation address that "the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception", and that "undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in much repute". We commend the following texts from Oriental Scriptures and Epics and other religious and ethical works on Truth and Falsehood to His Excellency's attention, and if Lord Curzon has any regard for Truth and for the people of this country, as we have no

doubt he has, he is in honour bound as Viceroy of India, as Chancellor of Calcutta University and as an English gentleman, to withdraw his baseless and offensive imputations:

Cross the passes so difficult to cross. Conquer wrath with peace; untruth with Truth. *The sama Veda, Aranya-Gana, Arka-Parva.*

Truth alone prevails and not untruth. Truth is the pathway which learned men tread. It is by this path that the sages, satiated in their desires, have obtained salvation in Him who is the infinite ocean of Truth. *Mundaka Upanishad, III-1-6.*

The very first injunction given to a disciple after he has taken the sacred thread and entered upon his studies is:

Speak the Truth, observe duty, do not swerve from Truth. *Taittiriya Upanishad, I-II-I*

According to Hinduism, Truth is the very essence of Brahma:

Brahma is Truth eternal, intelligence immeasurable. *Taittiriya, II-I-I.*

Speech rests on Truth; everything rests on Truth. Therefore they call Truth the highest: *Mahanarayan Upanishad XXVII.I*

There is no duty higher than Truth and no sin more heinous than untruth. Indeed, Truth is the very foundation of Righteousness. *Mahabharata*

Prince Rama is exhorted by a courtier priest to disown his father's promise that he should be banished for fourteen years. But that Prince of immortal fame, in the course of his reply, points out:

Truth and mercy are immemorial characteristics of a king's conduct. Hence royal rule is in its essence truth. On truth the world is based. Both sages and gods have esteemed truth. The man who speaks truth in this world attains the highest imperishable state. Men shrink with fear and horror from a liar as from a serpent. In this world the chief element in virtue is truth. It is called the basis of everything. Truth is lord in the world, virtue always rests on truth. All things are founded on truth; nothing is higher than it. Why should I not be true to my promise, and faithfully observe the truthful injunction given by my father? Neither through covetousness or delusion nor ignorance will I, overpowered by darkness, break through the barrier of truth, but remain true to my promise by my father. How shall I, having promised to him that I would reside in the forest, transgress his injunction and do what Bharata recommends. *Professor Max Muller's translation.*

Laws of nature are expressions of Truth, and Virtues are but forms of Truth, and all vices are forms of untruth. Bhishma described from as follows:

Truthfulness, equability, self-control, absence of self-display, forgive-ness, modesty, endurance, absence of envy, charity, a noble well-wishing

towards others, self-possession, compassion, and harmlessness—surely these are the thirteen forms of Truth. *Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, CLXII, 8,9.*

Truth is That which Is, and Untruth is That which Is Not. As Bhishma says:

Truth is eternal Brahman. . . . Everything rests on Truth. *Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, CLXII, 5.*

Aryan heroes have often declared:

My lips have never uttered an untruth.

In the *Ashvamedha Parva*, Shri Krishan, has stated:

Truth and Dharma ever dwell in me.

Bhishma, speaking of Truth and declaring it to be sacrifice of a high order, says:

Once on a time a thousand horse-sacrifices and Truth were weighed against each other in the balance. Truth weighed heavier than a thousand horse-sacrifices. *Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, CLXII, 26.*

There is nothing greater than Truth, and Truth should be esteemed the most sacred of all things. *Ramayana.*

Truth ever more has been the love
Of holy saints and God above,
And he whose lips are truthful here
Wins after death the highest sphere.
As from a serpent's deadly tooth,
We shrink from him who scorns the Truth.

Ramayana.

The virtues that bring about unity and harmony, secure peace and calm, and enable a man to fulfil his destiny, were thus stated by Shri Krishna:

Fearlessness, *Sattvic* purity, steadfast pursuit of wisdom, charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, study, austerity, uprightness;

Harmlessness, truthfulness, absence of anger, designation, peace of mind, avoidance of calumny, pity for all beings, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of restlessness;

Energy, forgiveness, endurance, purity, freedom from hatred and from pride—these are his who is born to the divine qualities, O Bharata. *Bhagvat Gita, XVI, 1-3.*

Right speech is thus described in the *Bhagvat Gita. XVII, 15:*

Speech causing no annoyance, truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and the repetition of the Vedas—this is called austerity of speech.

According to Hinduism, Ishvara himself is Truth. The Devas

adoring the Divine Lord, when he appeared as Shri Krishna, broke forth:

O True of promise, True of purpose, triply True, the Fount of Truth, and dwelling in the True, the Truth of Truth, the eye of Right and Truth, Spirit of Truth, refuge we seek in Thee. *Bhagvatpurana*, XII, 26.

The Institutes of Manu are dated, according to Sir William Jones, at least 1280 B.C. if not 1580 B.C. The tenfold law, as laid down by Manu, gives some of the qualities needed for the discipline of the mind and reaching the highest Truth, the one Reality:

Endurance, patience, self-control, integrity, purity, restraint of the senses, wisdom, learning, truth, absence of anger, are the ten signs of virtue. *Manusmriti*, vi, 92.

Elsewhere they are briefly described as follows:

Harmlessness, truth, integrity, purity, control of the senses, said Manu, is the summarised law of the four castes. (*Manusmriti*, x, 63).

Manu thus denounces those who are “dishonest in speech”:

All things are governed by speech: speech is the root, from speech they originate; that man verily who is dishonest in speech, he is dishonest in all. *Manusmriti*, iv, 256.

Aryan sacred books inculcate constant practice of righteousness and performance of duty:

The man who is unrighteous, or he who gains wealth by falsehood, or he who ever delights in injuring, never obtains happiness in this world. Although suffering from unrighteousness, let him not turn his mind to unrighteousness; he will behold the speedy overthrow of the unrighteous, of the sinners. Unrighteousness, practised in this world, does not bear fruit at once like a cow; slowly reacting it cuts off the very roots of the doer. *Manusmriti*, iv, 170-172.

Let him say what is true, but let him say what is pleasing. Let him speak no disagreeable truth, but let him not speak disagreeable falsehood; this is a primeval rule. iv, 138.

Let a man continually take pleasure in Truth, in justice, in laudable practices and in purity, iv, 175.

Let him never eat the food of a back-biter or of a false witness, iv, 214.

For he who describes himself to worthy men in a manner contrary to truth, is the most sinful wretch in this world; he is the worst of thieves, a stealer of minds, iv, 255.

They whose eating is solely for the sustaining of life; and whose speech is only to declare truth, surmount difficulties. *Hitopadesh*.

There are four sins of speech:

1. Lying, 2. Slander, 3. Abuse, 4. Unprofitable conversation. *The Ethics of Buddhism*.

Truth and falsehood stand to one another in the relation of a stone to an earthen vessel. If a stone be thrown at an earthen vessel, the latter will break. In either case it is the earthen vessel that suffereth. *Sikh Teaching*.

No act of devotion can equal Truth; no crime is so heinous as falsehood; in the heart where Truth abides, there is My abode. *Kabir*.

Indian Opinion, 1-4-1905

179. PRAISEWORTHY WORK BY CAPE INDIANS

MEETING AND DEPUTATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEW BILL

We congratulate our Indian brethren of the Cape on waking up betimes and actively discharging their duty in regard to the new Bill. As soon as the General Dealers' Licences Bill was published in draft form in the Cape *Government Gazette*, the leaders sensed its real purport. They held a big meeting in Cape Town¹, expressed their feelings about the Bill and passed some resolutions, details of which have already been published before². Alive to the gravity of the situation, they have not remained content with just this. They waited in deputation upon the Honourable the Attorney-General of the Cape Colony, presented these resolutions and discussed them with him. In choosing the members of the deputation, they showed tact, and included two respectable local Members of Parliament³ to lead them.

The Attorney-General, Mr. Sampson, explained to them a number of points about the draft Bill. Some of these explanations were all right, but his answers, on the whole, cannot be said to have been satisfactory. It is apparent that the Indian leaders will have to be very much on their guard when the Bill comes up before Parliament. The question of language, in particular, came in for much discussion at this interview. An article in the Bill requires, of every applicant for a licence, a knowledge of at least one European language. On this point Mr. Sampson did some plain-speaking, but a few other things he said showed that he was being shrewdly evasive. The satisfying part of the interview was that he agreed to clarify, in the provision relating to language, that only the account books need be kept in a European

¹ A meeting of a large number of prominent Indian residents of Cape Town was held under the auspices of the British Indian League at the Masonic Hall, Cape Town.

² *Vide Indian Opinion*, 18-3-1905, and *Indian Opinion*, 25-3-1905.

³ Sir William Thorne, M.L.A. and the Hon. Edmund Powell, M.L.C.

language and that it was unnecessary [for the authorities] to ensure whether or not the applicant knew the language. The Indians have no objection to the books being required to be kept in a European language; even so, the Attorney-General passed many strictures [on Indian traders] with reference to this point. Although there was little force in his arguments, Indians have to be cautious, particularly about what he said on the subject of discretion being vested in the Magistrate. For any matter to be left to discretion nowadays means uncertainly and endless delay. We have seen that, all along, everywhere in South Africa, discretion has had only one result, viz., it invariably goes against Indians. Mr. Sampson tried to show that the Indians did not have much to fear but in doing so he somewhat transgressed the limits of his own caution. Thus it was he let the cat out of the bag when, in his final reply to Mr. Powell, he said he had spoken vaguely in order to please. His reply sounds like a joke. "It is not at all necessary that the application to the Magistrate should be in English, though it should be intelligible to him." What does this mean?

From Mr. Sampson's comments on the reasons for the proposed law, it appears that he, too, is suspicious and not well disposed towards Indians. He does not appear to have taken the interview seriously; and the illustrations he offered are in our opinion pointless. At one point, he said that the Bill was not designed for Indians in particular; and, at another, that such a law had to be enacted, as the Chambers of Commerce and other mercantile bodies had been bringing pressure [on the authorities], complaining that account books of Indians were unsystematic, that he had, as a matter of experience, found it the law courts to obtain the necessary information from the books kept by Indians. The law he said, was being enacted to protect European merchants, etc. Obviously, this explanation appears to have been given without full consideration. He then began to show that he was fair-minded and exhibit his knowledge of Indians. While doing so, he referred to trading on Sundays and asked if there were not instances of whole Indian families doing business on Sundays. In this connection he mentioned a letter he had received, which said that a certain entire Indian family, i.e., including the merchant's wife and children, was doing business illegally on Sundays. With such people the whites could not compete. In this respect the Indians and the Greeks were equally blameworthy, and all of them had to suffer for the sake of the few, etc. This drew from Mr. Gool¹ the rejoinder that his correspondent must have been prompted

¹ Mr. G. M. H. Gool, a prominent Indian Merchant of Cape Town and one of the members of the deputation.

by jealousy, for his facts were not true. If however, any Indian was guilty of this offence, why were they not prosecuted and punished according to law?

This, in brief, was what transpired at the interview. Now, the question that occurs to us is: will a knowledge of English or some other European language prevent these offences? We are much surprised and grieved that the Attorney-General who is an able advocate did not hesitate to argue as if it would. What relation can there be between a man's language and his character? Will the complaints cease if Indian merchants keep their account books in European languages?

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-4-1905

180. THE PLAGUE HAVOC

Plague has wrought havoc in India. Its virulence this year has been inordinate. The Government is helpless and the people despondent. In the Punjab, the attack has been so fierce that trade has suffered heavily. And even those with a high standard of living who were less susceptible to its attack are no longer so. Nevertheless, the dread epidemic is found spreading only among the indigenous population. Many people think that this plague is the visitation of God's wrath on us for our accumulated sins. A correspondent of *The Times of India* has accordingly made a suggestion to the Government that they should fix a day when all India might offer prayers to God to eradicate the epidemic.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-4-1905

181. MEMORIAL TO NATAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY¹

TO

THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE COLONY OF NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

April 7, 1905

That your petitioners hereby venture to approach this Honourable House in connexion with certain two Bills that will be brought up for your consideration during this session-namely, the Bill “to amend and consolidate the law relating to the Municipal Corporations,” and the Bill regulating the “use of fire-arms”, in the following respects:

Your petitioners venture to think that the definition of the expression “Coloured person” in the first Bill above mentioned is very unsatisfactory, in that it means, among others, “any coolie or lascar”, which themselves require a definition; for, it will be very difficult for a police constable to know whom he is to consider a “coolie” or a “lascar”, as the terms do not denote a particular race, but are applied to mean unskilled labourers and seamen respectively.

In the humble opinion of your petitioners, the definition of the term “uncivilised races” is also unsatisfactory, and the term itself is offensive to those whom it is intended to include. Moreover, your Petitioners fail to understand why the children of indentured Indians should be classed among “uncivilised races”. Many of them have, by industry, risen very high in education and culture, and occupy important positions in the Colony, either as employees or independent men.

By sub-clause (c) in clause 22, persons who are disqualified for the parliamentary franchise by Act 8 of 1896 are disqualified from being placed on the Burgess Roll. Act No. 8 of 1896 disfranchises those who belong to countries which have not hitherto possessed representative institutions founded on the parliamentary franchise.

Your Petitioners venture to submit that there is no connexion between the parliamentary franchise and the municipal, and that even though it may be, for the same of argument, true that British Indians do not possess the parliamentary franchise in India, it is capable of conclusive proof that they possess the municipal franchise to a very

¹ A copy of this memorial on behalf of Abdul Cadir and other British Indians was later annexed to the petition to Lord Elgin dated August 15, 1906, and also reproduced in *Indian Opinion*, 18-8-1906.

large extent, some of your Petitioners having been, in India, either burgesses or councillors themselves. Nor would the past history of the British Indians settled in the Colony justify a disability of the above nature. Your Petitioners therefore humbly submit that it would be an unnecessary insult offered to the British Indians should the clause in question receive your approval.

Your Petitioners have failed to see any justification for authority to the Town Councils in the Colony to make by-laws with respect to the use of pavements and foot-paths by “Coloured persons”, and also the use of rickshaws by them, in so far as the term includes Indians. It is thus in this connexion that the definition of the term “Coloured person” comes into play, and is calculated to give rise to a great deal of mischief.

Your Petitioners also humbly protest against clause 200 of the said Bill, in that it authorises the Council to frame by-laws establishing a system of registration of Natives or persons belonging to “uncivilised races”. In your petitioners’ opinion, registration of those Indians who are included in the term “uncivilised races” is totally uncalled for, as Indians have never been found unwilling workers. It will furthermore appear, from the clause under discussion, that registration would be required of even cultured Indians.

With regard to the second Bill, your Petitioners venture to submit that it has very much grieved the British Indians residing in the Colony. Sections 44 to 47 deal with the use of fire-arms by Natives and Asiatics. Your Petitioners think that the Indians with the Natives is hardly justified. The Indian is a very docile Colonist, and has never given any trouble, and your Petitioners venture respectfully to point out that to bracket Indians and Natives together, and to compel the former to deal with the Native Department before they can obtain a permit to own a fire-arm, which may be required for self-protection, would be extremely degrading.

Your Petitioners, therefore, in conclusion, pray that the Bills above mentioned will be so amended as to remove any cause for complaint.

India, 14-9-1906

182. MR. LYTTELTON ON THE INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

From a cablegram in the local papers, we notice that Mr. Lyttelton, in reply to a question, has stated that the position of the British Indians in the Transvaal has been bettered by the judgement¹ in the Test Case of *Motan v. The Government*. With all due respect, we venture to think that the statement is not in accord with facts; and in any case, why should he or the Government take the slightest credit for any relief in the position because it was obtained in spite of the Government? Is it not a fact that the Government opposed the application for a licence made to the Supreme Court? They were represented by three eminent counsel, and they really drove the Indian community to the test case, because it was undertaken after even the old *bona-fide* traders were refused licences to trade, on the ground that they did not hold licences immediately before the outbreak of hostilities. That they traded outside Locations before the war was not held sufficient.

We are, indeed, strongly reminded of the pre-war days. Then, too, there was a test case² exactly similar to the one referred to by Mr. Lyttelton. Then, the British Government assisted the Indians to fight the case. They contended, with the Indians, that under Law 3 of 1885, Indian trade outside Locations was not prohibited, but after the Transvaal passed into British hands, a different tune was played. The same British Government, in the test case of *Motan*, instructed Counsel to oppose the Indian contention. It is strange that, having this knowledge, Mr. Lyttelton should appropriate credit for the decision of the Supreme Court on the test case. But, as we have said, the position of the Indians has not in any way become better than it was during the Boer regime. It has certainly become better that it was before the test case, but after the establishment of British Government in the Transvaal, the decision of the Supreme Court enables the Indians, *on payment of licence money*, to trade where they like. Before the war, under the protection of the British Government, the Indians were able to trade where they liked *without payment of any licence money*. It is

¹ The judgment was that Habib Motan, an Indian trader, could not be refused a licence to trade outside locations.

² *Vide* "Letter to the British Agent", 28-2-1898, "Letter to G.V. Godfrey", 18-3-1898, "A Statement of Account", 25-3-1898 & "Notes on the Test Case", 4-4-1898.

true that the Indians tendered the licence money, but the Boer Government declined to accept it, and were powerless, owing to British opposition, to prosecute the Indians who, with their knowledge and under notice to them, traded outside Locations. Thus, the position of the British Indians, so far as regards trade, was better before the war than it is to-day. In other respects, too, the position is bad enough, and certainly no less gloomy than before the war, and it is unexcusably painful, so far as Indian immigration into the country is concerned. Before the war, any Indian was free to enter the Transvaal. To-day, even a *bona-fide* refugee Indian, who is in a position to show that he has been previously domiciled in the Transvaal, and that he has paid, before the war, the sum of £3 as the price of permission to settle in the Colony, finds it tremendously difficult to obtain a permit to enter the country; and a British Indian, no matter what his qualifications or status may be, if he be not a refugee, cannot possibly enter the country. His application receives scant treatment at the hands of the Government; and this all but total prohibition of Indian immigration has been brought about, not by fair and open means, but by pressing into service a political ordinance passed, in the first instance, to prevent the entry into the Transvaal of people who might be suspected of having treasonable designs. That Ordinance is being now abused to shut the Indian out of the country. The religious susceptibilities of the Indians were hardly ever touched during the old regime, but now, though it is true that one cannot say anything against the Government on this point, the fact stands that there is an agitation to-day going on in Potchefstroom against the erection of a mosque, not, as has been stated in a prominent place in the town, but in a by-lane. We could go on recounting the troubles of the Indians, and could show how, contrary to all expectations that were raised in the minds of the Indians by the conduct of the British Government, and by the speeches of British Ministers, the Indians now find themselves face to face with a life-and-death struggle, and for Mr. Lyttelton to say that the position of the British Indians in the Transvaal has been bettered is, to say the least, extremely misleading. Not until the Law 3 of 1885, and other laws dealing with the British Indians, have been erased from the Statute-book of the Transvaal Colony, and legislation passed in greater agreement with British ideas of justice, will it be possible for the British Indian in the Transvaal to say that he is once more a British subject, enjoying all the rights that flow from such a status. To-day he is a step-child seeking and yearning for protection on the part of his parents, which protection he does not get.

Indian Opinion, 8-4-1905

183. AN IMPORTANT JUDGMENT CONCERNING TRANSVAAL INDIANS

It is well known that Indians cannot hold land in their own names and that some of them, therefore, purchase land in the names of the whites. Mr. Syed Ismail, a resident of Johannesburg, possessed some land which he held in the name of a white friend of his, Mr. Lucas. When the Johannesburg Corporation acquired Locations, etc., this land also was taken over by them, and a resolution to pay Mr. Lucas £2,000 as compensation was passed. Mr. Lucas died during the war, and his estate was attached for insolvency. As his assets were not sufficient to pay off his debtors, trustees claimed the compensation payable towards the land held by him on behalf of Syed Ismail. Syed Ismail thereupon filed a suit in the High Court claiming that this sum of £ 2,000 should be paid to him. The creditors of Lucas raised two issues: firstly that the amount claimed by Syed Ismail stood in the name of Lucas, and secondly, that, since the land to which Syed Ismail claimed a title was immovable property, he could not enjoy the right of its ownership. The rejoinder to this, submitted on behalf of Syed Ismail, was that, as the land was held on ninety-nine years' lease, it could not be regarded as immovable property and that, therefore, there could be no objection to Indians owning such land. And should the Court not hold this argument valid, there was the alternative answer that the law, which prevented Indians from ownership of immovable property, did not lay down that immovable property could not be held by others, such as the whites, in their own names on behalf of Indians. Giving the verdict in favour of Syed Ismail, the honourable judge remarked, with regard to the second issue, that land on a ninety nine years' lease should¹ be considered immovable property, and such land, therefore, could not stand in the name of an Indian. Granting Syed Ismail's second plea, however, the judge held that the whites could hold lands for the benefit of Indians, and that the law would protect the rights of an Indian owner if a white holding the property intended to commit fraud. This decision is very satisfactory; therefore, the Indians who are hesitating to purchase land in the names of whites need have no such fear any longer. It should, however, be borne in mind that the white concerned must be a trustworthy person and a clear title-deed should be obtained from him. It appears certain that

¹ In the original, "not" seems to have been wrongly placed. It would mean "could *not* be considered immovable property".

this decision will strengthen us in our fight with the Government for our rights. We learn that the trustees for Lucas' estate have preferred an appeal against this decision to the High Court. Let us await the outcome of the appeal.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 8-4-1905

184. CURZON'S SPEECH ON INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Reuter cable tells us that Lord Curzon made a forceful speech in the Indian Legislature in support of our case. He said that the South African Colonies would get no help from India, so long as they did not guarantee that the rights of Indians would be fully safeguarded. He added that it was the duty of the Government of India to protect the Indians and that they would continue to discharge that duty.

These words are bound to gladden us. They will certainly have a good effect. The speech shows that our efforts here do not go in vain. It behoves us to continue to make added effort and, as opportunity presents itself, agitate for the redress of our grievances. We are sure that, given unity and concerted effort, we shall succeed.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 8-4-1905

185. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

25 & 26, COURT CHAMBERS,
RISSIK STREET,
JOHANNESBURG,
April 10, 1905

TO
THE HON'BLE MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI
22, KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON
DEAR SIR,

Mr. Lyttelton is reported to have said that, since the decision in the test case in the Transvaal, the position of the British Indians had

become better than before war. You will notice a reply to this statement in *Indian Opinion* of the 8th April in its first leading article. The position generally has certainly not become better [but] has become worse than before war, and the relief that the test case has secured for the Indians simply takes them back to the pre-war days; but even for this the Government can hardly take any credit as they opposed the Indian contention strenuously before the Supreme Court.

In Natal, several Bills, as you will see from *Indian Opinion*, having an anti-Indian tendency are being introduced, and the Orange River Colony is ever tightening its grip of the Coloured people. Regulations are being passed in townships after townships, which, in my humble opinion, are unworthy of the British Constitution, and could never be sanctioned by Mr. Lyttelton, if they were introduced in the form of bills in the Legislative Council.

I earnestly hope that you will protect and do justice to the British Indian subjects of His Majesty, who look to you for relief.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G. N. 2269

186. LETTER TO COLONIAL SECRETARY

JOHANNESBURG,
April 11, 1905

TO
THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
BLOEMFONTEIN

SIR,

The attention of my Association has been drawn to regulations that are published from time to time in the *Government Gazette* in connection with the various Municipalities in the Orange River Colony regarding Coloured persons resident therein, and to the Ordinance “to supplement and amend the provisions of law with reference to the Municipality of Bloemfontein”.

In the regulations for the Township of Reddersburg, my Association noticed that the term “Native” is so defined as to include all Coloured persons, not excepting British Indians, and the regulations

for this Township, as also for that of Vrede, lay down rules for the control of the Coloured people living within those townships, which, in the humble opinion of my Association, are degrading, unjust and insulting; and while it is very probable that there are no British Indians staying in those townships, the regulations in question are none the less offensive on that account, and should a stray Indian happen to enter any of those townships, he would suddenly find himself hemmed in by galling restrictions.

My Association was pained to see similar powers granted by Ordinance 19 of 1905 to the Municipality of Bloemfontein. My Association ventures to think that such anti-colour activity in the Orange River Colony is contrary to British traditions as also the declarations made from time to time by Her late Majesty's Ministers, and it is incomprehensible to my Association why such legislation and regulations are countenanced by the Government of the Orange River Colony.

My Association will be extremely obliged if you will be pleased to inform me whether it is the intention of the Government to grant any relief in the matter.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDUL GANI,

CHAIRMAN,

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

187. MR. BARNETT'S CHARGE AND MR. ANCKETILL

Mr. Ancketill is to be congratulated on having questioned the Colonial Secretary upon the charge levelled by Mr. Barnett, the ex-Superintendent of Education, against certain employers of indentured Indians in Natal, in connection with the condition of the latter's huts, which he described as "piggeries".

Mr. Maydon¹ has replied, saying that the charge made by Mr. Barnett is greatly exaggerated, and that the Protector of Indians looks after the welfare of the indentured Indians. Mr. Maydon promised to lay on the table of the House the report made by the Protector on the

¹ Colonial Secretary for Natal.

charge. We consider the reply of the Colonial Secretary to be unsatisfactory in every respect. Here is a charge of extreme gravity made with the fullest deliberation before an audience of cultured men, who enjoyed a most responsible position in the Colony. Mr. Barnett was then speaking generally on education in Natal, and the above charge is by no means an isolated passage in his address, which is a serious indictment against the system of education prevalent in Natal. To call for a report from the Protector of Immigrants in a matter of this kind is very much like setting a man to judge his own case. Mr. Barnett's charge, we contend, includes in its condemnation the whole of the Indian Immigration Department. We do not say he is right, but we do say that the report drawn [up] by a Department which is condemned contradicting the condemnation is hardly the way to meet the indictment.

It is not merely a question of consulting the interests of the indentured Indians, it is that of the fair name of the Colony. We think that the Government would be extremely ill-advised in not probing the question to the bottom, and giving the fullest satisfaction to the public. If the result of the independent inquiry in any way supports Mr. Barnett's charge, the sooner the blot is removed the better for the Colony; and if the charge is proved to be incorrect, Mr. Barnett should be called upon, as a past public servant, to offer an explanation. We hope, therefore, that Mr. Anketill will continue to question the Colonial Secretary until what is needful has been done.

It is to be noticed, also, that Mr. Barnett delivered his attack before an audience that included the ex-Prime Minister of Natal, Sir Albert Hime, and many other Natal notabilities. Sir Albert Hime made lengthy remarks after the lecturer had finished, and we do not see anywhere a repudiation of the serious charge brought by Mr. Barnett. Does the Colonial Secretary not find food for reflection here?

Indian Opinion, 15-4-1905

188. LECTURES ON RELIGION

It appears from the Johannesburg newspapers that, on being invited by the Theosophical Society there to deliver a course of lectures on the Hindu religion, Mr. Gandhi gave four speeches on the subject at the Masonic Temple. On each occasion the hall was full. The last speech was delivered on the 25th of March. An account of two of the speeches has already appeared in *The Star*.¹ We give below, on

¹ *Vide* "Hinduism", March 4, 1905 and March 11, 1905.

the suggestion of some of our readers, a summary of the lectures, obtained from Mr. Gandhi.

CONTEMPT FOR INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

When the Theosophical Society invited me to deliver these speeches, I accepted the invitation on two considerations. It is now nearly twelve years that I have been living in South Africa. Everyone is aware of the hardships suffered by my compatriots in this land. People view with contempt the colour of their skin. I believe all this is due to a lack of proper understanding; and I have continued to stay in South Africa with a view to helping as much as possible in the removal of this misunderstanding. I, therefore, felt that it would to some extent help me in the fulfilment of my duty if I accepted the Society's invitation; and I shall regard myself very fortunate if I am able, through these lectures, to give you a better understanding of the Indians. I am to speak to you no doubt about the [Hindus¹]; but the ways and manners of the Hindus and other Indians are all but identical. All Indians have similar virtues and vices and are descended from the same stock. The other consideration was that there was, among the objects of the Theosophical Society, this one, viz., to compare the various religions, find out the truth underlying these and show the people how those religions were only so many roads leading to the realisation of God, and how one ought to hesitate to dub any of them false. I thought that this object, too, would be realised to some extent if I said a few words on the Hindu religion.

THE HINDUS

Hindus are not considered to be the original inhabitants of India. According to Western scholars, the Hindus as well as most of the European peoples lived at one time in Central Asia. Migrating from there, some went to Europe, some to Iran, others moved south-eastwards down into India through the Punjab, and there spread the Aryan religion. The Hindu population in India exceeds two hundred millions. They are called Hindus because they once lived beyond the river Sindhu (Indus). The Vedas are their oldest scripture. Very devout Hindus believe that the Vedas are of divine origin and without beginning. Western scholars hold that these were composed before 2000 B.C. The famous Mr. Tilak of Poona has shown that the Vedas must be at least 10,000 years old.² The main thing that distinguishes the Hindus is their belief that the *Brahman* or oversoul is all-pervading. What we all have to attain is *moksha* or liberation, *moksha*, here

¹ In the original, the word used, clearly through oversight, is "Indian".

² In *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*.

meaning freeing oneself from the evil of birth and death and merging in the *Brahman*. Humility and even-mindedness are the chief qualities of their ethics; while caste reigns supreme in their temporal affairs.

The Hindu religion underwent its first trial on the advent of Lord Buddha. The Buddha was himself the son of a [king¹]. He is said to have been born before 600 B.C. At that time the Hindus were under the glamour of the outward form of their religion, and the Brahmins had, out of selfishness, abandoned their true function of defending the Hindu faith. Lord Buddha was moved to pity when he saw his religion reduced to such a plight. He renounced the world and started doing penance. He spent several years in devout contemplation and ultimately suggested some reform in the Hindu religion. His piety greatly affected the minds of the Brahmins, and the killing of animals for sacrifice was stopped to a great extent. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Buddha founded a new or different religion. But those who came after him gave his teachings the identity of a separate religion. King Ashoka the Great sent missionaries to different lands for the propagation of Buddhism, and spread that religion in Ceylon, China, Burma and other countries. A distinctive beauty of Hinduism was revealed during this process: no one was converted to Buddhism by force. People's minds were sought to be influenced only by discussion and argument and mainly by the very pure conduct of the preachers themselves. It may be said that, in India at any rate, Hinduism and Buddhism were but one, and that even today the fundamental principles of both are identical.

THE BIRTH OF PROPHET MAHOMED

We have seen that Buddhism had a salutary effect on Hinduism, that the champions of the latter were aroused by its impact. A thousand years ago, the Hindu religion came under another influence more profound. Hazrat Mahomed was born 1300 years ago. He saw moral anarchy rampant in Arabia. Judaism was struggling for survival; Christianity was not able to gain a foothold in the land; and the people were given to licence and self-indulgence. Mahomed felt all this to be improper. It caused him mental agony; and in the name of God, he determined to make them realise their miserable condition. His feeling was so intense that he was able immediately to impress the people around him with his fervour, and Islam spread very rapidly. Zeal or passion, then, is a great speciality, a mighty force, of Islam. It has been the cause of many good deeds, and sometimes of bad ones too. A thousand years ago the army of Ghazni invaded India in order to

¹ The original has "emperor"

spread Islam. Hindu idols were broken and the invasions advanced as far as Somnath. While, on the one hand, violence was thus being used, the Muslim saints were, on the other, unfolding the real merit of Islam. The Islamic principle that all those who embraced Islam were equals made such a favourable impression on the lower classes that hundreds of thousands of Hindus accepted that faith, and there was great commotion in the whole community.

Kabir¹ was born in Benares. He thought that, according to Hindu philosophy, there could be no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. Both of them, if they did good works, would find a place in heaven. Idolatry was not an essential part of Hinduism. Reasoning thus, he attempted to bring about a synthesis between Hinduism and Islam; but it did not have much effect, and his became no more than a distinct sect, and it exists even to-day. Some years later, Guru Nanak was born in the Punjab; he accepted the reasoning of Kabir and made a similar attempt to fuse the two religions. But while doing so, he felt that Hinduism should be defended against Islam, if necessary with the sword. This gave rise to Sikhism, and produced the Sikh warriors. The result of all this is that, despite the prevalence of Hinduism and Islam as the two principal religions of India to-day, both the communities live together in peace and amity and are considerate enough not to hurt one another's feelings save for the bitterness caused by political machinations and excitement. There is very little difference between a Hindu *yogi*² and a Muslim *fakir*³.

JESUS CHRIST, THE PROPHET

While Islam and Hinduism were thus vying with each other, the Christians landed at the port of Goa about 500 years ago, and set about converting Hindus to Christianity. They also partly resorted to force and [converted] partly through persuasion. Some of their ministers were exceedingly tender-hearted and kind, rather one would call them saintly. Like the *fakirs* they made a deep impression on the lower classes of Hindu society. But later, when Christianity and Western civilisation came to be associated, the Hindus began to look upon the religion with disfavour. And today, we see few Hindus embracing Christianity in spite of the fact that the Christians are ruling over a vast kingdom. Nevertheless, Christianity has had a very considerable influence on Hinduism. Christian priests imparted education of a high

¹ A poet-saint who attempted, through his devotional songs, to unite Hindus and Muslims.

² A recluse.

³ A religious mendicant.

order and pointed out some of the glaring defects in Hinduism, with the result that there arose among the Hindus other great teachers who, like Kabir, began to teach the Hindus what was good in Christianity and appealed to them to remove these defects. To this category belonged Raja Ram Mohan Rai,¹ Devendranath Tagore,² and Keshab Chandra Sen.³ In Western India we had Dayanand Saraswati.⁴ And the numerous reformist associations like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj that have sprung up in India today are doubtless the result of Christian influence.⁵ Again, Madame Blavatsky⁶ came to India, told both Hindus and the Muslims of the evils of Western civilisation and asked them to beware of becoming enamoured of it.

TENETS OF HINDUISM

Thus, we have seen how there have been three assaults on Hinduism, coming from Buddhism, Islam and then Christianity, but how on the whole it came out of them unscathed. It has tried to imbibe whatever was good in each of these religions. We should, however, know what the followers of this religion, Hinduism, believe. This is what they believe: God exists. He is without beginning, immaculate, and without any attribute or form. He is omnipresent and omnipotent. His original form is *Brahman*. It neither does, nor causes to be done. It does not govern. It is bliss incarnate, and by it all this is sustained. The soul exists, and is distinct from the body. It also is without a beginning, without birth. Between its original form and the *Brahman*, there is no distinction. But it takes on, from time to time, a body as a result of *karma*⁷ or the power of *maya*⁸, and goes on being born again and again into high or low species in accordance with the good or bad deeds performed by it. To be free from the cycle of birth and death and be merged in *Brahman* is *moksha* or liberation. The way to achieve this *moksha* is to do pure and good deeds; to have compassion for all living beings, and to live in truth. Even after reaching this stage, one does not attain liberation, for one has to enjoy embodied

¹ Founder of the Brahmo Samaj.

² & ³ Raja Ram Mohan Rai's work was continued by Devendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, the former on the lines of pure Hinduism and the latter along those of Christianity.

⁴ Founder of the Arya Samaj.

⁵ The Brahmo Samaj was to some extent the result of Christian influence, but the Arya Samaj, which was based on ancient Vedic principles, was an attempt to meet the challenge of Christianity.

⁶ Founder of the Theosophical Society.

⁷ Sum of person's actions from a previous existence, viewed as deciding his fate in the next.

⁸ Illusion.

existence as a consequence of one's good deeds as well. One has, therefore, to go a step further. We will, however, have to continue to act, only we should not cherish any attachment to our actions. Action should be undertaken for its own sake, without an eye on the fruit. In short, everything should be dedicated to God. We should not cherish, even in a dream, the feeling of pride that we do or can do anything. We should look upon all equally. These are the beliefs or tenets of Hinduism, but there admittedly exist a number of schools. Also, there have arisen a few factions or sects resulting from [differences in] secular practices. But we need not consider them on the present occasion.

CONCLUSION: AN APPEAL TO THE AUDIENCE

If, after listening to this, any one of you has been favourably impressed and has come to feel that the Hindus or the Indians, in whose country the religion expounded above prevails, cannot be altogether an inferior people, you can render service to my countrymen even without becoming involved in political matters.

All religions teach that we should all live together in love and mutual kindness. It was not my intention to preach you a sermon neither am I fit to do so. But if it has produced any favourable impression on your mind, I would appeal to you to let my brethren have its benefit and, as behoves the English people, to defend them, whenever they are maligned.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 15-4-1905

189. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

April 17, 1905

C. K. GANDHI ESQ.

C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS

PHOENIX

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. You should talk to Mr. Kitchin about the matters you mention. You should not sit still. You will find that your curiosity, which will be quite legitimate, will not be resented. How is the new arrangement working? Is the job-work now finished, or about to be? Before you tell me how many Hindi subscribers we have or unless the Hindi people would guarantee so many subscribers, we

cannot afford to increase the Hindi columns. In fact the letter that crossed your letter, under reply, would show you that I would even decrease the Hindi columns if you have not enough support. The same thing applies to Tamil. There is no prospect of my being able to go there at present. I have already send £ 100. You should not sign the notes in favour of M. C. Camroodeen three months hence. We should get at least six months. You need not bother about Mr. Nazar giving you any Gujarati. Can you definitely come in the beginning of May? If you fix your date beforehand, I can arrange for your permit. If Appoo wants you to send two copies, do so by all means, charging for one only, and you should regularly send three copies to Mr. Rustomji at Bombay. Can you not reduce the complimentary list for India and London? What is the total of foreign complimentary copies, that is outside British South Africa? I am studying Tamil very diligently and, if all is well, I may be able to fairly understand the Tamil articles within two months at the outside. I am rather anxious to get the Tamil books. Please therefore try if you cannot get them. You Understand, I suppose, what I want? You may go over to Mr. Mood-ley's place. I have written to him.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the typewritten original: S.N. 4232

190. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

April 19, 1905

C. K. GANDHI ESQ

C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS

PHOENIX

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. I hope you will discuss your views with Kit-chin about the Hindi and Tamil matter. Of course personally I should feel very sorry to see the two languages dropped. I entirely agree with you about Mannering. Please discuss the matter with Mr. West. When is Mannering likely to leave? I hope to let you have the cake per Shah who is leaving to-morrow evening. I have the Tamil books. They will be useful. What, however, I wanted was Pope's larger Grammar. You

know my book which I gave Madanjit. If you cannot make the cake properly, it must be the fault of the oven, or you do not add sufficient ghee. You will remember that the meal must be kept soaked in cold water for nearly three hours. When you make your cake the ghee should be added first and thoroughly mixed with flour before you pour water over it, and it should be well kneaded.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the typewritten original: S.N. 4233

191. LETTER TO "THE OUTLOOK"

[Prior to April 22, 1905]

A REPLY TO MR. HILLS¹

TO
THE EDITOR
The Outlook
JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

Mr. W. Hills has made in his letter to *The Outlook* statements which are hardly borne out by the facts. The Editor has not supported a policy "which would hand over the Transvaal to a parasitical race". Mr. Hills himself admits, by implication, that the British Indian is very industrious and hard-working. It is scarcely fair to call a race of such men parasites.

Mr. Hills says his opposition to Asiatics is not due to "colour prejudice but to economic considerations"; and in support he states the experience of all Natalians. Now the experience of all Natalians it is difficult to know. The experience of some, who, moreover, are accepted as representative of the people of Natal, is on record. The late Mr. Saunders, the late Sir Henry Binns, the late Sir John Robinson, the late Mr. Escombe, the present Colonial Secretary, Mr. Maydon, Sir G. M. Sutton, Sir James Hullett, and many other, have testified to the usefulness of the Indian in Natal. The late Sir Henry Binns said, in giving evidence before a Commission, that it was when Natal was on

¹ This appeared, along with Mr. W. Hills' Letter of March 14, in *The Outlook*. The editor of that periodical had submitted Mr. Hills' letter to "one who has made the subject one of special study" Gandhiji. Both the letter and the reply were later reprinted in *Indian Opinion*. Only the reply is reproduced here.

the brink of bankruptcy that Indian immigration was thought of. Sir James Hullett, only a few months ago, giving his evidence before the Native Affairs Commission, said emphatically that Natal owed its prosperity to the presence of the Indian immigrant, and that it could not do without him. The greatest proof, however, in support of the statement that Natal requires the Indian is given by Mr. Hills himself. If the Indian population in Natal has doubled since 1896, what is the cause? It is simply that more and more Indians are being required in order to keep going the chief industries of Natal, namely, sugar, tea and coal. It should be remembered that the Indian of whom Mr. Hills is thinking is not an intruder, but that he is actually invited to the Colony for its benefit. There are still 18,000 applications before the Indian Immigration Trust Board which have to be dealt with. The demand for indentured Indian labour is much greater than the supply. Verulam always had a large Indian population. Mr. Hills, in regretting that it has become an Indian township, forgets that it had either to become an Indian township or cease to be a town at all. The north coast of Natal takes in the largest Indian population. It has to be developed either by Indian labour or not at all. The Natalians have thought better, and have not hesitated to cultivate the coast land through Indian labour, and the palatial mansions which the white men occupy even on the north coast, let it be remembered, are due entirely to the assistance of the Indian immigrant, and are owned by the employers of Indian labour, so that the example of Natal is all in favour of the Indian, and the "economic considerations" on which Mr. Hills lays so much stress have compelled the Natalians to resort to Indian assistance.

Again, Mr. Hills makes a mistake when he states that "the law, under the late Government as interpreted for 15 years, confined Asiatics to Locations". It is a well-known fact that, under the late Government, the Indians lived outside Locations with absolute impunity, and, it is because they were able to do so, that the present Government find it difficult to oust them. It is true that, as they had British protection then, it could hardly be withdrawn now, and it should be again remembered that, during the Boer regime, there was no restriction against Indian immigration, whereas, today, as the Chief Secretary for Permits has shown, only those Indians who were settled in the country before the war are allowed to re-enter, and then, too, after much questioning and delay. Although Mr. Hills talks about the white population in general and its good, in applying his principles, he only takes notice of the Indian licences to trade. Is it, then, that he objects only to the Indian traders? Mr. Hills again makes the mistake of supposing that

the South African Coloured people are refused licences, whilst the Indians received them freely. Under the Supreme Court's ruling, the Government dare not prevent any Coloured people, as such, from getting licences, and if Mr. Hills' objection is, after all, as it evidently seems to be, against the trade of the Colony falling entirely or even largely into the hands of Indians, there is not much difficulty in sympathising with him, nor has the Editor of *The Outlook* suggested that such competition should not be regulated by a statute of general application. But to thus regulate Indian trade, and to hound the Indian out of the Colony by all kinds of vexatious legislation, are two different things. With the one, every sensible Colonist will be in perfect agreement, so long as vested interests are not touched, and licences are not refused to Indians as such. But it is scarcely in keeping with justice and fair play, for instance, to prevent the Indian from walking on foot-paths, from owning landed property, from living, subject to strict municipal regulations, or from building a mosque, anywhere he likes. Such restrictions are meaningless, if they do not proceed from colour prejudice, and it is questionable whether those who fan the flame of such prejudice would be doing any good to posterity. The facts must be taken as they are. India is part of the British Empire, like the Transvaal, and there ought to be a policy of give and take, whilst there certainly should be nothing done to needlessly wound the feelings of these men, who are, after all, subjects of the same King, and are a people with remarkable traditions and a wonderful ancient civilisation.

Two simple bills are likely to solve the whole difficulty. One would give to the Local bodies control of all trade licences, subject, in exceptional cases, to review by the Supreme Court, and the other would regulate immigration into the Colony after the manner of the Cape Immigration Act.

One more statement by Mr. Hills needs correction. After the correspondence that appeared in *The Star*, challenging the statement that there are 49 Indian, as against 13 white, store-keepers in Pietersburg, some caution, at least, is necessary. The British Indian Association has stated¹ definitely that there are only 23 Indian stores in that town. Mr. Kleinenberg, whom Mr. Hills has copied, has not been able to refute that statement. It is, therefore, necessary for Mr. Hills to ascertain from Mr. Kleinenberg whether the figures he gave *The star* could be verified. So far, the British Indian Association has had the

¹ Vide "Letter to *The Star*", "Prior to December 24, 1904".

last say. It is of the utmost importance that those who are responsible for guiding public opinion should have facts and nothing but facts before them.

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

192. THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY

Elsewhere will be found the letter¹ of the energetic British Indian Association of Johannesburg, addressed to the Colonial Secretary of the Orange River Colony on its anti-Asiatic activity. We must congratulate the Association on having made a move in this scandalous matter. Hitherto we have had to draw attention to the township regulations. Emboldened by the impunity with which these regulations have passed muster, the Municipality of Bloemfontein has now secured as Ordinance giving it almost the same powers that have been arrogated by several townships of the Orange River Colony through the regulations to which attention has been drawn from time to time in this journal. The passing of this Ordinance shows that the anti-Asiatic clauses thereof have met with the approval of the Imperial Colonial Secretary. As the Chairman of the British Indian Association states in his letter, there is no doubt that such legislation is “degrading, unjust and insulting” and that “such anti-Coloured activity in the Orange River Colony is contrary to British traditions, as also to the declarations made from time to time by Her late Majesty’s Ministers”.

We notice that Sir Mancherjee² has been again questioning Mr. Lyttelton on Indian matters in South Africa. We venture to think that, to his many services to the British Indians in South Africa, he will add yet another measure, if he will earnestly take up the question in the Orange River Colony, though it does not actively interfere with the British Indians at present. We do not despair of a time when a fair proportion of Indians will be allowed to settle in that Colony; and for that matter, even in the present day, there are probably no fewer than 200 Indians earning their livelihood in one or other of the towns in the Orange River Colony. We feel that even they, handful as they are, require protection from the studied degradation to which they are subjected by the laws of the State.

From a purely Imperial standpoint we may even go further, and

¹ *Vide* “Letter to Colonial Secretary”, April 11, 1905.

² Chairman, South African British Indian Association in London.

ask whether it is politic or right that the natives of the soil should be harassed by unnecessary restrictions. Under British rule, no community is allowed to remain stagnant and unprogressive. The Natives are being gradually educated. It would be a mistake to suppose that they have no feelings or that they do not smart under a curtailment of their natural liberty. We are not exaggerating when we compare regulations of the control of Locations in the Orange River Colony with those for the control of prisoners in a well-ordered jail. If the inmates of the Orange River Colony Locations have a little greater liberty, it is only a question of degree but not of kind. The monster petition from the Natives in the Transvaal shews that they are awakening to a sense of their rights under the British flag. True statesmanship would consist in anticipating and providing for their reasonable wants. In the Orange River Colony, the Native is evidently not credited with having any feeling.

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

193. TAMIL IN LONDON UNIVERSITY

We have received a letter from Ceylon requesting us to arrange a meeting for the promotion of a memorial to the Registrar of London University, praying that Tamil may be accepted as an optional language in the curriculum of that University for the matriculation and other examinations in arts. We invite the attention of the Tamil-educated Indians to the matter which, in our opinion, deserves every encouragement. There should be no difficulty about their holding a meeting and adopting a simple memorial to the External Registrar of the University of London. Tamil immigrants in other parts of the world have already sent in their representations, and we do not see why the same thing should not be done by those in South Africa. Tamil is one of the greatest of the Dravidian languages and has a vast literature. It is supposed to be the Italian of India, and is in every way a language fit to be adopted by London University as an optional subject. London University is recognised to be the most liberal institution in the world, and seeing that Tamil is spoken by millions of the subjects of the King-Emperor, the University of the Metropolis of the Empire will do well to grant the prayer of the Tamil memorialists.

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

194. INDIANS ON THE MINES

Mr. Lyttelton has replied in the Imperial Parliament to Sir M. M. Bhownaggee's question as to the treatment of Indians on the mines. The reply is unsatisfactory in the extreme. Mr. Lyttelton said he was not aware that anything warranted such an inquiry: but when he receives the reports of the latest cases, he may alter his opinion. The fact of these unsavoury cases continually cropping up is quite sufficient warrant for a rigid and impartial enquiry. Mr. Lyttelton added that there was a Protector of Indians in Natal, thereby suggesting that he was the person to move in the matter. But we have not heard that he has done so. Commenting on Mr. Lyttelton's reply, which it regards as unsatisfactory, *The Natal Witness* reiterates the demand for an enquiry. With regard to the Protector of Indians, the *Witness* says:

We know there is such an official, but the mine employees contend that they are prevented from approaching him, and that in itself is an assertion that needs looking into.

And it adds:

If our Government fails to recognise its duty in these matters, it is to be hoped the question will not be lost sight of at home, and that influence will be exerted in the right direction from that quarter. Better, however, if the enquiry were instituted without such pressure, and these ugly charges proved or disproved once and for all.

We hope these cases will be brought to the notice of the Government of India, who, from past experience, will not be so easily satisfied as Mr. Lyttelton. But the best thing of all would be for the Natal Government to institute an enquiry on its own initiative, as our contemporary suggests, and probe the matter to the bottom without delay.

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

195. MALARIA IN DURBAN

Malaria has been raging in Durban with great virulence. There were only 12 cases in last January, but the number of persons attacked during March was 612. The figure is alarming. The only relieving feature is that the rate of mortality is not high. Again, according to Dr. Murison, it is largely women, children and others, who mostly keep

indoors, that have caught the infection. And it is pointed out that it has spread through mosquitoes from Zululand. Dr. Murison suggests the following preventive measures.

1. Mosquito-curtains with very small holes should be used by every one sleeping on a cot, and care taken to remove any mosquitoes on the bed and tuck in the lower edge of the curtain under the mattress along the four sides. A torn curtain should not be used until it has been properly mended.

2. As far as possible, quinine should not be taken as a preventive. If, however, one has to live in an infected house or to sleep without a mosquito curtain, one should take five grains of quinine every day before breakfast.

3. Water should not be allowed to collect in or around the house. Drains and gutters should be inspected, and pits and ditches filled up.

4. Where there are large pools of stagnant water, they should be sprayed with kerosene until the pits are filled up.

5. The authorities should be informed if water collects and stagnates, or there is an overgrowth of useless vegetation around the house within the premises.

It is necessary for every one to take these precautions. The main thing is that one should keep the house and its surroundings clean, not allow mosquitoes to breed, keep one's person clean and take light food.

The incidence of malaria is greater among the whites than among the Coloured people. Of the 612 cases mentioned above, 400 were whites, 185 Asiatics and 27 Kaffirs. This shows that some communities are more susceptible to certain diseases than others. While the Indians are more liable to plague, the whites are particularly susceptible to malaria. But if we consider the matter in this fashion, it would be just like the pot calling the kettle black. Nevertheless, malaria is not a deadly disease, while plague is a terrible killer. Through proper investigation, the causes of both these diseases can be found out. We must not fail in our duty to take all the necessary precautions.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

196. INDIANS IN EAST LONDON

There are certain restrictions on Indians in East London in regard to walking on foot-paths and residing in the town. The law there allows only those Indians who own landed property or are respectable tenants to live freely in the town, provided they obtain a pass

from the Town Council for doing so. It is the duty of the Town Clerk to issue passes to all those who ask for them. The Indians in general refused to take out passes in this way. They carried on a fight for about a year and a half and managed to carry on without the passes. But when the Town Council took legal proceedings against them, the Magistrate decided in its favour. The Indians preferred an appeal against the decision on the plea that they were not “Asiatics” but Aryans who had subsequently settled in India. We are constrained to say that our brethren have wasted their money on the litigation, and brought ridicule on themselves to boot. It is all very well to say that we are Aryans, but such a plea in a law court is bound to harm—and has harmed—our cause.

We ought to have woken up when the East London law was enacted. It is very difficult to get a law repealed once it has been passed. Our advice now is that we should submit quietly to the law and take out passes. Compared with other places like the Transvaal, the situation in East London is still tolerable. While complying with the law, we should, of course, continue the fight. But the struggle should be carried on through Parliament. Our people in East London have the power and the right to vote. It would yield good results if we exercised them judiciously.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

197. INDENTURED INDIANS

It appears from the Natal *Government Gazette* that 11,175 indentured men and 5,334 women had become free by December 31, 1904, since the introduction of the £ 3 poll-tax. Of these, 7,585 men and 1,845 women have paid the tax. That is, more than half the number of the freed men have paid the poll-tax to the Government and are at present engaged in some vocation or carrying on trade in the Colony.

The Government has already collected £ 28,290 from these people. This is by no means a negligible sum when one comes to think of it. It is a matter of great sorrow that such penalty is inflicted on British subjects; but where there is no remedy, one has to reconcile oneself to the situation. According to Lord Curzon, the average *per capita* income of an Indian is Rs. 30 a year,—which means that this tax is one and a half times the average income in India.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

198. MALAY LOCATION IN JOHANNESBURG

The Johannesburg Administration has appointed a Commission to draft a law for the purpose of acquiring certain lands in Vrededorp. It is not yet decided whether the Malay Location is a part of Vrededorp or not: but a portion of it might fall within its limits. According to its terms of reference, the Commission are:

1. to determine how the lands should be acquired from the residents;
2. to suggest how compensation should be paid if it is decided to acquire the land;
3. to record evidence in this connection.

The chief Magistrate of Johannesburg, Mr. Badab, has been appointed the Chairman of the Commission. The date on which the Commission is to meet has not yet been fixed. But when this is announced, those living in the Malay Location will have to be on their guard.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

199. JIU-JITSU

The eyes of Europeans are slowly being opened. Narmada-shankar, the Gujarati poet, has sung:

The Englishman rules, the country is under his heel.

The native remains subdued;

Look at their bodies, brother,

He is full five cubits tall,

A host in himself, match for five hundred.

The poet here tells us that the main reason for the rise of English is their sturdy physique. The Japanese have shown that not much depends upon the physique of a man. The fact that the Russians, though well set up and tall, have proved powerless before the short and thin Japanese, has put the English officials in a quandary. They gave thought to the matter and discovered that Europe was very much behindhand in physical culture and knowledge of the laws governing the body. The Japanese understand very well how the various joints and bones of the (opponent's) body can be controlled, and this has made them invincible. Many of our readers must be aware of the effect produced when a particular nerve of the neck or leg is pressed during an exercise. This very science the Japanese have perfected. A

Japanese coach has, therefore, been employed to train the English army, and thousands have already been taught the art. And *jiu-jitsu* is the Japanese name for it. The problem will now be to find something else after all the nations have learnt *jiu-jitsu*. This process is bound to go on endlessly.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-4-1905

200. SUGGESTION BY BARBERTON AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL

The Agricultural Council of Barberton had appointed Captain Madge to investigate if the soil surrounding that place was suitable for growing tobacco. He reported that the land could yield a very rich crop of tobacco. Thereupon, the committee of the Council has proposed that, since Indians are needed to assist in the cultivation of tobacco, they should be admitted to the areas around Barberton on the same terms as in Natal. Thus, the whites have begun to feel the need for Indian labour right from the beginning, for the Kaffirs are of no use and all the available Chinese are absorbed in the mines. Indian labour, is, therefore, in general demand.

Lord Curzon has declared in his speech¹ that, as long as the South African Colonies do not concede adequate rights to the Indians, they will receive no help from India. If, therefore, the Transvaal Government does really need Indians, Lord Curzon will have a golden opportunity to exert pressure in order to secure the rights of Indians. The Transvaal is not likely to achieve prosperity so long as agriculture is not introduced there. And there is little likelihood of agriculture being developed without Indians.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 29-4-1905

201. LONGEVITY AMONG THE WHITES AND THE COLOURED PEOPLE

“Why do women live longer than men, and the Kaffirs, Hot-tentots and Malayas longer than the whites?” asks *The Cape Times*. The question arises from a perusal of the Census Report. There are more women than men in the Cape. The number of men is 12,18,940, while that of women is 12,90,864. Up to the age of sixty the number

¹ Vide “Curzon’s Speech on Indians in South Africa”, 8-4-1905.

of men is greater, but among those aged seventy, there are 21,788 men and 23,719 women; among those aged eighty-five, 2,355 men and 2,895 women; and among those aged ninety five, 88 men and 109 women. There are 300 persons in the Cape who are over a hundred years; of these, only 126 are men and the rest women. Similarly, the Coloured population is found to be more long-lived than the white.

The reason for this is clear enough. As the Europeans indulge in sensual pleasures more than the Coloured peoples, their lives are shorter. Again, the duration of life among men is shorter than among women because the former suffer more worries than the latter. The Indians stand lower in the scale than all the other for a variety of weighty reasons. But the main reason is the very poor standard of life that the Indians maintain in South Africa. In order to save money, our people live together in large numbers in single rooms; and for the same reason or from indolence, they take food which is either insufficient or inadequately nutritive. Many live on ill-baked bread made of musty flour. Small wonder, then, that such food has adverse effects.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 29-4-1905

202. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

21-24, COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 1, 1905

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS
PHOENIX

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letters. I have not been able to write to you for some time. I sent you Gujarati matter yesterday. I would like you to tell me whether what I send is enough; if not I could send more, in which case I should really have *The Indian Review* and some Gujarati papers sent to me.

I sent with Shah two loaves of Kuhne, biscuits, sweets, cake and *papad*¹. The loaves were for Bean and West, one each, the rest for you.

¹ Dry, crisp and paper-like, it is made from a variety of pulses and spices.

I wonder whether you got all these things. Did you send the sweets from Durban? If so, please do not repeat the experiment. It is totally unnecessary, and I am anxious not to introduce complex dishes in the house.

You may send me the first part of Pope's Grammar. See that it is in both English and Tamil. Is it a new edition published? If not, don't buy it. A new edition was published, I think, last year. If they will give it to you on approval, then you can send all the three parts, deposit 30/- and if I find them not useful, they should refund the money and take the books back. I have already got a Tamil-English dictionary from Mr. Simon. All I now want is a good grammar.

I hope you have discussed the matter of Tamil and Hindi with Kitchin, and told him that neither can be rejected at the present stage. I have written to M. C. C. & Co.¹ regarding the P/Notes they want. Herewith statements for the Press to date². I shall be interested to know how the English work is done this week in the absence of Mannering. Is Rugbeer gone altogether? I am extremely sorry for him. Have you knocked off night work?

Please put down Edward B. Rose, Esq., 45, Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, London, on the complimentary list. You may begin with the current number.

Yours Sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.] I see [the] sweets were brought by Desai.³

1 Enclosure: Statement.

From the typewritten original: S.N. 4234.

¹ The firm of M. C. Camroodeen & Co.

² This is not available.

³ This is added in Gandhiji's own hand.

203. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[JOHANNESBURG,
Post *May 1, 1905*]¹

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,²

I have your letter as also Pope's Handbook. If P. Davis would sell the three volumes for less than 30/- you can buy three for £ 25.³ If they would sell the first for 12/6, you can pay for it, but if they insist on three or none at all and charging 30/-, even then you should pay, get the other two parts and send them on.

Yes, £ 5/1/6 are what I sent you when you became a fixture in the Press. I transferred that amount on to the Press just in order to enable me to see in the end how I myself come out of it. Of course, that and the charge of £ 16 for Shah will not be included in the expenses for the current year. Debit me with the £ 5 paid to Shah as also the 5/- paid to him for his razor. Please let me know whether the Gujarati matter sent this week is enough, or whether I should send still more.

Yours sincerely,

From the typewritten office copy: S.N. 4235.

204. LETTER TO C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

14 MERCURY LANE,
DURBAN, NATAL,
May 4, 1905

SIR,

I am requested specially to forward the enclosed to you, and humbly to suggest that some action might be taken in the various Legislative Councils in India, and if that be not possible, in the Viceregal Council, though seeing that Bombay, Madras and Calcutta [do not send] a very large number of immigrants to South Africa, there is no reason why the local governments should not take notice of the disabilities which the British Indians are labouring under.

¹ The reference in the letter to Pope's Handbook of Tamil Grammar and the statement of expenses, both dealt with in the previous letter, suggest that this was written subsequently.

² The original is mutilated, only the last two letters of the name being left. The contents, however, make it clear that the letter is addressed to Chhaganlal Gandhi, *vide* the preceding item.

³ The "£" is evidently a slip; it must be 25 shillings.

This question is one of those about which there is unanimity of Indian and Anglo-Indian opinion; and I venture to think that united action on the part of the non-official members will do much for our cause. There is very little doubt that the official sympathy would also be with us, and under the strong and sympathetic Viceroy we have in Lord Curzon, the great question which underlies our disabilities (as put by the *London Times*: "May the British Indians when they leave India have the same status before the law as other British subjects enjoy? May they or may they not go freely from one British possession to another and claim the rights of British subjects in allied states?") cannot but be decided favourably if only it is sufficiently brought to His Excellency's attention.

I remain,

Sir,

Yours obediently,

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C. Vijayaraghavachariar Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

205. THE TRANSVAAL CONSTITUTION

The Transvaal Constitution has been on the lips of everybody in South Africa ever since its publication. We cannot recall an instance when the constitution of a British Colony has evoked so much interest as the one given to the Transvaal. Every newspaper has published leading articles: every important person in South Africa has offered his judgment on it; and the sum and substance of the great body of opinion that has gathered round the Constitution appears to be praise not unmingled with unfriendly criticism. In fact, Lord Milner, in his valedictory address at Johannesburg, anticipated such a result when he said that the Constitution would probably fail to please anybody wholly, but that it would be accepted by all fair-minded men as a genuine attempt to bring nearer together the British and the Boers, and to prepare the people in the near future for complete self-government.

The objections that have been taken to the details are, in our opinion, objections taken because of ignorance of the history regarding Constitutions for the other self-governing Colonies. The point is that, even wherein there has been strong agitation for the grant of self-government, or other representative institutions, there has never been such a close examination of the details before. People have hitherto

been satisfied with the granting of a principle, but to-day we find them insisting on every detail being arranged according to their notions. Hence it is that exceptions are seriously taken to the reservations by the Crown regarding legislation, although, if trouble were taken to examine even Constitutions for the self-governing Colonies, it would be found that the power of veto has been always retained, and occasionally even exercised. For instance, when the Australian Commonwealth passed its anti-Asiatic legislation excluding Asiatics as such, Mr. Chamberlain had no hesitation in disallowing the Act; and similarly in Natal. The first action of the responsible ministry in disfranchising Indians as such was promptly checked by Lord Ripon. It is conveniently forgotten that the Constitution which the Transvaal has received is perhaps the most liberal yet known of all the Constitutions granted preliminary to responsible government. The other objection taken, that the Orange River Colony has not received the same treatment as the Transvaal, goes to the root of all government. So long as Britain remains the predominant power, and so long as governments must ultimately depend upon force, it is useless to express dissatisfaction with what is, in the nature of things, unavoidable.

Apart, however, from the intrinsic merit of the Constitution, Mr. Lyttelton's despatch, which served as preamble to the Constitution itself, is the most important of all. It is a humane document worthy of a British minister.

Coming to the purely Indian standpoint, it is difficult not to feel that the British Indian, as also the British Coloured man, is only the step-child, and has been left out in the cold. He has no voice in the affairs of the Colony, and he is insulted by deliberate exclusion. Mr. Lyttelton says:

His Majesty's Government have been unable, having regard to the Terms of Peace signed in 1902, to make provision for the representation of any of His Majesty's coloured subjects.

And here it may be noted that even Mr. Lyttelton has made the common mistake of including other people in the term "Native". The Terms of Peace mention only the natives of South Africa. Why should other Coloured people, then, be included by inference? Mr. Lyttelton proceeds:

As a protection, however, for the interests of those sections of the population which are not directly represented in the legislature, the Governor will, as now, be required by his instructions to reserve any bill whereby persons

not of European birth or descent may be subjected to any disability or restriction to which persons of European birth are not also subjected.

It is to be hoped that the reservation will be fully exercised.

Indian Opinion, 6-5-1905

206. EDUCATION OF INDIANS

Speaking on education in the Natal Parliament, Mr. Wiltshire said that the Government should provide greater facilities for the education of Indians. He pointed out that Indians needed them and that a special responsibility devolved on the Government for the education of Natal born Indians. We should be thankful to the Honorable Gentleman for his speech. Our condition is likely to improve in every way with the increasing spread of education. The Government will no doubt have ultimately to discharge their duty in the matter. It appears that, in the absence of a separate school for Indians in Ladysmith, the Government have permitted Indians with a high standard of life to be admitted to the existing school.

Speaking in the Orange River Colony, Mr. Argette, the late Superintendent of Education in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, declared that he would make special efforts for the education of the Kaffirs in Basutoland. He is sufficiently mindful of the need for technical education. He was very sympathetic about the education of Indians, and was always trying to start schools for them in the Transvaal.

Indian Opinion, 6-5-1905

207. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 6, 1905

[MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,]¹

I am sending you to-day all the Gujarati matter. I may not send any more. Khanderia tells me he has sent a report² on the Pietersburg

¹ The office copy bears no superscription, but the contents leave no doubt as to the addressee.

² This was presented to the High Commissioner; *vide* "Sir Arthur Lawley and British Indians", 13-5-1905.

Address. If there is anything in conflict with the sub-leader I am sending you in Gujarati, you should strike out the portion, that is to say, there should be nothing falsely praising the Acting High Commissioner. His reply is not as satisfactory as it might have been, as you will see from what I am sending.

Desai tells me that you are not keeping quite good health, and that you are suffering from boils. This is inexcusable. There must be some irregularity about the diet. I cannot too strongly advise you to copy West's simplicity. We are all making a luncheon of Kuhne bread, nut butter and jam. The slices are cut out at home and brought to the office and luncheon made at the office. You could do likewise if you have to take your food in town. I would like you to be very careful. You should see the Gujarati people regarding the earthquake fund. It should not be allowed to become a fiasco. I am trying my best on this side. Has not Kaba yet arrived? Mr. Mukherji writes to me saying that neither he nor Mr. Dadabhai received their copies of *Opinion* during the middle of April'. . .applies for cheques...

Your letter to hand together with Maganlal's. I am sending Gujarati matter which is double that sent last time and still hope to send some more. I can understand from your letter the difficulties you are experiencing there. As I give most of my spare time to Tamil, I cannot cope with the work satisfactorily. Henceforward, as far as possible, I shall send, just as I am doing today, the bulk of Gujarati material by Saturday's post. Please be careful, as I do not read again what I write. Do send me *The Indian Review*. It will be possible for me to translate from it.

I was very much pleased to read Maganlal's letter. It is good that you have grown vegetables. Let me know if pests cause any damage to them. Whose plot is the best? Dada Sheth has not yet called me. I shall come if he does.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a Photostat of the original: S.N. 4236

¹ Hereafter the words are undecipherable. Then follow two paragraphs in Gujarati which have been here rendered into English.

[May 6, 1905]¹

His Excellency Lord Selborne will arrive shortly in Johannesburg. From the account of his career given by the well-known journalist, Mr. Stead, in the April issue of the *Review of Reviews*, it appears that, when His Excellency made the speech about the war on November 1, 1899, he was secretary to Mr. Chamberlain. While recounting, in the course of that speech, the causes of the war, he said that the British Government fought it not in order to deprive the Boers of their rights, but to accord equal rights both to Boer and Briton. The British Government was not actuated by self-interest or monetary consideration, but they wanted to determine and uphold the rights of other peoples. The British Government were the trustees of the people of Canada and Australia, the Negroes in South Africa and the Indian immigrants in the Transvaal. It was, therefore, their duty to wage war for the protection of these peoples. Since it was the duty of the British to keep the promises they had made, they were bound to protect the rights of all these peoples. It was the duty of the British Government to protect the rights of British subjects wherever they were, whether white or Coloured. It was on these grounds that His Excellency defended the war.

Quoting the above speech of Lord Selborne, Mr. Stead remarks, "Let us see how Lord Selborne stands by what he has said". Let us hope the noble lord will stick to his words and add luster to the name of England by relieving the Indians of the hardships they are labouring under.

Indian Opinion, 13-5-1905.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Chhaganlal Gandhi", May 6, 1905.

209. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

21-24, COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 11, 1905

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ
C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS
PHOENIX

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. Kaba writes to me saying he could not leave at the time he wanted to. He must have left on the 19th April. He tells me in his letter just received that he is coming without his wife. He may bring Harilal and Gokuldas with him, but as there is no cable-gram, I do not think they have left. I see Orchard is very dissatisfied. You have said nothing about him. Please let me know what the matter is. I have an astounding letter from Anandlal.¹ He says he is living by himself, and wants me to let him occupy the rooms occupied by Bean. Why is this? Why have you remained silent about it? Messrs. M. C. Camroodeen have sent me their statements. One is for rents to the extent of £92/2/11 and the other for goods of £238/9/2. Have you checked them? Have you the original invoices about the goods from London? I am sending them a draft for the rent account which, of course, will be subject to correction if there is any error in it. As I have just now got some money with me, I am sending Parsee Rustomjee £500, so that he may use it and whenever you require any money, you will be able to get some from him.

Yours sincerely,
[M. K. GANDHI]²

From a photostat of the original: S.N. 4237. Courtesy: Shri Arun Gandhi, Bombay

¹ Son of Amritlal and nephew of Gandhiji.

² This portion of the letter has been torn off.

210. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 11, 1905

OMAR HAJI AMOD, ESQ.

BOX 441

DURBAN

DEAR SHETH OMAR HAJI AMOD,

Your letter to hand. I am very sorry about Abdulla Sheth. Please tell Dada Sheth that, if he wants me to go there, he may not embarrass me by asking me to do so at my expense. I have to be very careful, as most of my money has been spent on Phoenix.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 10.

211. SIR ARTHUR LAWLEY AND THE BRITISH INDIANS

His Excellency, the High Commissioner, has been visiting Pieterburg in connection with an Agricultural Show, and British Indians took the opportunity of presenting His Excellency with a loyal address. The action is to be commended. They were able to draw from Sir Arthur Lawley some remarks on the Indian question. His Excellency is reported to have said that

of all the difficulties which presented themselves to the Government at the present time, none was harder than that dealing with the status of British Indians in this country. The Government realised the conspicuous and splendid services which had been rendered to the Empire by them in India and in other parts. The Government appreciated the value of those services fully. People in this country, however, recognised that the conditions governing the Indians were not the same as those existing in the land from which the latter came. Here prejudices had arisen in the minds of the people owing to past history with coloured classes, and the question of the Indians' presence was looked at from an entirely different standpoint. He was sure the Indians must recognise this. The Government was called on to hold the scales of justice impartially, and the question was still a matter of correspondence between the Home Government and the Colonial administration.

We thank Sir Arthur for his acknowledgement of India's contribution to the Empire; but the result of such acknowledgement, we are sorry to have to say, is very poor. We cannot help recalling His

Excellency's advice to Mr. Lyttelton that promises made to the British Indians, having been made in ignorance, were better broken than fulfilled. The British Indian Association has shewn conclusively that promises were made to the Indians in the Transvaal with full knowledge of the circumstances and by no means in ignorance. We fear that His Excellency has, shall we say with deference, committed the same mistake in his remarks quoted above. Why should he mix up the Indians with other Coloured classes? If a majority of the white people in the Transvaal will not see a distinction, is it not the duty of the Government to educate them up to a proper appreciation of it? How can Indians be expected to recognise unreasonable prejudice if it is meant thereby that they should bow to it? Recognition of such prejudice is undoubtedly necessary; but it is so only in order that it may be removed by calm discussion, and by placing constantly before the public the true facts. The Government "would hold the scales of justice impartially" only when it boldly tackles the question, and instead of indirectly encouraging the current prejudice, endeavours to stem its tide by taking up a firm attitude. As to the carrying on of a correspondence with the Home Government, we have good reason to believe that this is meant to wring from the latter a consent to the imposing of further disabilities on British Indians. Has His Excellency studied carefully the very moderate propositions made by the British Indians in the Transvaal? Has his Government ever told the people of the Transvaal that the claims put forward by the Indians are extremely reasonable, and that they have shewn a laudable desire to meet the views of the white Colonists so far as possible?

Indian Opinion, 13-5-1905

212. JUVENILE SMOKING

There appears, in a recent issue of the *Cape Government Gazette*, an interesting Bill to be introduced by Mr. T. L. Schreiner, the well-known member of the Cape House of Assembly. Mr. Schreiner is known to be a philanthropist and a moralist. The Bill we are alluding to is called the "Youths' Smoking Prevention Bill", and is intended to prohibit smoking by youths of or under the age of 16 years, or appearing to be so. The manner in which the Honourable Gentleman wishes to achieve his object is very simple. The Bill makes it criminal for any tobacconist to sell tobacco, cigars, or cigarettes to boys appearing to be of 16 years or under. It also authorises the police to confiscate and destroy any tobacco, pipe, cigar or cigarettes

found on the person of such youths and authorises the parents or guardians of the latter to sue the seller of the offensive product for a refund of the money paid to him, notwithstanding destruction of the things sold, whilst it also enables teachers in Government schools to punish smoking by boys as a school offence. It has been often said that people cannot be made sober by an act of Parliament, and the same may be equally applicable to Mr. Schreiner's Bill; but we are not prepared to concur in the view that temperance legislation has not been productive of some good. We are inclined to think that this Bill, if it meet with the approval of the Cape House, will be a step in the right direction. Smoking, in any case, is neither a desirable nor a clean habit, and whilst, under certain circumstances, it may be of some use, and may also be a great soother of pain, the habit of smoking amongst boys is undoubtedly harmful, and ought to be checked by all legitimate means. The Bill is, perhaps, proof of the existence of the evil to a large extent. Indeed, we see the habit often indulged in by telegraph boys and messengers who are much below 16 years. The specious plea is often put forward, in defence of juvenile smoking, that, if it is good for adults, it could not be bad for youths. A moment's thought, however, would convince the casuists that what is good for the one is not necessarily good for the other; and smoking is one of such things which may not be indulged in by boys with impunity. It undermines their constitution and weakens their mental capacity. We, therefore, hope that Mr. Schreiner will be able to induce the Cape Parliament to accept the Bill.

Indian Opinion, 13-5-1905

213. EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA

News received by the latest mail from India gives full details of the havoc wrought by the earthquake. The Divine wrath that has descended on the people of Northern India is such that it will not be forgotten for years. Many an old historical monument, numerous villages, palatial buildings in large cities, the simple huts of the poor and tented camps of the army have all been devastated. Several families have been totally wiped out. The greatest damage has been done to Dharmasala, the Kangra valley, Palampur and Mussoorie. The account of the condition of the victims of the calamity is very pitiable indeed. Men were rendered quite helpless and died for want of food and water, as no news whatever of the people's condition could be had from certain parts due to a breakdown of telegraphic communications. The Government evinced great sympathy and ran special trains

to render all possible help to the distressed. Subscription lists have been opened in India as well as in Great Britain, and large sums have already been contributed. Our readers must already be aware that we, too have started a fund in aid of those unfortunate fellow-Indians who have been suddenly reduced to a state of penury. We hope everyone will do his duty and contribute to the fund to the best of his capacity.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 13-05-1905

214. LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 13, 1905

MRS. ANNIE BESANT
CENTRAL HINDU COLLEGE
BENARES CITY
DEAR MADAM,

The Managers of the International Printing Press have sent me your letter to them regarding the reprint of your *Bhagawad Gita*. The responsibility for the advice, as to the reprint and inclusion of the portrait, must rest entirely on my shoulders. I know that ordinarily it would not be considered a proper thing to reprint a book without the author's permission. A gentleman offered to have a translation of the *Bhagawad Gita* printed for distribution among Hindu boys and other if the Managers printed it at cost price. He was also in a hurry. Reprint of your translation was suggested. The matter was referred to me and, after much careful thought, as there was no time left for reference to you, I advised that your translation might be reprinted for circulation in South Africa. I felt that the motive of the management was pure, and that when the circumstances, under which the edition was published, were brought to your notice, you would overlook any apparent impropriety. Simultaneously with the publication, a letter, explaining the whole of the circumstances, was sent to you over the signature of the Manager and Proprietor. It seems to have miscarried. We were all wondering why there was no letter from you, either of disapproval or approval. Your letter of the 27th March, however, explains the absence of any previous communication from you. As to the portrait, I can only say that, if a mistake has been committed, it has arisen from excessive reverence for yourself. When I suggested the inclusion of

the portrait, I had in my mind the interpretation that was likely to be placed upon the act by some people, but I again felt that you would not resent the indiscretion, if such it was, when you came to know that a large number of the copies went to the Indian youths. Rightly or wrongly, as you are aware, publication or printing of such portraits in sacred works is not uncommon in India. Only 1,000 copies were printed. Of these, there are perhaps not more than 200 left, and these are being distributed or sold now probably at the rate of 5 per month, and then only among real inquirers.

I have now placed the whole position before you, and it remains for me to express my deep regret for the offence done to your feelings and to apologise for it. If you consider that any public statement is necessary, or complete withdrawal of the book from further circulation, or simple taking out of the portrait is necessary, your wishes shall be carried out.

*I remain,
Dear Madam,
Your obedient servant,*

From the typewritten office copy: S. N. 4238.

215. MR. GANDHI'S CLARIFICATION¹

May 13, 1905

I am glad the Editor forwarded the above letter to me, and I am grateful to Mr. Vavda for having expressed his views. There was only one object before me in delivering these speeches, viz., to serve Indians. I readily accepted the invitation to give an ideal of the Hindu religion in India and what it stood for. While doing so, I found it necessary to compare it with other religions. But in this, my one consideration was to point out, as far as possible, the special excellences of each religion and create a favourable impression on the minds of the whites. All the facts stated by me were drawn from history, which we have been learning at school since childhood. That Islam was spread by force is a historical fact. But along with it, I also pointed out that the potent cause of the spread of Islam was its simplicity and its

¹ In one of the lectures delivered on the Hindu religion under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, Johannesburg, *vide* "Hinduism," March 10, 1905 and March 18, 1905. Gandhiji, referring to the spread of Islam, had said that the majority of converts to Islam came from the lower classes. He had also mentioned fervour or passion as a powerful trait of Islam, which was responsible for many good deeds and sometimes for bad ones also.

special virtue of regarding all as equals. That the majority of converts to Islam were Hindus from the lower classes is also a fact that can be proved; and I, for one, do not consider that to be in any way derogatory. To me personally, there is no distinction between a Brahmin and a *bhangi*¹. And I consider it a merit of Islam that those who were dissatisfied with the social distinctions in Hinduism were able to better their condition by embracing Islam. Nor did I suggest that all the converts to Islam came only from the lower classes of Hindu society. And I have not the least idea that by the lower classes are meant only the untouchable Dheds. While I admit that men from the higher classes such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas also became Muslims, it is universally known that the bulk of converts was not drawn from among them. However, the point I want to emphasise is that no stigma attaches to Islam if the Hindus of the lower castes became Muslims. On the contrary, it shows its excellence, of which the Muslims should be proud.

As for the fervour or passion of Islam, I do hold the view I have already stated. Mr. Vavda's interpretation of the word fervour or passion is quite mistaken. I have used it in a complimentary sense, and have clearly pointed out that it is a strong point of Islam. Nothing worth while can be accomplished without real fervour. The Turks could resist Russia and Greece successfully only when they fought desperately with real fervour, and now all are afraid of the Turkish soldiers. None could lay hands on Rajputana while the Rajputs fought with fervour. Japan has been able to take the fort of Port Arthur² only because she has been fighting with fervour. Fervour is as necessary in other tasks as it is in war, and it is a positive virtue. Edison is making inventions because of passion. It was the passion of Watt which led to the invention of the steam engine and made travelling in the world easy. And we shall be able to come together and succeed in our fight for the redress of our grievances against the whites if we have the same passion. This passion is the special merit of Islam. We shall benefit immensely if this very passion is brought to bear on other tasks.

These statements of Gandhiji created a stir among Indian Muslims in South Africa and several letters of protest were received by the Editor, *Indian Opinion*, who published three of them along with this letter which is Gandhiji's reply to Mr. A. E. Vavda's letter dated May 9, 1905.

¹ Scavenger.

² The Russian fleet at Port Arthur was defeated by the Japanese on August 10, 1904.

I have nothing more to add. I know that the question that arose in the mind of Mr. Vavda has arisen in the minds of others as well. I have said what I considered to be true. In doing so, I had no intention of offending the feelings of even a single individual. To my mind, there is no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim or Christian. I have frequently said so and, I believe, I have been acting accordingly. I maintain that Hindu religion teaches us to look upon all with an equal eye without making distinctions between Hindu and Muslim, Brahmin and *bhangi*, and that is the religion I follow.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

216. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

21-24, COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P.O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 13, 1905

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. It reassures me about Anandlal. Still I am anxious to know from him why he wants to live alone. If the people at Rustomjee's are slow, you should hurry them on. M. K. Patel has not yet paid. I think I will receive the money some time next month. The £ 6 you saw in the notice I have explained to you are part of the subscriptions I brought from Cape Town. I have told you that the three items on the list represent subscriptions brought from Cape Town, and the names of the persons who have paid, including the advertisers, have been already sent to you. Did you not receive them? £ 1/14/- represents two more subscriptions collected by Mr. Gool. One of the subscribers is Wilson. The other name is one I did not receive through Lucheram who brought the money. Lucheram has received the parcel but has not yet paid. The £ 5 are not to be paid to the Press by you. I have explained why I have transferred the amount to the Press. It is

part of capital expenditure. You need not therefore bother about it. I hope the men who were ill are better now. For the shooting by Sam,¹ gentle persuasion and chaffing are the only remedies. I am afraid nothing more can be done. With reference to Kitchin, I suggest that you should go over to him and ask him to explain why he seems to be doing nothing. I know he won't resent it and in any case it is better that you should understand him thoroughly. Never mind about the weekly statement. You are only to print two more copies of the magazine. I do not know whether we will be able to recover the full amount. I am however hoping that we will. Having gone so far I feel that we ought to print the 12 numbers. You are now printing the eleventh and there will only remain the twelfth to be published. For the rest, if they want us to publish them, we will require a guarantee. I am glad you have received the Gujarati letter about my lectures. Print it in full in the next issue and print also my letter². It shows that the paper is being eagerly read, and that is what we want. Misunderstandings will sometimes happen. That however need not make us flinch from our duty. Let that letter be printed first and underneath my explanation. There was some talk of the same nature here also, and though I have been trying to explain it, the letter you have send me enables me to give much fuller and more public explanation. For the time being, you may expect 32 sides of the scribbling paper in Gujarati per week from me. Why was a bill sent to N. Sen? Was it upon advice from Madanjit? You should write to the gentleman telling him that the account was sent because Madanjit wrote, if that is a fact; otherwise tell him that it was sent in inadvertence and that the management apologise for it. I enclose for your perusal as also of Kitchin, West and Bean, if they have seen Mrs. Besant's letter, copy of my letter³ to her, and even if they have not seen her letter, you may mention the fact to them and show the copy. Evidently, Bean supplies for you Polak's place. He says it is well that he went to Phoenix if only for making your and Maganlal's acquaintance.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the typewritten original: S. N. 4239.

¹ "Sam" was Govindaswami, engineer in the Phoenix settlement and a Shikari.

² *Vide* "Mr. Gandhi's Clarification", 13-5-1905.

³ *Vide* "Letter to Annie Besant", 13-5-1905.

217. LETTER TO KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK¹

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 13, 1905

MESSRS. JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.
84, FIELD STREET
DURBAN

MY DEAR KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK,

I enclose herewith a cheque for £ 500 which please credit to the Press account. I can spare this sum for the present and am, therefore, sending it; for I know that, if it remains there, it will save Shethji so much interest. Out of this amount, please give Chhaganlal as much money as he may want and I shall ask for the remainder when I require it. But whatever money accumulates with me, I should prefer to keep there and hence this cheque.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 35.

218. LETTER TO PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 13, 1905

RUSTOMJEE JIVANJI GHORKHODU, ESQ.
11, KHETWADI LANE
KHETWADI
BOMBAY

MY DEAR SHETH PARSEE RUSTOMJEE,

I hope you have reached safely.

I receive letters regularly from Kaikhushroo and Abdul Huk. Since they write to you also, there is no need for me to say more.

I know that you have to pay interest on overdrafts. As I had at present a little money to spare, I have sent the firm a cheque for £500.² A part of the amount, say £250, will go to Chhaganlal; even so

¹ Managers of Messrs. Jalbhai Sorabji Bros., owned by Parsee Rustomjee, who was away in India at the time.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

the balance will remain there. I shall take it back if I need it; and if I have more to spare, I shall send that also. Even otherwise we do not think it proper to hold up a big sum due to you from the Press, especially when, as I believe, I have money to spare.

Please do pay attention to the education of the children. Do not forget what I told you about your health.

My Salaams to Maji.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 36.

219. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI¹

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 15, 1905

[SIR,]

Natal of late has been very active in its anti-Indian crusade. Attention has been drawn to the various Bills that have appeared in the *Government Gazette*, and which are now before the Natal Parliament.

The Firearms Bill, without the slightest justification, brackets the Indians with the Natives, and places them, so far as that Bill is concerned, under the Native Affairs Department. I need hardly say what the moral effect of this is likely to be.

There is another Bill published which makes occupation by Indians of rural land in Natal no occupation at all. The Bill seeks to impose a tax of one halfpenny per annum on every acre of unoccupied rural land when it is beyond 249 acres owned by one individual or company. For the purposes of the Bill, such land occupied by Indians, if they are not owners, would be liable to taxation. This is insulting and unjust. It is Indians who have made the cultivation of the coast lands possible.

India Office: Judicial and Public Records, 1960.

¹ The original is not available. This is only an extract, quoted by Dadabhai Naoroji in his letter dated June 6, 1905, to the Secretary of State for India.

220. LETTER TO HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 15, 1905

MR. HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB
BOX 88
DURBAN

DEAR SHETH SHRI HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB,

Your telegram to hand. I have sent a reply. Lord Selborne is coming this month, so that it is very difficult for me to leave this place before his visit. There is a move to present an address of welcome to him, and if that is decided upon, it will be necessary for me to remain here. Whether he will accept the address or not will be known this week. Meanwhile, I have written to Abdulla Sheth not to force [us] to incur expenses.

I have asked for at least £40¹ to be sent to me if I needs must come. My present position is not such as to allow me to go there at my own expense—for which please excuse me.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 40.

221. LETTER TO ATTORNEY-GENERAL

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 17, 1905

TO
THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL
PIETERMARITZBURG

SIR,

I venture to enclose herewith copy of the correspondence² between the Principal Immigration Restriction Officer and myself regarding the forfeiture of a deposit by a British Indian.

I wish only to emphasise the fact that there was absolutely no fraud on the part of the holder of the pass. That, according to his own version, he was too ill to leave the Colony. That, in any case, he had no intention of misusing the pass he held, and that he is a poor man to whom the £10 were advanced by a friend.

¹ Telegram dated May 15 reads: "Will end month do please send forty pounds least."

² This is not available.

Under the circumstances and in view of the fact that there seems to be no warrant for a forfeiture, apart from an action at law, I venture to trust that you will be pleased to authorise the Principal Immigration Restriction Officer to refund the amount of the deposit. I have no desire to lay stress upon the legal point, but I feel bound, in justice to the applicant, to draw your attention to it.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

Letter Book (1905): No. 65

222. LETTER TO PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 17, 1905

[TO]

RUSTOMJEE JIVANJEE GHORKHODU

MY DEAR SHETH SHRI PARSEE RUSTOMJEE,

Your letter to hand. I was very glad to read it. I am sure your mother must have been greatly delighted at your meeting her. It is a matter for great satisfaction that your heart's desire has been fulfilled.

I hope you will now pay sufficient attention to the education and conduct of your children.

You did a very proper thing in continuing your simple diet on board the steamer. And I am glad to have your assurance that you will be regular in your walks, food and baths in Bombay. Please do not entertain the feeling that I have rendered you a service. My only desire is that your health should continually improve and you might live long and do good deeds.

Please persuade my children to come here when you see them.

Please do not entertain any anxiety about the work here. I frequently receive letters. I believe both of them are working satisfactorily.

I am making enquiries about the bills in respect of previous cases. Please give my respects to Maji. Ask Jal¹ to write me a letter. Get Soharab² also to write a few lines below it.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 70.

¹ Sons of Parsee Rustomjee.

² *ibid*

223. *LETTER TO KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 17, 1905

MESSRS. JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.

MY DEAR KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK,

I have received your letter. Contribute up to a maximum of five guineas to the Earthquake Relief Fund, provided Omar Sheth pays that much. Do consult him. Tell him that my advice is that both should pay that much. If, however, Omar Sheth contributes less, you may also pay the same amount. Let not your subscription exceed his. Get others also to contribute.

I have received a letter from Rustomjee Sheth, wherein he inquires about Mr. Laughton's bill in respect of the previous cases. Try and get it reduced, if possible; pay it, if not paid already; and inform him accordingly.

Rustomjee Sheth desires that you should so arrange things that either of you is almost always present at the shop. Do write to reassure him about this. I have written telling him that the business would always remain safe in your hands and that he need not worry at all.

You did well in having the photograph taken there.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 72.

224. *LETTER TO ISSA HAJI SOOMAR*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 18, 1905

TO

ISSA HAJI SOOMAR, ESQ.

RANAVAV

PORBUNDER

INDIA

DEAR SHETH SHRI ISSA HAJI SOOMAR,

Received your letter. I am glad to know that you agree with my opinion. If you take Mr. Joshi with you, the expenses incurred on acc-

ount of paper, etc., will be so insignificant that it is useless to ask for them. I believe you will surely benefit whenever you may go to England.

You need not be discouraged because your brothers do not help you.

Those who realise their duty have got to discharge it, whether or not others join them in doing so.

You must have seen the account of the property case appearing in *Indian Opinion*.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 71.

225. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 18, 1905

OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI, ESQ.

BOX 441

DURBAN

DEAR SHETH SHRI OMAR HAJI AMOD,

Your letter to hand. I shall come there as soon as possible. But as there is a move afoot to present an address of welcome to Lord Selborne, it is very difficult to leave before that function is over.

I would not have made a demand for money but for the fact that, in view of my present position, it will be very difficult for me to come there at my own expense. I shall, therefore, be thankful if Dada Sheth sends some money at least.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 75.

226. LETTER TO S. V. PATEL

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 19, 1905

MR. S. V. PATEL

P. O. BOX 208

KLERKSDORP

DEAR SIR,

Probably the best medical education is to be obtained in Germany, but then a knowledge of German would be necessary. Ordinarily, a medical degree obtained in Glasgow is considered very good, and no matter what degree may be held in Bombay, the course takes, as a rule, 5 years. A Glasgow degree would be considered quite sufficient for practice in any part of South Africa.

The address of the paper *India* is 84-85, Palace Chambers, Westminster, London.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 93.

227. LORD CURZON ON THE INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Indian mail to hand brings the full text of Lord Curzon's remarks, at the time of the Budget debate in the Viceregal Council, on the Indians in South Africa.

His Excellency made a lengthy reference to the status of the British Indians in South Africa, and the British Indian settlers must feel deeply indebted to him for his strong advocacy. His Excellency devoted a considerable portion of his speech to the situation in Natal, and we now understand, for the first time, the nature of the work done by the delegates who proceeded to India some time ago on behalf of the Natal Government. Their object was to impose further restrictions on indentured Indians by making their return, at the end of their service, absolutely compulsory. Lord Curzon, we are glad to be able to say, repudiated any such suggestion, unless certain concessions were granted by the Natal Government in favour of non-indentured Indians settled in the Colony. His Lordship asked for the eventual abolition of the £3 tax, amendment of the Dealers' Licenses Act, as also of the

regulations in which Indians are classed with barbarous races, and other minor matters.

All this is extremely satisfactory, and it shews that the Indian appeal to the Viceroy has received very full consideration. His Excellency added that he was able to obtain one concession, namely, that three years' residence in the Colony was accepted by the Natal Government as freeing Indian residents from the prohibition under the Immigration Restriction Act. This means that His Lordship has been led to believe that it was a concession granted by the Natal Government. If so, we are sorry, because it would be a misleading statement. As a matter of fact, the Natal Government were bound to lay down certain rules with reference to the interpretation of the term "previous domicile". The law, as it stood, stated that those Indians who were previously domiciled in the Colony were free from the educational prohibition. In practice, two years' residence was accepted by Mr. Smith, as a rule, as evidence of previous domicile; and it was on Mr. Smith's recommendation that the Government have raised the period to three years and embodied it in the Act. Also, we may inform His Excellency that three years' residence is not necessarily to be accepted as sufficient evidence of domicile. We make bold to say that, but for the amendment of the Act, it would not be possible, even for an Indian who had resided in the Colony for six months, and could prove that he had changed his residence to Natal and intended to be domiciled, to be refused exemption. What, therefore, His Lordship considers is a concession, we are, with great deference, obliged to say, is no concession at all. The question, however, is whether His Excellency can safely stop where he has left the question. During the current year, the Natal Parliament has been actively pursuing an anti-Indian policy. We have already drawn attention to Bills containing anti-Indian clauses. The Dealers' Licenses Act is a thing of constant worry and irritation. Is it right, then, that Natal should still continue to draw upon India for the staple of her prosperity, and reject the advances of the Indian Government on behalf of free British Indians? To say the least, it is a one-sided bargain, in which Natal gets all without giving anything in return.

His Lordship dwelt on the position in the Transvaal. His statement is a recapitulation of Mr. Lyttelton's despatch, but it shews that he is fully alive to the interests of his wards. We hope that his watchful guardianship will, in the near future, cause the Indians to be released from the galling restraints under which they labour in that Crown Colony.

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

228. ANTI-INDIAN LEGISLATION IN NATAL

In a recent number of the *Natal Government Gazette*, there are three Bills published which shew how bad the financial position of the Colony is. One of the Bill is intended to impose a poll-tax of £1 per head on every adult male of the age of 18 years or over. It exempts from liability to pay the tax, poor or infirm persons, as also indentured Indians whilst they are under indenture. The second Bill imposes a succession duty on the estates of deceased persons, the minimum duty, in the case of lineal descendants or ascendants bearing one per cent. The two measures are likely, if they are accepted by the Parliament of Natal, to produce a fair amount of revenue.

It is, however, the third Bill with which we are more immediately concerned, and which raises a very important question, affecting the Indian community. The Bill is entitled "To Impose a Tax upon Unoccupied Rural Lands". It is sought thereby to impose a tax of a half penny per acre on every piece of unoccupied rural land of an extent of 250 acres or upwards. Clause 5 of the Bill states that

land shall be deemed to be unoccupied unless the owner or some European has continuously resided thereon for at least nine out of the twelve months prior to the first day of March in any year.

Thus, any piece of rural land that may be occupied by Indians in the Colony, other than the owners, would, if the Bill becomes law, be considered as unoccupied for the purpose of imposing the halfpenny tax. The Bill may affect Indian landlords in the coast districts, where land is cultivated only by Indians.

This policy of constantly insulting and irritating the Indians without cause ought, in the interests of the Empire, to be checked by Mr. Lyttelton. It is true that Natal enjoys complete self-government, and it is therefore at liberty to make its own laws; but when liberty becomes license, it is a question whether the authorities in Downing Street, who are the custodians of the honourable traditions of the Empire, should not check legislation which insults British subjects not directly represented in the Legislature.

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

229. *THE IMMIGRATION LAW IN THE CAPE*

The Report of the Immigration Officer of the Cape, Dr. Gregory, on the working of the Immigration Law in that Colony, has been published. We find therein that, of the persons seeking entry into the Cape last month, 298 were not allowed to enter. Of these, 56 were disallowed because they were not literate in English, 156 because they were paupers and 74 because they were illiterate and poor; twelve were not allowed to land because they were prostitutes. Dr. Gregory's view is that, because of hard times, many who would have otherwise come have not been able to do so, and that, therefore, it is not possible to say what the real effect of this law has been. He also believes that many Indians were put to difficulty in not being able to land. And even if it is held that this law is good for preventing the entry of Indians, it is questionable whether it is just to prevent British Indian subjects from entering, when Yiddish-speaking Hebrews who are actual beggars can do so by borrowing money from their friends. It seems from the Report that Dr. Gregory himself regards this law as unjust. The Cape Government have promised Indians in the Cape that the provision in the law regarding language would be so amended as to make the knowledge of an Indian language acceptable. It is the duty of leading Indians in the Cape to get that promise implemented. We are sure that, if they pursue the matter energetically, the Government will make the necessary changes in the Act. We hope that the Cape Indians will take up the matter vigorously and see it through.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

230. *THE LATE MR. TATA*¹

A mammoth meeting was held early last April in the Town Hall in Bombay to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. Tata, with Lord Lamington, the Governor, in the chair. The first resolution regarding the raising of a memorial was moved by the popular Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Sir Lawrence Jenkins. Justice Badruddin

¹ Sir Jamshedji Nasserwanji Tata (1839-1904), Indian industrialist and philanthropist.

Tyabji,¹ Justice Chandavarkar, the Honourable Mr. Parekh,² Sir Bhalchandra³ and others attended the meeting. All the speakers, including the Governor, pointed out that a gentleman as liberal, simple and as sagacious as Mr. Tata had hardly lived before in India. In whatever he did, Mr. Tata never looked to self-interest. He never cared for any titles from the Government, nor did he ever take distinctions of caste or race into consideration. As Justice Badruddin observed, the Parsis, the Muslims, the Hindus—all were equal to him. For him it was enough that they were Indians. He was a man of deep compassion. Tears came to his eyes at the thought of the sufferings of the poor. Though he possessed unlimited wealth, he spent nothing from it on his own pleasures. His simplicity was remarkable. May India produce many Tatas!

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

231. SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA

No one has served Bombay as well as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. He has been a member of the Corporation for the last thirty years and attended its meetings, forgoing important lucrative cases. He is, therefore, regarded as the Father of the Corporation. There is talk of offering him the presidentship of the Corporation this year in view of the forthcoming visit to India of the Prince of Wales. Since he already holds a knighthood, *The Times of India* suggests that it would be only proper for the Government to confer on him the title of Lord Mayor, when he assumes the office of President. If the Presidents of the Corporations of Melbourne and Sydney can be Lord Mayors, why not those of Calcutta and Bombay?

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 20-5-1905

¹ A distinguished member of the Bombay Bar and later judge of the Bombay High Court. He presided over the third session of the Indian National Congress at Madras in December 1887.

² Sir Gokuldas Kahandas Parekh, a member of the Bombay Legislative Council.

³ Sir Bhalchandra Bhatavdekar, an eminent doctor and public-worker of Bombay.

232. LETTER TO HAJI MAHOMED HAJI DADA

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 20, 1905

HAJI MAHOMED HAJI DADA, ESQ.

BOX 173

DURBAN

DEAR SHETH HAJI MAHOMED HAJI DADA,

I have not read the book, *Kasassul Ambiya*.¹ If you send me a copy, I shall be able to say whether it can be reproduced in *Indian Opinion* or not. If it contains historical material useful to English readers, it may be possible to publish an English translation. I have often heard of this book. Is it not likely that the stories in it are already known to most of our readers? In case they are, it will be a problem deciding whether to reproduce it or not.

I am collecting money from Gunavantrai. £25 have already been received and credited to the account of Seth Haji Habib and I expect the balance will come at the rate of £5 a month.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.102.

233. LETTER TO ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 20, 1905

MESSRS. JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.

84, FIELD STREET

DURBAN

MY DEAR SHRI² ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO,

Your letter to hand. The power of attorney passed by Sheth Azam Gulam Hussain has been found.

Hussain Issop seems to be an employee in the shop. He has asked for an advance of £15 against his salary. He says that you have

¹ An Urdu book containing the lives of the prophets and saints of Islam.

² The original has "Shri 5," which means that the word Shri is to be repeated five times. Gandhiji has addressed others in this way.

asked him to get my sanction. I think there should be no objection to giving him such an advance, if his work is quite satisfactory, if he is trustworthy and is really in need of money. But I leave that to your discretion.¹

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.103.

234. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD AND ADAMJI MIANKHAN

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 20, 1905

DEAR SHETH SHRI UMAR HAJI AMOD
AND SHRI ADAMJI MIANKHAN,

I hope the petition² I sent earlier through Mr. Nazar has been sent to the Assembly. If it has not been sent already, there seems to be very little time left to do so now.

I am to-day³ sending another petition; it relates to another Act. I hope there will be no delay in these matters.

There is a private Bill of Durban about which a representation can be also made through a lawyer. I have suggested to Mr. Nazar to do so.

This time both of you have to exert yourselves to the utmost and work courageously. It does not matter if there are only a few signatures. At times, even the signatures only of the Chairman and the Secretary are enough.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

Enclosure: 1.

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.104.

¹ Gandhiji, it would appear, was a consultant in the absence of Parsee Rustomjee; all sorts of problems were referred to him and his advice was often sought by the managers of the firm.

² *Vide* "Memorial to the Natal Assembly", 7-4-1905.

³ This is not available.

235. *LETTER TO HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB*

[JOHANNESBURG,]
May 23, 1905

MR. HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB
BOX 88
DURBAN

DEAR SHETH SHRI HAJI DADA HAJI HABIB,

I have received your letter together with the P. note. I am returning the P. note as I have no use for it. My condition is such that I hesitate to spend any money from my own pocket even for a short time. But since you are so importunate, I shall leave this place at the earliest if no satisfactory reply is received from Abdulla Sheth.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the original Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 116

236. *LETTER TO PARSI COWASJI*

[JOHANNESBURG,]
May 23, 1905

MR. PARSI COWASJI
115, FIELD STR.
DURBAN

DEAR MR. PARSI COWASJI,

Your letter to hand. I have had a talk with Rustomjee Sheth about you. He was not inclined to render help without a surety. I, therefore, cannot give my consent. The best thing for you to do would be to write to Rustomjee Sheth and patiently await his reply.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 119

237. *LETTER TO GOVERNMENT OFFICER, CHINDE*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 23, 1905

THE GOVERNMENT OFFICER
REPRESENTING THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
CHINDE
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA
SIR,

At present in the Transvaal there are a few hundred Indians who are desirous of proceeding to Chinde¹ if they can receive employment on the Railways that, I understand, are being constructed under the Government. Some of them have already worked in Chinde or in other parts of British Central Africa.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly let me know whether there is any scope for them and, if there is, where they should apply.

I have the honour to remain

Sir,

Your obedient servant

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 120.

238. *LETTER TO DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF POLICE²*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 23, 1905

TO
THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
“A” DIVISION
JOHANNESBURG
SIR,

I have the honour to enclose herewith, on behalf of Messrs. M. C. Camroodeen & Co., a warning issued from your office, which

¹ A small town in Portuguese East Africa, in which the British held a concession till 1923.

² A similar letter was addressed the same day to the Commissioner, South African Republic (Letter Book: 1905, No. 126).

described them as Camroodeen “coolie” .

I hope that the description is an unconscious mistake on the part of the official who has issued the warning. I need hardly draw your attention to the fact that the description is in the highest degree offensive, and that it would be totally wrong to describe Messrs. M. C. Camroodeen & Co. as “coolies”. I may add, theirs is one of the oldest established British Indian firms in South Africa

I have the honour to remain

Sir,

Your obedient servant

M. K. GANDHI

1 Enclosure.¹

Letter Book (1905): No. 124.

239. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 23, 1905

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS

PHOENIX

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I send herewith Municipal Notice in Gujarati to be printed. Please have it translated in Tamil, Hindi and Urdu also. See that the translation is accurate. Please print the whole [in] four languages on double foolscap, all on the same paper print 10,000. You will see that the matter is of immediate importance, and seeing that it is a municipal matter, it should take precedence of others if there is pressure of work. Use decent paper. No proof is required, so that there need be no delay. I send you the original in English also, in order to enable you to have your translation without difficulty.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Enclosures²

Letter Book (1905): No. 133.

¹ This is not available.

² These are not available.

240. LETTER TO E. A. WALTERS

[JOHANNESBURG,]
May 25, 1905

E. A. WALTERS, ESQ.
WINDSORTON
CAPE COLONY

DEAR SIR,

RE: COOVADIA & SIDAT

In this matter, all my letters recently sent to you have been ignored. The debtor himself writes to me saying that he has paid you the full amount. Unless therefore I have a settlement from you, I shall be most reluctantly compelled to submit the matter to the Incorporated Law Society at Cape Town.¹

Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 145.

241. LETTER TO KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK

[JOHANNESBURG,]
May 25, 1905

MESSRS. JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.
84, FIELD STREET
DURBAN

MY DEAR MESSRS. KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK,

Your letter to hand. In the matter of Nuruddin, you should act strictly in accordance with the instructions given by Rustomjee Sheth. I have asked him to write to Rustomjee Sheth directly.

Make an advance of up to £7 against his salary to Hussein Issop if he is trustworthy and his work satisfactory.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 153.

¹ Gandhiji did this later; *vide* "Letter to Law Society", 22-6-1905

242. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

May 26, 1905

OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

BOX 441

DURBAN

DEAR SHRI OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI,

Received your letter as well as copies of Sheth Haji Mahomed's letter. I am very much surprised and sorry to read the latter and to know that even mature and wise men [sometimes] forget themselves. I think it would have been good if you had sent a short reply as soon as the letter was received. But since no reply has been sent so far, I see no need to do so now. I shall write to you if I receive a letter.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.157.

243. EMPIRE DAY

Empire Day—the anniversary of the birth of the late Queen-Empress—is a day set apart by universal consent in all parts of the Empire outside Great Britain to commemorate the reign of its most beloved Queen. It is but a deeper tribute to her memory that it is becoming known as “Empire” rather than as “Victoria” Day; for it is a recognition that no person has done more to draw together the units of those vast Dominions of which she was the Queen-Empress. By her large heart and wide sympathy; by her abilities and queenly virtues; above all, by her personal goodness as a woman, she has for ever enshrined herself in the hearts of every nation under the British flag. The lesser persons who administered her power might make mistakes; injustice even might be committed in her name; but the people ever knew that the mistakes and the injustice came not from Victoria the Good. As wife and as mother, she proved herself as worthily as Queen; and knowing that domestic virtue alone makes a household happy and prosperous, she was a firm believer in the scriptural statement: Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. She saw, before all others, that the British Empire must

be founded on the rock of righteousness—individual and national—if it were to have a permanent prosperity. Other nations and other Empires the past has held; but all have been broken on this “rock of offense”. From the first, when she spoke those simple words: “I will be good”, she endeared herself to her subjects the world over. It may be noted here that Victoria owed her greatness in very large part, under Providence, to her own wise mother; and both before and since, great men and women without number have dutifully acknowledged the same. It is always true that a good mother makes a wise child. As another instance of this, we have but to see the universal satisfaction that is felt with the present occupant of the British throne, who by his tact and wisdom has already done so much for the Empire and the world. Of all contemporary monarchs, King Edward best exhibits that peculiar genius which constitutes true kingship; and this is due in most part to the influence of his august Mother.

In every way, then, Victoria is a name worthy to be honoured when we think of the Empire; and it is but fitting that the day set apart should be the anniversary of the hour that brought her into the world.

To Indians especially, Victoria Day should be sacred. No other person has done so much for the liberty of India as the late Queen-Empress. That this was recognised by the millions of India was apparent by the remarkable demonstrations of mourning that took place throughout India on her decease. Speaking of her, the Viceroy said:

The hearts of all the Indian people had been drawn together by this singular and beautiful combination of mother, woman and queen. It was easy to say much about the mark which this marvelous reign had left upon the history of India, and to indicate many points where the sagacious hand and influence of the deceased Sovereign had been felt; but were not all her reign and character summed up in the famous Proclamation of 1858, the Magna Charta of India, and the golden guide of our conduct and our aspirations? It might be said of her that she turned Great Britain into a worldwide Empire, with India as its cornerstone.

Victoria’s interest in India was always personal and profound. Not only did she surround herself with Indian servants; not only did she learn to speak and write Hindustani (no light task to one burdened with the cares of State); but she made the Viceroy send an account of the situation in India *by every mail*. And that her knowledge of Indian affairs was intimate is shewn by the following extract from one of her letters to Lord Northbrook.

The Queen trusts the English are now kinder in their conduct to the

Natives than they used to be. It is so essential that these unchristianlike feelings should no longer exist. It is everywhere her greatest wish that there should be the kindest and best feeling between classes who, after all, are the same before God.

“The same before God” —that was the spirit which inspired the great Proclamation; and of which the Empire has scarcely proved itself worthy. It is with regret that we say it; and it is with regret that we have to call the attention of our readers and the authorities to various matters in which the spirit of Victoria the Good has been violated, when we would have wished that this issue of our journal at least should be free from anything that would detract from our satisfaction in belonging to the great British Empire.

Indian Opinion, 27-5-1905

244. IN THE NATURE OF A TEST CASE

An important decision has been given by the Supreme Court in the case in which one Said Ismail and another were plaintiffs, and L. K. Jacobs was defendant in his capacity as Trustee in the Insolvent Estate of one Lucas, deceased. The original action was brought in the High Court at Johannesburg. The plaintiffs held some landed property there, but being prevented from registering the title in their own names, had it registered in the name of their friend, the deceased Lucas. This was in the year 1896. Until recently, they had remained in possession, with the knowledge of the authorities, and they had paid all the assessment and other rates. They adopted that course upon the advice of a prominent firm of solicitors in Johannesburg; and in order to protect themselves, they took from the deceased Lucas an irrevocable power of attorney to deal with the property, and also a lease with a clause as to automatic perpetual renewal. Lucas became insolvent before the war and, some time after, died. The original Trustee never brought up the property in question, in the schedule. In the year 1902, among other properties, this too was expropriated under the Expropriation Ordinance by the Johannesburg Municipality, and compensation was fixed at £2,000. The award was naturally given in the name of the registered owner, namely, Lucas; but as the case was prosecuted by the plaintiffs, and as they claimed the money—the proceeds of the property which they contended Lucas held in secret trust for them—the money was deposited in the hands of the Master

of the Supreme Court, and the parties were left to have an adjudication as to their rights. The plaintiffs, therefore, sued the defendant for a declaration of rights, and demanded that an order should be issued to the Master for payment of the money to them. The defence raised was, first, that the plaintiffs, being British Indians, could not, in virtue of Law 3 of 1885, hold landed property, and that, therefore, the agreement on the part of Lucas to hold it for them was illegal and void, and, therefore, not capable of being enforced at law. The second ground of defence was that, even if it was competent for Lucas to enter into the agreement with the plaintiffs, the latter had only a personal right against him, and could thus only prove their claim as concurrent creditors, but could not make good their claim to the money on the strength of a universal right, in other words, as preferent creditors. Sir William Smith, though not without some hesitation, decided the point in favour of the plaintiffs, and gave judgement with costs. From this the defendant appealed, and the Supreme Court has adjudged on the appeal in favour of the defendant, holding, with him on the second defence raised. The net result, however, of this important judgement seems to be that the holding by Europeans of land for Indians is not illegal, but that, in the event of the insolvency of such Europeans, the Indians concerned must take the risk, unless their names are registered on the title-deeds, as *cestuis que trustent*. This case, therefore, takes the Indians a step further in their fight, and renders Law 3 of 1885 still more ineffective as a weapon to be used against them. It would be most interesting to test whether, as a matter of fact, if an Indian insisted on his name being registered as a *cestui que trust*, his name could be so registered. In the event of the successful prosecution of such a test case, Indians would practically be able to hold land in any part of the Transvaal without the slightest risk; and looking at it from a common sense standpoint, we are inclined to think that it follows as a corollary from the judgment of the Supreme Court. It would certainly be equitable, seeing that it has now been decided that Natives are free to hold landed property in any part of the Transvaal, and to have it registered in their own names.

Indian Opinion, 27-5-1905

245. MAHOMEDAN v. HINDU

It is with very great regret that we notice some correspondence in an East London journal between a Mahomedan and a Hindu. We should have thought that the palpable need for the utmost harmony between all sections of the Indian community in South Africa would have prevented amenities¹ of this nature. We do not desire to go into the merits of the letters, but merely to express out disapprobation of this kind of thing. We trust the writers will have the good sense to join in our regret and leave the correspondence where it stands. There are other and weightier matters that can more usefully employ their attention. We may perhaps be allowed to remind our readers that *Indian Opinion* is a journal specially devoted to the discussion of all Indian affairs in South Africa; and that, if unfortunately differences arise between Indians, our columns are the natural and most fitting medium for their ventilation.

Indian Opinion, 27-5-1905

246. SIR MANCHERJI AND MR. LYTTTELTON

Sir Mancherji asked Mr. Lyttelton why Indians were excluded from the right to vote in the Transvaal Constitution. He asked further whether or not the Constitution would be amended in order to enfranchise them. Mr. Lyttelton replied that the Boers interpreted the terms of the Peace Treaty, signed on the cessation of hostilities, to mean that no Coloured person would get the right to vote until the Transvaal attained full self-government. In deference to this interpretation, Mr. Lyttelton had excluded the Indians so as not to give any ground to the Boers to doubt the honesty of the British Government. The word used in the terms of the Treaty is "Native" and not "Coloured people". Now the word "Native" can in no way be interpreted to mean "Indians". That word is invariably used in South Africa for the natives of this country. The practice of including Indians and other Coloured people in the term "Native" is of recent origin, and that too only when it is specifically so laid down in a law. It is surprising that Mr. Lyttelton should have given the above explanation when the word is not normally so interpreted even today. If Indians are thus included in the term "Native", great harm is likely to done to them.

¹ Perhaps this word is used satirically in the sense of pleasant manners or is a misprint for 'enmities'.

There is not the slightest likelihood of the Dutch or the British granting the franchise to Indians on the attainment of self-government. Sir George Farrar, a noted gentleman of the Transvaal, has already declared that the “Natives” would never be granted the right to vote. His views regarding Indians are very unfavourable. He would not even dream of granting rights to an Indian, in preference to a “Native”.

The meaning of the above interpellation is that we should put up a tough fight whenever an attempt is made to include Indians in the term “Native”.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 27-5-1905

247. SMALLPOX IN JOHANNESBURG¹

Smallpox has made its appearance in Johannesburg. It is said to have entered through passenger steamers. It started with the Malay Location. The first case was a Malay one, followed by another of a white. According to Dr. Porter, five Indians have also been affected. Great strictness is being observed in the Malay Location; people's houses are being inspected morning and evening.

Much inconvenience is likely to be caused if smallpox spreads further. Compulsory inoculation has been introduced in the Malay Location. But that is not all. Regulations have been framed by the Town Council, and when they come into force, much difficulty is likely to be felt.

The remedy lies in the people's own hands. To keep the tenements clean, to bathe daily, to keep water, milk, etc., clean, to put on clean clothes, and to let plenty of air and light into the house; these are the preventive measures for smallpox or any other illness. If anyone in the house catches the disease, the fact should immediately be intimated to the authorities. The more the people conceal such diseases out of fear, the greater will be their hardships, the more widely will the disease spread, and the greater will be the repression by the authorities. The patient is bound eventually to be removed to hospital. If, therefore, we inform the authorities of our own accord,

¹ This appeared as “From Our Correspondent”.

there is likely to be less hardship. No harm will come to the patient if he is removed to hospital; on the contrary, he may recover the sooner for it.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 27-5-1905

248. LETTER TO MAHOMED SEEDAT

JOHANNESBURG,
May 27, 1905

MR. MAHOMED SEEDAT
C/O MR. M. C. ANGLIA
GREY STREET
DURBAN

DEAR SHETH SHRI MAHOMED SEEDAT AND OTHER ISLAMI TRUSTEES,

Your letter to hand. I find that you and the other gentlemen have been offended by my speeches¹ and my writings. I am sorry about this and beg to be forgiven.

My intention in that speech was to serve all Indians. I believe this was just the impression created on the minds of my hearers.

What I said was no doubt on the basis of history and I would request you in this connection to refer to *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Hunter's *Indian Empire*, and such other books.

To my mind, members of the lower castes are not base. I consider it a godly act to take care of them. You ask me my caste; well, I am a Vaishya.

What more shall I say?²

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI.

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 163.

¹ *Vide* "Hinduism" March 4 and 11, 1905

² Gandhiji had earlier explained his stand in some detail; vide "Mr. Gandhi's Clarification", 13-5-1905.

249. ADDRESS TO LORD SELBORNE

JOHANNESBURG,
[May 28, 1905]¹

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

We, the undersigned, representing the British Indian settlers in the Transvaal, beg to tender to Your Excellency a respectful welcome, and pray that your tenure of office may be marked by a return to prosperity of the country and by peace and good-will among the various sections of His majesty's subjects in this sub-continent. May we ask Your Excellency to convey to their Majesties the King-Empror and Queen-Empress an assurance of our loyalty to the Throne.

We beg to remain,
Your Excellency's humble servants,
ABDUL GANI,
A. A. PILLAY
M. K. GANDHI
[AND SEVENTEEN OTHERS]

Indian Opinion, 10-6-1905

250. LETTER TO ISSA HAJI SOOMAR

[JOHANNESBURG,]
June 1, 1905

TO
ISSA HAJI SOOMAR
RANAVAV
PORBUNDER
KATHIAWAD, INDIA

DEAR SHRI ISSA HAJI SOOMAR,

Your letter to hand. That Mr. Joshi is an able man is quite true. But I do not see any possibility of collecting any money here at present. Omar Sheth had given Mr. Majmudar² a considerable amount. You, too, can do likewise. If you go to England, you will have to

¹ The address was actually presented on Wednesday, June 7.

² Tryambaklal Majmudar of Junagadh, Gandhiji's fellow-student in England.

spend a lot; you should not therefore mind, if perchance a little more money is spent.

I am returning Mr. Joshi's letter herewith.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.210.

251. LETTER TO H. J. HOFMEYR

Delivered Personal

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 2, 1905

TO
H. J. HOFMEYR, ESQ.
ZIMAN'S BLDGS.
JOHANNESBURG
DEAR MR. HOFMEYR,

I must confess that your letter enclosing cheque staggers me because I venture to think that there is a principle at stake. The cheque was given to me ear-marked. You know the money belonged to me. It did not come out of anything I had for Said Ismail, and seeing that the property to buy which it was given was not purchased, I think I was entitled to a return of the full cheque. I know that I won't come to grief with reference to the charges deducted by you, but, to my mind, it is hardly conducive to the growth of confidential relations which ought to exist between professional men. I hope you do not mind my writing to you so frankly, but I thought that I ought to pass on the thoughts that occurred to me when I saw your cheque, letter and the bill. Of course, I accept your cheque, so that anything I have said herein does not disturb the deduction made by you.

I am,
Yours truly
M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 220.

252. BARODA: A MODEL INDIAN STATE

In a recent number of *India*, Sir William Wedderburn, one of India's truest friends, has contributed an appreciative article on the affairs of Baroda, a State in the Presidency of Bombay with a population of two millions, and with territories covering an area of eight thousand square miles; in other words, a State a little bigger than Wales. Sir William has based his appreciation on the report of administration issued by Mr. R. C. Dutt,¹ at one time Acting Commissioner of Orissa, now Finance Minister of Baroda, and who is known to the literary world as a brilliant author. The Maharaja Gaekwar himself, one of the most cultured Princes of India, has surrounded himself with able councillors, of whom Mr. Dutt is the brightest star. Mr. Dutt has written works expounding his view as to the amelioration of the poverty of the masses in India. His chief remedy is to make the revenue system as elastic as possible, and as soon as he accepted office in Baroda, he was allowed to put his views into force. Instead, now, of the cultivator having to pay a fixed tax in coin, he has, under well-defined rules, the opportunity of either paying in coin or in kind. This takes us back to the pre-British period, when the ryot throughout India paid a certain portion of his produce to the paramount lord. This was suited to the genius of the people and most convenient to either party. The paramount lord then shared the prosperity of the ryot and suffered with him in adversity. The Maharaja's councillor has also done away with petty, vexatious cesses. Nor does Mr. Dutt's activity stop at revenue reform. He holds decided views on education. An advanced district of the State has been selected for an experiment in compulsory education. According to Mr. Dutt's report, the following is the position of education in Baroda as compared with British India:

In no department of administration is the far-sighted liberality of H. H. the Maharaja Gaekwar more conspicuous than in education, and in none are the results more real and tangible. The percentage of the State revenue spent on education is 6.5 in Baroda, as against 1.17 in Bengal, 1.44 in Bombay, 1.33 in Madras, and about 1 per cent in all British India. And the percentage of children under instruction to the total population is 8.6 in Baroda, as against 4.0 in Bengal, 6.2 in Bombay, 3.09 in Madras, and less than 3 per cent, in all British India. Seven annas is spent on education per head of population in Baroda, as against about one anna in British India.

¹ Romesh Chunder Dutt, prominent Indian Civilian, presided over the Congress Session at Lucknow in 1890.

Mr. Dutt, again, is very deeply interested in the problem of self government, and reviving or keeping up the great village communities of India, which have been so graphically described by the late Sir Henry Maine as self-contained republics. Mr. Dutt has, therefore, endowed the villages with control of their own management and has given certain powers to the headman, revived the village school-master, and upon the old system he has engrafted real elective representation. The village Panchayat, instead of being hereditary, will now be elected by the people. It is a bold experiment, and, if it succeeds, it will form a landmark in the government of Indian States, and as Sir William Wedderburn says, it may well be that the British Indian Government may have to copy Baroda; nor, adds Sir William, need there be any hesitation or shame about it, as it should be a matter of pride to the British Government, which has, after all, given to India the present Maharaja of Baroda, and an administrator of Mr. Dutt's remarkable capabilities. To our South African readers, a State like Baroda ought to serve as a help to dispel prejudices and illusions about India, for a country which has so much that is good, so much that is progressive, cannot after all be termed a country inhabited by savages or a semi-civilised, barbarous race.

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

253. AN INDIAN PHILANTHROPIST

We have been receiving for some time past copies of a journal called *The Indian Sociologist*, and "organ of freedom, and of political, social and religious reform". It is edited by Pandit Shyamaji Krishnavarma, M.A. (Oxon.), sometime lecturer at Oxford, and is published in London. It is a journal fearlessly edited, and the editor is imbued with the teaching of the late Herbert Spencer. The journal is evidently intended to model Indian opinion in accordance with Spencer's teachings. The Pandit is an Indian scholar of distinction, and has a fair amount of capital at his command. He has established several scholar-ships for Indian students in order to enable them to carry on their post-graduate studies in Europe and America. Each scholarship is worth 2,000 rupees and is given to selected graduates from all parts of India, the chief conditions being that the candidates must remain and study for at least two years in Europe or America, and must not, on any account, accept government service. The candidates are also expected to enter into an agreement to refund the money thus

advanced in easy instalments after the completion of study. As a result of the first competition, the following five candidates have already been selected: Abdullah Al-Mahmun Suhrawdy, M.A., Sarat Chandra Mukerji, M.A., Parmeshwar Lall, M.A., Syud Abdul Majid, B.A., and Shaikh Abdul Aziz, B.A. The experiment is a very bold one. The donor's intentions are patriotic. Its success, however, will very largely depend upon the manner in which the first scholars use their opportunity. Their scholastic qualifications certainly betoken a happy augury. We wish every success to Pandit Shyamaji Krishnavarma in his enterprise. His example may well be copied by the Indian merchants in South Africa and elsewhere.

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

254. MR. GANDHI'S COMMENTS¹

I am grieved to read the above letter. I wrote what I believe to be true. However, I find that some persons have taken offence at what I said, for which I am sorry and I apologise to them. As I do not wish to prolong the controversy, I do not think it advisable to reply to the letter at any length. I have not sought to lower Islam, nor do I hold it to be lowly. I do not think that such an impression was created on anyone's mind when I made the speech.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

255. SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC IN JOHANNESBURG

There has been an outbreak of this epidemic in Johannesburg, but fortunately it is not yet very widespread. A boy in the house of Husanmal, and Indian living in the Malay Location, caught the infection, but Husanmal did not inform the authorities nor did he give satisfactory information even when they made inquiries about it. He

¹ Subsequent to Gandhiji's reply, *vide* "Mr. Gandhi's Clarification", May 13, 1905, two letters of protest were received by the Editor, *Indian Opinion*. The one signed by "A Muslim" asserted that "... The ancestors of over a lakh of Bohras, who are highly placed, had been the Brahmin priests of Sidhpur. Besides, the forefathers of Sunni Bohras from Central Gujarat had been Banias ... Thus it can be proved that some people even from the higher classes were converted to Islam," to which Gandhiji replied as above.

was, therefore, prosecuted and fined £10. Our people should take a lesson from this instance. Nothing is gained by concealing the disease; on the contrary, much harm is done. Not only does the person concealing the attack suffer penalty, but the whole community has to suffer for it. There is no doubt that smallpox is infectious. We know that thousands suffer because of it; hence, we should be careful if only to safeguard our own health.

Again, it is all the more necessary to be careful in South Africa; the whole community is condemned and has to suffer hardships if even one of us commits a mistake.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

256. MR. SAMUEL SMITH AND INDIA

Mr. Samuel Smith is a well-wisher of India. He is a member of the British Parliament, and went specially to attend the last Congress session. Writing to the *London Times*, he makes the following suggestions:

- (1) Three capable Indians, to be nominated by the Viceroy, should be given seats on the India Council in England;
- (2) at least one Indian should be appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council;
- (3) one member each from [the Presidencies] of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras should be sent to the British Parliament. They should be elected by the respective Legislative Councils.

Mr. Samuel Smith says that, if this reform is introduced, it will give Indians great satisfaction and facilitate good administration. He further adds that the greatest malady India suffers from is poverty. In order, therefore, to make the people happy and contented, the land revenue should be settled permanently and should not be excessive. If the Government would consider these suggestions of Mr. Smith, it will surely yield good results.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

257. INDIA AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

Now that it is thought that fresh elections to the British Parliament are likely to take place shortly, it is high time the facts about India are placed before the British electors. A resolution to send a

deputation to England was passed at the last Congress session with this end in view. The journal, *India*, tells us that Sir William Wedderburn, a staunch friend of India, has issued a circular in this regard, requesting the members from all the big towns in Britain to organise meetings to hear the tale of India's woes from these representatives. Mr. Gokhale, C.I.E. has been appointed the leader of this deputation. He is the same Mr. Gokhale who served as professor at the Fergusson College, Poona, taking a mere pittance to maintain himself. He is at present a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, Calcutta; year after year, he puts up a fight on behalf of India in that House.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

258. PLAGUE IN INDIA

There occurred in India 65,780 cases of plague during the last week of April, of which 57,702 proved fatal. There were 23,387 deaths in the United Provinces,¹ 19,015 in the Punjab, 3,056 in the Bombay Presidency and 9,703 in Bengal. The *Liberty Review* has passed severe strictures on the British Government whom it holds responsible for the epidemic, and for this large number of deaths, for, it adds, there is extreme starvation in the land. It has been estimated that only three out of the thirty crores of the people get even one meal a day. This much is certain, that if a man obliged to starve, his body gradually gets weaker and at last becomes so reduced in resistance that it becomes more easily susceptible to infection or an attack of germs. Nevertheless, we must say that the criticism of the *Liberty Review* is to a certain extent unjustified. We can say from experience that the plague does not attack only the starving. We see that even those with a high standard of living are victimised by it. Moreover, we can add the following from experience:

1. Very often all the persons in a house affected by plague get the attack.
2. When once plague has spread in a village, it is never totally eradicated.
3. Persons observing the rules of hygiene are less susceptible to the plague.

¹ Now Uttar Pradesh.

4. Those who leave an infected village are saved.
5. The whites are not as susceptible to the plague as Indians.
6. The whites live more cleanly and observe the rules of health.
7. Wherever plague breaks out outside India, it is immediately eradicated.

We can see from this that plague has not much to do with starvation.

Doubtless the main thing to do in the case of plague is to observe cleanliness. Cleanliness does not mean merely bathing and washing. It is well to maintain personal cleanliness. But in addition to it, the house also should be kept clean; sufficient light and sunshine should be let into it; latrines should be kept clean; and in a house which is affected, things should be so arranged that the things used for the patient are not used by others. How to deal with plague is a wide subject, and we cannot say much about it here. However, our readers should remember that there is no other disease so deadly as the plague. Cholera has always been considered a deadly disease, but it is nothing as compared to plague. Moreover, plague is increasing daily in India and not on the decline. For, whereas there were 2,72,000 deaths in 1901, there were 5,00,000 in 1902 and 8,00,000 in 1903; and this year the attack has been so virulent that the number might easily shoot up to a million. The average number of deaths per month this year comes to about 1,20,000¹. If mortality continues at this rate and goes on increasing from year to year, it will be little wonder if the whole of India becomes depopulated within 15 years. Several villages have already been laid waste. At many places in the Punjab, public works have come to a stop. Men who have survived the plague have deserted the villages. This should set every Indian thinking. Every Indian should search his heart and realise what his duty is.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 3-6-1905

¹ The figure 12,000 in the original is evidently a slip.

259. LETTER TO M. H. THURSTON

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 5, 1905

M. H. THURSTON, ESQ.
P. O. BOX 1712
JOHANNESBURG

DEAR SIR,

With reference to the house occupied by me, I find the chimney in the dining-room is quite out of order, the wood-work having bulged out. Each time I light a fire, the dining-room is filled with smoke which issues out of the crevices left by the bulging out.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly have the matter put right without delay.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that rents all over Troyeville have gone down and I shall be obliged if you could make a reduction in the rent I am paying.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 252.

260. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 6, 1905

TO
OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI, ESQ.
BOX 441
DURBAN

DEAR SHRI OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI,

I am sending you the enclosed telegram [received] from Pretoria. A certain gentleman named Shone has made an offer of £50 for a ten year lease to Tayob Haji Khan Mahomed in a letter which I received yesterday; but he has not mentioned the value of the building. I have asked the gentleman about it, but there does not seem to be anything in it. From the telegram, I guess that it must surely be

the building of 14,000 and £20.¹ However, as I have not seen Kallenbach, I have not wired. Do send me the documents.

I shall most probably leave on the 9th. I intend spending Sunday the 11th for Dada Sheth's work. I will have to return as soon as possible, because I am badly needed here. I shall have to give some time to Phoenix also. At the latest, I must be back here on the 19th.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.259.

261. LETTER TO KHUSHALBHAI GANDHI²

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 7, 1905

TO

KHUSHAL JIVAN GANDHI

SARDHAR VIA RAJKOT

KATHIAWAD, INDIA

RESPECTED KHUSHALBHAI,

I have a letter from Chhaganlal to-day saying that Haki's³ daughter has expired. I do not find time here even to reflect on such happenings. This is the special characteristic of this country. I can well realise the effect of such bereavement on the minds of both Bhabhi⁴ and you. But such sorrow is a test for us all. We shall have stood it only, if we can remain calm and unruffled.

I shall see Chhaganlal and Maganlal when I go to Phoenix in a couple of days.

Respectfully yours,

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No.272.

¹ Evidently the cost and rental value of the building.

² Gandhiji's cousin, father of Chhaganlal and Maganlal.

³ Harkunvarbehn, addressee's daughter.

⁴ Elder brother's wife, here addressee's wife.

262. LETTER TO FULABHAI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 7, 1905

TO
MR. FULABHAI
BOX 128
POTCHEFSTROOM
DEAR MR. FULABHAI,

Your two letters to hand.

You had written to me in your letter that you would send me my fees and again promised to send money when Mr. Hussain Ibrahim went from here. Hence it was that I gave instructions to debit the amount to your account. It makes little difference to me to whose account the sum is debited, as I never file a suit against anybody. But for that very reason I invariably take the fees in advance from a person not known to me. Had it not been for your intervention, I would never have taken up the work without my fees. However, since you are unwilling, I shall not keep it in your account.

The store will be saved only if Hussain Ibrahim either comes here or sends the document duly signed from there, otherwise a single creditor will swallow it up. I shall prepare the document and send it if he sends me the fees. Please let me know where his goods are and whether a notice for sale has been issued.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati: Letter Book (1905): No. 281.

263. LORD SELBORNE AND THE INDIANS

In another column we print an interesting report of a presentation by the British Indians in the Transvaal to Lord Selborne. The text of the address,¹ suitably to the occasion, is colourless, but it shows that, in spite of the irritating circumstances that surround British Indians, they do not forget their inherent courtesy, and they showed this by their welcome to His Majesty's representative in South Africa. It is a pity that the address was not presented, as it should have been, publicly, but evidently there was no mistake made by the Indians.

¹ *Vide* "Address to Lord Selborne", May 28, 1905.

They seem to have made preparations long ago, and to have faithfully carried out the requirements of the private secretary to His Excellency. Although the receptions given to Lord Selborne were non-political, we notice that the Mayors both at Pretoria and Johannesburg could not refrain from alluding to the Indian question. Opinion would be divided as to the appropriateness of bringing the question thus early to the notice of Lord Selborne. The Mayor of Johannesburg, Mr. George Goch, who is otherwise a most liberal-minded gentleman, and who has often taken up the cause of the Coloured races in South Africa, allowed himself, in reply to the toast on his health, to remark that the last despatch from Sir Arthur Lawley on the British Indian question, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, showed the true position, and that the community owed him much

for lifting up that question on a plane which was far above that which any of them could conceive, and has given a basis in that despatch for the settlement of a most intricate and most difficult question in the new legislature, which by and by they would have under his guidance.

Now we have shown, conclusively we think, how that despatch is full of inaccuracies and sentiments hardly creditable to a British statesman. We have a very high regard for Sir Arthur Lawley. We believe him to be actuated by excellent motives; but we regret to have to say that he has been entirely misled on this question, and has been over-mastered by the prevailing prejudice to which he has succumbed. He has not hesitated to advise the Colonial Secretary to break the oft-repeated promises of the British Government, and has no doubt unconsciously misquoted facts in support of such dangerous advice. The strength of the British Government lies very largely in its rectitude and in its scrupulous observance of promises. It is true that, on many an occasion, there has been a departure from it, and on each such occasion, British prestige has suffered. No statesman recalls such departures with pride, but either glosses them over, or offers to explain them away, thus indirectly showing the British statesmen do not intend to fall away from the high standard. It is, therefore, a disquieting sign to find a gentleman of Mr. George Goch's standing ranging himself on the side of those who favour a policy which is calculated to revolutionise British methods. It nevertheless shows the temper of the Transvaal community on the British Indian question, and practical politicians have to take note of that feeling.

Indian Opinion, 10-6-1905

264. THE CHINESE AND THE KAFFIRS—A COMPARISON

A good deal of discussion is still going on in England regarding the employment of the Chinese in the Johannesburg mines. To pacify the minds of the people in the matter, Lord Milner had, before leaving South Africa, sent some communication to England, which has now been published. Lord Milner states therein that the *per capita* expenditure of recruiting and bringing the Kaffirs to Johannesburg has been £10-15-0 during the last three years, while the cost of getting the Chinese is £16-11-3 per head. From this, Lord Milner wants to suggest that the miners do not stand to gain in recruiting the Chinese. Moreover, the cost of maintaining the Chinese in Johannesburg is greater than that of maintaining the Kaffirs. For, while a Kaffir costs 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per day, a Chinese costs 11d. Lord Milner, therefore, concludes that, if the Kaffirs can be had in sufficient numbers, the miners would leave the Chinese alone. But 30,980 Chinese have already entered the Transvaal.

In all this computation, Lord Milner has overlooked one fact, viz., that, while the Kaffir hardly works for six months, the Chinese have to do so continuously for three years. Moreover, the Chinese being more active than the Kaffirs, much more work can be taken from them than from the latter. This is a very important point, but His Lordship utters not a word about it. Unless this is taken into account, Lord Milner's figures are of no use whatever. Were it not so, those who pay a higher salary to the more efficient make, according to Lord Milner, a mistake. We, therefore, feel that Lord Milner's communication is not likely to have much effect in England.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 10-6-1905

265. JAPAN AND RUSSIA

Japan's star seems to be in the ascendant. She stormed the Fort of Port Arthur, captured Mukden and has done other deeds of valour. But all these pale into insignificance before her latest exploit. Not only did she defeat the great Russian fleet, but wounded its great Admiral and did not leave intact a single Russian man-of-war. No one ever imagined that Japan was capable of such bravery. Many had thought that Japan would find herself in a difficult situation once the

Russian fleet reached Singapore. It was also known that the Japanese Navy was not very strong, that is to say, it had fewer battleships than Russia. But in scouting and watchfulness, Japan surpassed all the others. Admiral Togo's spies were very accurate in their intelligence, and he pounced upon the Russian fleet just when it was most vulnerable. This was no ordinary deed of daring. Such courage is incomparable; but we consider supreme the patience and the cool composure shown by Admiral Togo in achieving his objective. Nothing was done with a view to winning honours or showing off their bravery to the world. Togo had only one objective, viz., to strike at Russia at the opportune moment and at the strategic place. That he has done; and Russia, which only two years ago was considered to be almost invincible, has now very nearly fallen into the hands of Japan. It is said that history has nothing which can bear comparison with this naval battle. England won a great [naval] victory in the sixteenth century. The "invincible" Spanish Armada was then destroyed in the English Channel, and the British Admiral was triumphant. That too has been considered a very fierce battle; but the Heavens then came to the succour of England. The Spanish Armada was very large, and the Channel narrow. And just as the battle was raging, a strong wind began to blow, which the Armada could not withstand, while it proved favourable to the English fleet.

In the nineteenth century, Nelson scored a great victory off the Cape¹ of Trafalgar and the British Navy won for itself a pre-eminent position; but the powerful steamers we see today did not then exist nor the dangerous weapons of the present age.

Japan did not receive any unexpected help. She had only the firm determination to win, and this determination has proved her true ally. In this war Japan has not known defeat.

What, then, is the secret of this epic heroism? We have repeatedly to ask ourselves this question and find an answer for it. The answer is: unity, patriotism and the resolve to do or die. All the Japanese are animated by the same spirit. No one is considered greater than the other, and there is no rift of any kind between them. They think of nothing else but service to the nation. They have so identified themselves with their motherland that they consider themselves prosperous [only] if they bring prosperity to the country in which they are born, bred, and destined to pass their lives; that, if the country

¹ The original has "in the Strait of Trafalgar".

rose, they rose; if she enjoyed political power, they were partners in that power. Such is their patriotism. This unity and patriotic spirit together with a heroic indifference to life [or death] have created an atmosphere in Japan the like of which is nowhere else to be found in the world. Of death, they do not entertain any fear. To die in the service of their country, they have always regarded as wholly good. If, after all, one has to die some day, what does it matter if one dies on the battle-field? There is no certainty that, if one stays home and does not go to the front, one will live longer. And even if one did live very long, what was the good of living as a subjugated people? Reasoning along these lines, the Japanese have become defiant of death. What wonder, then, that those, who thus sacrifice their flesh, blood and bones, should prove invincible on the battle-field?

But how will these thoughts avail us? What have we to learn from them? We do not find the requisite unity even in the minor struggle we are carrying on in South Africa; splits occur every day. Instead of patriotism, we see more of selfishness everywhere. "If only I am saved, it does not matter if the others perish," is the thought constantly on our mind. Our life is so dear to us that we pass away while we are still fondling it. If we do not achieve good in this world, what hope is there of achieving it in the next? This is the condition most of us are in. Our reading this account of the Japanese War will have been fruitful only if we emulate to some extent at least the example of Japan. We shall gain nothing by mere reading just as parrots do not attain to Heaven by repeating the name of Rama.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 10-6-1905

266. SPEECH AT NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS MEETING

The following is a report of Gandhiji's speech at a meeting of the Natal Indian Congress held at Durban under the chairmanship of Haji Mahomed Haji Dada:

June 16, 1905

Mr. Gandhi said: I would advise the members of the Congress to authorise the Secretaries to incur expenditure on the Hoondamal Licence Case, as it is a very strong one; if we do not put up a fight, we shall have to regret it later. We should also send money to help Mr. Madanjit, who is carrying on a commendable agitation on our behalf in India.

It appears some people have misconstrued the speeches I delivered at Johannesburg¹. I had no intention in those speeches to hurt the susceptibilities of the Mahomedans. We should not discriminate between Hindus and Mahomedans. We know very well what the Japanese have been able to achieve through unity and accord. Though we profess different religions, we should regard ourselves as one in the matter of public work.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

267. MEASURES TO ERADICATE PLAGUE IN INDIA

Dr. Turner of Bombay has addressed a long letter to the Government of that Presidency, stating that plague was on the increase from year to year and that the only way to eradicate it was for the people to have themselves inoculated. The Doctor believes that those who are inoculated rarely suffer an attack of the plague. But the great problem is how to persuade people to get themselves inoculated. Dr. Turner says that it is not possible to compel people to do so. It would be indeed very good, if the employers compelled their workers, but that takes time, so that will not do either. Finally Dr. Turner suggests that the Government should insure the life of the inoculated person, and endorse a document to the effect that, if the person dies within a year of the inoculation, they would pay his relatives Rs. 100. The Doctor hopes that this will induce many persons to undergo inoculation. Another doctor suggests instituting a lottery for those who get themselves inoculated. Chits bearing the names of the inoculated should be prepared, lots drawn, and prizes awarded to winners. Thus are these good men struggling in vain to eradicate the plague.

It is possible that some men may be able to save themselves through inoculation. But we see no advantage in this. This remedy of inoculation is just like the means adopted by men, given to the pursuit of pleasure, to escape the consequences of their indulgence. Inoculation does not extirpate the causes of the plague and unless these are removed, no real benefit can accrue. If, by chance, one does get rid of plague, another disease will appear in its place. Just as a tree is not destroyed unless its roots are pulled out, so also the plague will not disappear unless its causes are removed. It is necessary to bring about

¹ Vide "Hinduism", March 4 and 11, and "Lectures on Religion", April 15, 1905.

an improvement in the sanitary habits, morality and the economic condition of the people. I believe that we commit sin by not observing the rules of sanitation. Our moral standard is low, for we neglect our duties. Added to this, there is poverty which brings many miseries in its train. He will be considered a true alleviator of India's ills, who can think out a remedy for this, and, having discovered it, puts it into practice. Only after these essential remedial steps have been taken will it be proper for us to take other measures to supplement them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 17-6-1905

268. INDIA'S MILITARY AID TO ENGLAND

From the figures published in the journal, *India*, relating to the military aid England receives from India, we learn that a troop of 8,215 soldiers had come to South Africa in 1899; a platoon of 14,371 men was sent out to China, when the Boxer Rebellion broke out in that country; and 3,376 Indian soldiers were sent to Somaliland. These figures are exclusive of those who are stationed in Tibet as also those posted to guard the North-west Frontier.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 17-6-1905

269. MR. GANDHI REPLIES¹

All I have to say in connection with the above letter is that I am not aware if the facts stated in history books are incorrect. I shall be glad to correct my mistakes, if any. The facts I have in stated are to be found in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Hunter's *History of India* and other books. However, the fact whether I am right or wrong need not be emphasised, but the aim with which I presented the facts should be

¹ After "Mr. Gandhi's Comments", 3-6-1905, was published in *Indian Opinion*, the Editor received a letter protesting against it from "A Follower of Islam", who said: "The statement that the lower classes of Hindus had been converted to Islam is not supported by any Urdu or Gujarati books on Indian history. However, if any such thoughts are found in some wretched books of history, they must have been only the figments of Hindu imagination . . . Will Mr. Gandhi be pleased to give the name of the history whence he has learnt such serious things?" This is Gandhiji's reply.

taken into consideration. And if I have presented the historical facts with the intention of doing good, nobody should take offence.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 17-6-1905

270. LETTER TO LAW SOCIETY

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 22, 1905

TO
THE SECRETARY
INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY
CAPE TOWN
SIR,

I intrusted [*sic*] Mr. E. A. Walters¹ of Windsorton, Law Agent, with the collection of an amount due to a client in Johannesburg by a resident of that place or district.

Mr. Walters, so the debtor writes to me, has been paid the full amount due by him, but he has only sent me a part of the debt, and has ignored letters written by me to him during the last twelve months. This matter was placed in his hands about the month of February 1904. In my last letter to him, which I wrote on the 25th May 1905, I informed him that I should bring his action to the notice of your Society if he ignored my communications. Unfortunately, I have not heard from him in reply to that letter also.

I, therefore, bring this matter to your notice for such action as the Society may deem fit to take.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 393.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to E. A. Walters", May 25, 1905.

271. LETTER TO TOWN CLERK

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 22, 1905

TO
THE TOWN CLERK
P. O. BOX 1049
JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

RE: THE RIGHT OF INDIANS TO TRAVEL IN THE MUNICIPAL TRAM-CARS

If the Tramway Committee has considered this matter, I shall thank you for a reply to my communications herein.

My client, who applied for the monthly pass, is very anxious to bring the matter to a head, and test his right, should the Committee decline to entertain his application favourably.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 397.

272. LETTER TO PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 23, 1905

PARSEE RUSTOMJEE JIVANJI GHORKHODU, ESQ.
9TH KHETWADI LANE
BOMBAY

DEAR SHETH SHRI RUSTOMJEE JIVANJI GHORKHODU,

I went to your firm when I visited Durban last week. Omar Sheth, Kaikhushroo, Abdul Huk and I sat together and went over the accounts. The receipts from rent have diminished considerably. They have gone below £200 and will go down a little further. But that can't be helped. I met the lady running the Avon Hotel. She said that she would stay on only if the rent was reduced, and I have agreed to do so. In business, too, I do not see much substance. But since Abdul Huk is confident, Omar Sheth's advice is that some business should be

carried on. He has agreed to supervise it himself. I therefore do not see any harm in doing a little business.

I remember what you said about rent. But you should not be in a hurry. Rents are bound to decline in these difficult times; but there is no cause for alarm. Please finish your work there without any hurry. The need for building the house is quite evident; please therefore let there be no interruption in it.

There were no letters from you either here or at Durban. It is necessary to write to the firm at regular intervals.

Please write to me about your health.

Please give my respects to Maji. Get Jal and Sorab to write to me.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 402.

273. LETTER TO JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.

[JOHANNESBURG,]
June 23, 1905

TO
MESSRS. JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.
110, FIELD STREET
DURBAN

DEAR SIRs,

I have your letter. I have gone through Mr. Laughton's account. I think nothing could be said against it professionally. With regard to the bill with reference to Latiwala, you may plead for a reduction seeing that Latiwala has disappeared. I approve of your action regarding the Avon Hotel. Please tell Chhaganlal what the £ 7/4/- are for, so that he may make the necessary entries in the books. With reference to the Umbilo Road property, if the tenant would not pay more than £6, you may reduce it accordingly.

Yours faithfully,
M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 405.

274. LETTER TO "THE STAR"¹

[Prior to June 24, 1905]

[TO
THE EDITOR
The Star
JOHANNESBURG]

SIR,

I see that Mr. Loveday has again repeated his statement about the influx of Indians into the Colony, in total disregard of the evidence that he admits having seen after he first gave currency to those statements. Mr. Loveday thinks that the Permit Department does not keep out British Indians, and that non-refugees have been entering the Colony. In the face of the report of the Chief Secretary for Permits, one can only come to the conclusion that Mr. Loveday declines to believe the report. I can only say that even the British Indian refugees find it extremely hard to enter the Colony. I have before me a letter, addressed from the Permit Office to a British Indian, who applied some seven months ago for a permit asking him whether he still requires a permit. The poor refugee being friendless, after having waited months for making good his right as a refugee to enter the Transvaal, has gone back to India, and the letter has been sent to me by the gentleman whose address he gave. Nor is this a solitary instance. Whereas Europeans, whether they are refugees or not, obtain their permits for the asking, the Indian refugees, many of whom have paid the sum of £ 3 as the price of being allowed to remain in the country during the old regime, have to wait at least two months before they are admitted, and then, too, each applicant has to go through a number of formalities and a good deal of expense before he can enter the Colony. He must call at the Permit Offices in the coast towns for an application form. He has to get it filled in, for which, as a rule, he pays a fee. On receipt by the Permit Office in Johannesburg, letters are sent down to those whose names have been given as references. These letters have to make affidavits on which a half-crown stamp has to be affixed. If the evidence produced as to previous residence is considered satisfactory, a notification is sent to the applicant authorising him to enter the Colony. Nor is this all. He must then proceed to

¹ This was reproduced in *Indian Opinion* under the caption "Refutation of Mr. Loveday's Inaccuracies".

Johannesburg, call at the Permit Office and submit himself for cross-examination, and if he satisfies the examining officer, he receives a permanent authority to stay in the Colony. I know cases in which many have been sent back because they were not able to satisfy the examining officer that they were refugees. If, therefore, any one could possibly complain against the Permit Department, it would be the British Indians; and they do not belong to the criminal class mentioned by Mr. Hosken. Mr. Loveday has once again brought up the statistics published by the Mayor of Pietersburg, and yet the Mayor of Pietersburg has not taken up the challenge of the British Indian Association, although it was he who provoked it. I venture to quote from the letter addressed to you by the Chairman of the British Indian Association on the 9th December.

I deny that there are at present 49 Indian traders in Pietersburg. There are only 28 stores owned by Indians within the township, as distinguished from the Location, and of these some are held by the same Indians. Within the township before war, there were at least 23 Indian stores.

The names of all these store-keepers have been given in the same letter. This statement has never been disproved, but Mr. Loveday says the Asiatic Traders' Commission report that there was only one Indian trader in Pietersburg without a licence before war. This is misleading. I have before me the full report of the Asiatic Traders' Commission. In the first place, it is an interim report. In the second place, the Commissioners do not pretend to have ascertained the number of Indians who were trading without licences. All that the Commissioners have done is to mention the respective claims placed before them, and they state that there was only one British Indian claim for Pietersburg. They had in all only 233 claims presented to them. That surely does not exhaust the list of Asiatic traders before war. The newspapers also published the information that the British Indian claims were all withdrawn after the ruling that the Commissioners gave as to their authority, and that the British Indians ceased to participate in their deliberations. The Commissioners add that their work was interrupted by the decision of the Supreme Court in the now famous test case about the right of a British Indian to trade freely in the Colony. Knowing, as he must have done, all these facts in connection with the report, it is strange that a responsible politician like Mr. Loveday should allow himself thus to mislead the public by making a statement which cannot be proved. I admit that the Indian population in the Location at Pretoria has increased. Probably, it has increased also in Pietersburg and Potchefstroom. Will he also take note of the fact that the Location in Johannesburg has been wiped out;

that there are not at present half the number of the British Indians who used to occupy the old Location; and that, during the last three months, not less than 300 Indians have left Johannesburg? According to the statistics placed before Mr. Conyngham Greene, there were in the Transvaal before the war 15,000 Indians. Not more than 12,000 permits have been issued to them by the Permit Department, and as the number of Indians leaving the Colony is greater than the number that is allowed to enter the Colony, I venture to submit that there are at present in the Colony less than 12,000 Indians. Mr. Loveday adds that indentured Indians of Natal, who have just become free, have gone to Potchefstroom and established themselves, a fact which is resented by the Indians themselves in Potchefstroom. Will the honourable gentleman condescend to give the names of the Indians who have thus entered the Colony? He would certainly then be rendering a great service to his constituents, the anti-Asiatic vigilants. Will he also be pleased to give the names of the Indians who have stated that they are being inundated by Indians from Natal, and if he cannot, will he have the grace to withdraw the serious statements he has made?

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 24-6-1905

275. LETTER TO DADABHAI NAOROJI

[Prior to June 24, 1905]

[TO
THE HONOURABLE DADABHAI NAOROJI
22 KENNINGTON ROAD
LONDON, S. E.
SIR,]

I send herewith copy of *Indian Opinion*. The leading article shows to what extent it has now become possible under Law 3 of 1885 for the Indians to own land. The Supreme Court decision practically leaves them free, so long as they can get a European friend to become a trustee, to own fixed property. I draw your attention to the fact so that, in any legislation that may be drafted there, it may not be taken for granted that, under Law 3 of 1885, it is impossible for the Indians to own property.

From what has been going on here, it appears that the new legislation to replace Law 3 of 1885 will be as much as possible on the lines of Law 3 of 1885, that is to say, it is not the intention of the Government here to give any greater rights than [those] enjoyed under Law 3 of 1885. Just as, therefore, Mr. Lyttelton has taken up the stand,

saying that he would not, in view of the Supreme Court decision, consent to restrict the trading rights of the Indians, so also should he now refuse to sanction any legislation which would restrict an Indian's rights to own landed property.

The anti-Indian legislation that is at present being considered by the Natal Parliament is dangerously symptomatic. Almost every *Gazette* contains something about it. Indians are to be brought under the Native Department regarding the holding of fire-arms.

Their occupation of rural land, unless they are owners, is not to be accepted as such for the purpose of levying a land tax.

The Durban Town Council is asking for powers to impose licences on store-holders and bring them within the Dealers' Licenses Act.

The Municipal Corporations Consolidated Law is intended to deprive the Indian of the municipal franchise.

The latest Bills published in the Natal *Government Gazette* are intended to bring within the Dealers' Licenses Act Native Eating House-keepers, and to restrict the scope of Hawkers' Licenses to the magisterial divisions within which they have been issued (hitherto a licence to hawk outside municipal boundaries entitled the holder to hawk throughout the Colony excepting the municipal areas).

All this legislation is unnecessary and insulting. I, therefore, venture to think that, as stated by Lord Curzon in his Budget speech, it is time that the next step was taken, namely, to suspend indentured Indian immigration to Natal, unless the Natal Government would cease their anti-Indian activity and amend, at any rate, the Dealers' Licenses Act so as to give the aggrieved party the right to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Colonial Office Records: 417, Volume 414, India Office.

276 CORRUPTION DURING WAR TIME

It is true that patriotic fervour surges in everyone's breast during times of war. This fervour is very beneficial. Many a patriot has, under the stimulus of zeal, performed, with only a small army, feats that have astounded the world. While, on the one hand, some people abound with such enthusiasm, hundreds, thousands, nay, lakhs, of lives have, on the other, been lost, ruined or reduced to a state of dependence, through the doings of some selfish people who took advantage of the inability of officials to exercise sufficient control during war. Taking advantage of the chaos, normal persons have added to the prevailing disorder by committing, during war, misdeeds which they will not think of at other times. It seems that the rules of honesty and good conduct are entirely forgotten during times of war. The viola-

tion of these rules is more in evidence during a bigger war than a smaller one. For it is said that it is during a crisis that a man's character is put to the test. It cannot be claimed that he has been put to the test until he has had the chance successfully of committing a crime but remains steadfast in spite of the opportunity. Such steadfastness at a critical time may be found in a handful of men. It is indeed all too rare.

The bigger the war, the bigger the extent of chaos. The fraud and trickery, that were exposed during the Crimean War¹, and other sundry happenings that have later come to light, are most distressing. During that war, a large stock of boots was purchased and despatched to the front for the use of soldiers, but they all were found to be for the left foot! A large quantity of foodstuff for the army was sent from England; but when it was consumed, instead of helping to feed the army, it proved deleterious being very rotten meat. It was not only merchants who wanted to become millionaires, but even the generals on the front, the politicians who were out to sacrifice a large number of precious lives, and leaders who called themselves benefactors of the state, committed fraud. Large stock of useful medicines sent out for soldiers and officers on their deathbed disappeared mysteriously before reaching the hospitals for which they were bound, and not a trace of them was found. Merchants, the so-called patriotic generals and high Government officials thus went on misappropriating hundreds of useful and valuable articles to fill their pockets at the expense of hundreds of poor soldiers who had gone to the front to fight for their country, leaving their homes and hearths. When a news correspondent sent a full account of this, describing the condition of the army encamped at Sebastapol, the whole nation was so enraged that the ministry in power had to resign. In addition to this, there was a long list of oppressive tyrannies. But all these are insignificant incidents compared to those of the last Boer War. A scrutiny of how contracts, for the supply of provisions, uniforms, etc., to the army, were given and executed during that war has revealed how public money was utterly wasted. This was due solely to the misconduct of the autocratic officials. Contracts were blindly given by the departments concerned to contractors who were their favourites or were known to them and who made a profit of 50 to 500 per cent on some of the goods

¹ Between Russia and the allied powers, viz., Turkey, England, France and Sardinia (1853-1856).

supplied. Such corruption was not confined to Great Britain alone. The defeat France sustained in 1879 was due to its officers who had become slaves of mammon. For, at the time of that war, the French Government had kept every necessary article ready. Millions and billions had been spent on these arrangements at the very start, but all that expenditure was incurred secretly. All these things were purchased and stored—on paper only. Although money was spent like water, articles of even ordinary military use ran short at the very outset of the war. The reports of the present Russo-Japanese War, too, are astounding. Last April, a million roubles were given to Duke of Sergius to be spent on feeding and clothing the army in Manchuria. This stock was despatched to Manchuria in the month of May; but, instead of reaching there, it got transported directly from Moscow to Danzig, and from thence, goods worth thousands of pounds were sold for a song in Germany. Large sums of money were raised through subscriptions for the benefit of the widows of men and officers killed in the war; but not a farthing of that money reached the poor widows. The bags of sugar despatched to the battle-field were found to contain sand instead of sugar! No trace could be found of millions of roubles that disappeared during the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway. But this is not all. Innumerable examples have been recorded of the corruption and bribery practised in Russia.

The conduct of the Japanese affords a marked contrast to all this. No merchant or officer in Japan has entertained any thought of exploiting the war situation, with the result that the Japanese army can secure its needs at a very small cost. The report of the Butler Commission on the war in South Africa, which has been published, tells us that the irregularities and corruption that prevailed during that war were in no way less [considerable] than in Russia. The way public money has been spent is very much to be deplored. A major part of this waste was due to incompetent officers, who were inexperienced and untrained. The Commission recommends that the officers deserve to be censured for such serious lapses. The country's wealth that was collected through heavy taxation was abused without limit, and the officers supposed to be responsible for it connived at it. This has cast a slur on the British administration, which has so far enjoyed a reputation for justice and integrity in public affairs. There was no limit to the chaos, corruption and dishonesty rampant at the time. The report of the

Commission, it is expected, will open the eyes of the Government, who will do whatever is still possible in the matter.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 24-6-1905

277. *LETTER TO G. K. GOKHALE*

21-24, COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER, RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
June 26, 1905

TO

HON. PROFESSOR GOKHALE, C.I.E.

84 & 85, PALACE CHAMBERS

WESTMINSTER

DEAR PROFESSOR GOKHALE,

By this time you must be deeply engaged in your mission in England. I have no doubt that you will have a corner in your heart for the British Indians in South Africa. Is it possible for you, on your return to India, to pass through South Africa? If you could do so, and if you would kindly let me have previous notice, suitable arrangements would be made for your stay in the different parts of the country. I suggest your giving one month to South Africa. If you could come, the expenses of your tour in South Africa would be borne by the community. You could land in Cape Town, pass through Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria; go to Natal and see Durban, Pietermaritzburg, thence to Delagoa Bay, and thence either by the East Coast visiting Mosambique, Zanzibar, Lamu and Mombasa, or go via Ceylon and take in Mauritius on your way.

I remain,

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 4105.

278. LETTER TO CAMROODEEN & CO.

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 26, 1905

MESSRS. M. C. CAMROODEEN & CO.
P. O. BOX 126
DURBAN

DEAR SIRs,

I was exceedingly sorry to learn of the death of Mr. Dawnak. Will you please convey to his parents my sympathy in their loss? I cannot realise the fact. Together with your letter, I have before me a letter from him telling me how nicely he was getting on.

It will be far more convenient that Mr. Abdul Gani should accompany me when I go there for Dada Abdoola's affairs.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 433

279. LETTER TO ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 27, 1905

MESSRS ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO
MY DEAR SHRI ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO,

There is a complaint against you both that you spend most of your time on Sundays playing cards, that you are not courteous to your customers and do not take sufficient care of your master's business. I do not believe much of this. If you are fond of playing cards, I personally do not wish to prohibit you. I believe you do your master's work carefully. I cannot persuade myself to believe that you are not courteous. Nevertheless, I consider it proper to convey to you what has come to my ears rather than keep it to myself. If you are really playing cards, I would suggest that it is better to utilise your leisure going outdoors or adding to your knowledge by reading good books. If, however, you must play cards, do so for a short while only. You know Rustomjee Sheth's nature. He does not like playing cards

at all. It will be a nice thing if you give up cards altogether, if only in deference to his wishes.

Do not speculate at all as to who has given me this information. Also do not be angry with any one for it. But, instead, take it that whosoever has given it has done so with the intention of doing good and reform yourself if there be any drawbacks, or do not worry, confident that you are already doing your duty in regard to such complaints against you.

There is again a letter from Mr. Nuruddin. I think it proper to return the note if there is no claim left on it.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 449.

280. LETTER TO "THE STAR"

JOHANNESBURG,
June 27, 1905

TO
THE EDITOR
The Star

SIR,

I trust you will allow me to trespass on your courtesy to enable me to reply to certain statements made by your correspondent at Potchefstroom with reference to a letter I wrote to you on Mr. Loveday's statements at the Inter-Colonial Council meeting. Your correspondent states that I "regretted the continued stream of Indians, particularly those of the lower class". I am not aware of having ever expressed any such regret for the simple reason that I have never believed in a continued stream of Indians pouring into Potchefstroom or elsewhere. I speak with certain knowledge when I deny any such influx at all. That there has been some increase in the number of Indian traders in Potchefstroom, as well as in other places, is not to be denied, but the increase in the number of white traders is out of all proportion to the increase in the number of Indian traders. In your leaderette on the Krugersdorp meeting, you say that "Pietersburg has undoubtedly been one of the favourite places to which the Asiatic traders have gravitated of late". This has been shown to be wrong. The fact is that

Pietersburg had a fair proportion of Indian traders before the war but there has been no great influx since.

In this connection, may I say that the British Indian community in the Transvaal has never received sufficient credit for the spirit of conciliation and compromise it has throughout shown. Whilst all kinds of impossible remedies are being suggested, the only two infallible tests proposed by the British Indian Association still remain untried. In order to prevent any possibility of the Indians "invading" the country, an Immigration Restrictions Act on the Cape model has been suggested. The Act has been tried not only there, but in Australia, Natal and elsewhere, and has not been found wanting. It is useless to say that there cannot be strict watch on the border. Natal has succeeded in keeping that watch. Many an Indian has found out to his cost that he cannot enter Natal territories through Charlestown or any other inland stations, unless he can prove that he is entitled to enter the Colony under the Immigration Act. To prove that the Indians do not in any way mean to usurp the European trade, they accept municipal control over the licences, in such a manner that any Municipality will have the power either to refuse or to grant a licence to trade, subject in extreme cases to revision by the Supreme Court. It is true that such legislation will not be class legislation, and will be of general application. Does it, however, matter? It can be passed without any bother, if all parties agree upon the main principles, and it will set at rest the unhealthy agitation against the Asiatics that springs up in the Colony from time to time, and settle the minds of the Indians. There is no finality to any legislation under a progressive Government. If, therefore, the two measures above mentioned are, in practice, found not to answer, it will be time to consider what more is necessary.

The Indians need not accept any such compromise, especially in view of Mr. Lyttelton's emphatic declaration that nothing that they enjoyed before the war would be taken away from them. They certainly enjoyed the rights of free immigration and free trading, and it is exactly [on] these two points that they have offered the above compromise; if only the very un-British Law 3 of 1885, and other harsh and needless regulations, which have nothing to do with the economic conditions, be removed from the Statute-book. Mr. Brodrick has only lately stated that British trade with India is greater than that with Australia, Canada and South Africa put together, and that, therefore, Imperially considered, India occupies a place second only to Great Britain. Will the Colonists continue to subject the inhabitants of that country to constant pin-pricks?

We are told that the Chinese guilds have been successful in bending the American Government. Lord Curzon has already talked

of retaliation. It is not possible, then, to realise what India could do if retaliation were seriously taken up? China and America are not under the same flag, whereas South Africa and India are. Would it not be a calamity if there arise permanent estrangement between the local Governments in South Africa and the Indian Government, and if Lord Curzon carries out his threat deliberately uttered in the Imperial Legislative Council at Calcutta? Some such thing is inevitable unless the Colonists see the sweet reasonableness of the compromise above offered.

I am, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

281. LETTER TO "THE RAND DAILY MAIL"

[JOHANNESBURG,]
June 28, 1905

TO
THE EDITOR
The Rand Daily Mail

SIR,

Perhaps you will allow me to make a few remarks on your leading article in the *Daily Mail* of the 26th instant anent the Krugersdorp anti-Asiatic meeting.

After admitting that pledges were given before the war by the Home Government regarding the British Indians, you go on to advise them that "they must admit that their competition has driven out many white traders". With all due respect, I venture to think that you are advising the Indian community to admit what does not exist. There has not yet been given, at any of these meetings, one authentic instance of the white trader having been driven out by Indian competition. This can only be proved by the appointment of a commission to investigate the charge. In the meanwhile, the presumption is wholly in favour of the Indian contention that Indian competition has not "ruined white trade", or "driven out" any such traders. In the Transvaal itself, as well before the war as now, the white traders have held their own. At the Cape, in spite of the greatest freedom of trade granted to Asiatics, the white trader is largely predominant. In Natal, where there is the largest Indian population, Sir James Hullett only the other day said, in his evidence on oath, that the Indian traders had not seriously affected the white traders. I submit that this competition has been quite healthy, in that it has kept down the prices of the necessities of

life. I am free to admit that the Indian scores by his simplicity of life, but this is more than counterbalanced by the white trader's knowledge of the English language his superior organising ability, and better facilities for making connections with wholesale houses in Europe.

But, Sir, the Indians are prepared to concede all that can reasonably be expected of them, without having to make the admission you advise them to make. They are prepared, in place of Law 3 of 1885 and other unnecessarily stringent regulations, to accept municipal control over the licences in general, whereby the local bodies will have the right either to grant or to refuse licences, subject, in special cases, to revision by the Supreme Court.

Their trading rights are the greatest cause of irritation, and this can be allayed without the slightest difficulty, and without loss of time, by accepting the compromise above suggested.

You seem to think that the Indians now here "have certain moral claims which will have to be dealt with by fresh legislation". This is not in accord with facts. They have a moral claim, certainly, to be placed on an equality with the Europeans, so far as the rights of trade, ownership of property and locomotion are concerned, but they have, today, a legal right to trade and live where they like, as has been laid down by the Supreme Court, and it is not capable of being restrictively dealt with by fresh legislation, as has been said, both by Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Brodrick; and yet, in order to conciliate public opinion, the Indian community is prepared to accept a restriction on trade, on general and non-racial lines, under the proviso above mentioned.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

282. *LETTER TO M. H. NAZAR*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 29, 1905

TO
M. H. NAZAR, ESQ.
P. O. BOX 182
DURBAN

DEAR MR. NAZAR,

I enclose herewith draft for £108 with statement showing what it covers. I epitomize as following:

Doman	£ 29-17-0
Subhav	22-18-0
T. Maharaj	5-18-6
Vangad Samy	16- 7-0
Dubri	33- 0-0

Total	£ 108- 0-6
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The other claims have not yet been received. Suramsamy's Power of Attorney I have not yet been able to trace, nor Verasamy's. Vandithumu's Power of Attorney has been sent to the Commission, but they are not able to trace this claim. Can you say how much the man received before, and then, if you could, I should be able to secure that claim.

I notice in the Natal *Government Gazette* received to-day a Bill to amend the Immigration Act of 1903. This ought to appear in this week's *Opinion*, but I am afraid that it will not. I think that it is your clear duty to see the *Gazette* the day it is received by you, and send anything that may be therein of importance to Phoenix. It does not look at all nice that Natal matters should appear a fortnight after they happen. Have you also borne it in mind that we have to send a memorial to the [Colonial¹] Secretary as soon as the several Bills, about which we [have] petitioned, become Acts, or are accepted in their final [stages by] the Legislative Council? For that infor[mation I must rely] upon you entirely.

Yours sincerely.

M. K. GANDHI

2. Enclosure².

Letter Book (1905): No. 468.

¹ This and the subsequent words in square brackets are indistinct in the original office copy.

² Not available.

283. LETTER TO MAX NATHAN

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 29, 1905

TO
MAX NATHAN, ESQ.
KEMPSEY BLDGS.
JOHANNESBURG

DEAR MR. NATHAN,

Re: Meer Allam & Leve

My clerk, Mr. Polak,¹ tells me that each time he has called on you regarding this matter, you have insulted him. This is painfully surprising as this would be the last thing I should expect from you. He came to you for a simple inquiry, and he tells me, in a rough tone you declined to see him or to give any information. Why so?

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 470.

284. LETTER TO PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 30, 1905

[TO]
RUSTOMJEE JIVANJEE, ESQ.
12 KHETVADI LANE
BOMBAY

DEAR SHETH PARSEE RUSTOMJEE,

Received your letter dated 20th May. I am returning herewith the two letters sent by you. I have written to Kaikhushroo and Abdul Huk² without mentioning your name or the writer's. It will take a day or two to receive their reply. You need not attach much importance to that letter. You will be able to judge better from the accounts and figures you receive. Please let me know if you find them defective. Anyway have no anxiety about the shop. Be at ease and complete the work you have begun.

¹ Henry S. Polak later became an intimate associate of Gandhiji and editor of *Indian Opinion* vide the *Autobiography* part IV, Chapter XVIII.

² Vide "Letter to Kaikhushroo and Abdul Huk", June 27, 1905.

Let me know what steps you have taken in regard to the children's education.

I am glad to know that you have kept up your walks and baths. Perhaps you take the children also with you.

You have given a good report in the issue of the *Jame-Jamshed* you have sent me. The account given about me was not necessary. I can do public work better without getting publicity in this way. You know my thoughts on the subject.

A heavy bill¹ has been received from Mr. Laughton regarding Latiwala. I cannot intervene in that matter. I have, therefore, written to the store that they should see Mr. Laughton and plead for a reduction.

Give my respects to Maji. Let me know the names of people whom you have met.

2 Encl.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): Nos. 481-82.

285. LETTER TO E. EBRAHIM AND CO.

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 30, 1905

TO
MESSRS E. EBRAHIM & CO.
P. O. BOX 27
STANDERTON

DEAR SIRs,

Your letter to hand. *The panchas*² have charged no fees. I have not billed you for all the work I did for Mr. Ismail Kaji. But the fee of 30 guineas includes the charges for letters written in connection with making the settlement, the consultations held with you as well as with Mr. Kaji, the preparation of documents for presentation to the *panchas*, the presentation of the case before the *panchas* and the work done later for the *panchas*. I have not debited the fees for all these items separately but have charged the minimum amount I considered reasonable. Nevertheless, should you so desire, I shall prepare a detailed bill and send it to you. I cannot say what it will come to, because

¹ Vide "Letter to Jalbhai Sorabji Bros", June 23, 1905.

² Arbitrators.

the 30 guineas I have charged have been debited at one time.

The cost of engaging a lawyer on your behalf cannot be recovered, as his work did not concern the arbitration. You may ask for further clarification, if you like.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 488

286. *LETTER TO HAJI HABIB*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

June 30, 1905

TO

HAJI HABIB, ESQ.

P. O. BOX 57

PRETORIA

DEAR SHETH HAJI HABIB,

I forgot to reply to you in connection with Ismail Amod. What can be done until Mr. Lang agrees to the matter regarding him? I have told him that I shall write to him when something definite emerges. I think you need not be in a hurry about it. If a bond is found to be immediately necessary, you can get it prepared without producing the promissory note.

An insurance man will insure the property. He will send his agent to inspect the building and will insure it only if it is passed by the latter, not otherwise. We shall have to bear the travelling expenses, to and fro, of the agent sent by him.

I shall be grateful if you will send me some money against my bill. I am badly in need. I shall be thankful if you can get Mr. Habib Motan, too, to send some. All my money has gone to Phoenix and is still going there.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati signed by Gandhiji: Letter Book (1905): No. 492.

287. *NATAL LEGISLATION*

There are four Bills published in the *Natal Government Gazette Extraordinary*, dated the 21st June, all of which are more or less

objectionable. The first is to amend the laws relating to liquor licences and other licences in their application to the province of Zulu land. In this Bill, which is very largely aimed at British Indians, a hawker is to be called upon to take out a licence from month to month, and this applies even to hawkers in goods not imported, although for the latter there is no licensing fee required. The fee for a hawker's licence to trade in imported goods is to be £1 per month. Moreover, licences under Act 18 of 1897 are not to be granted unless with the approval of the Colonial Secretary, whose decision is to be absolutely final, and "from whose decision there shall be no appeal to any court of law or authority".

Another Bill dealing with British Indians is the one to impose a tax upon unoccupied rural lands. This is a reproduction of the Bill with which we have already dealt¹ and in which land is to be deemed unoccupied unless the owner or some European has continuously resided thereon for at least nine of the twelve months reckoned from January to December in each year.

The third Bill is the one to provide for the licensing of private Locations. A private Location is defined therein to mean "any number of huts or dwellings occupied by Natives or Asiatics on any private lands or any piece of Crown land in process of alienation". Thus, by a stroke of the pen, every piece of ground which may be occupied by Indians is to be turned into a private Location, and the landlord of the place on which the private Location is established is to take out a licence in respect of which he has to pay 10/-² per year per hut or dwelling. Licence fee is not to be paid in respect of any huts occupied by Asiatics or Native employees. The net result of this would be that every room occupied by an Indian, unless he is the owner or in the employ of the owner, shall be liable to an annual tax of 10/-, to say nothing of the insult which is implied in calling the Asiatics' habitations "Locations".

The fourth Bill is to impose a tax on occupied dwelling-houses. This is of general application, and probably the framers of the Bill had not in their minds British Indians at all; but in the end the Bill will tell far more heavily against Indians than any other class of the community. The Bill contemplates the levy of a tax of £1-10 on every house valued at under £750. The tax rises to £20 for a dwelling-house

¹ *Vide* "Anti-Indian Legislation in Natal", 20-5-1905

² Shillings

exceeding £4,000 in value, and the word “dwelling-house” means a house or a part of a house used as a dwelling and including domestic servants’ quarters, stables, out-buildings and other buildings forming the adjuncts of a dwelling-house, in so far as they serve the residential purposes of the house, and this tax has to be paid not by the owners, but by the occupier. Therefore, every occupier of a room even if it is worth only £50 will have to pay an annual tax of £ 1-10. There are many rooms which are made of wood and iron for which, probably, only five shillings per month is paid. The Government proposes to add a monthly half-a-crown to such rental. To say the least of it, there should have been some free limit under which the tax should not be levied. As it is, the Bill is open to very serious objection. These Bills are a sample of the activity of the new ministry.¹ We feel constrained to say that the stamp of inexperience is to be seen on every one of them. Every true citizen must sympathise with the Government in their efforts to bring the Colony out of its difficult pecuniary position; but the means adopted by them to raise revenue are almost without precedent in modern times, except during war time, and are opposed to sound economic principles. We hope that, for the sake of the fair name and fame of the Colony, these Bills will receive short shrift at the hands of the Assembly and the Council.

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

288. MR. BRODRICK² AND BRITISH INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

Sir Mancherji³ has drawn from Mr. Brodrick an important reply on the status of British Indians in the Transvaal. The member for Bethnal Green pressed for some solution of the Indian question, and Mr. Brodrick has stated emphatically that nothing of what the Indians enjoyed before the war would be taken away from them; that every pressure that could be brought to bear on the Transvaal was being brought, but that it was difficult to interfere with a self-governing Colony dealing with the immigration of such people as it may consider to be undesirable. The first statement made by Mr. Brodrick

¹Headed by C. J. Smythe.

²St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India, 1903-5

³ Sir Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggee (1851-1933). Indian Barrister settled in England; Member of Parliament and of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.

can only mean that it is the intention of the Imperial Government to see that Indians are not deprived of such rights as they may have enjoyed during the Boer regime. Such intention is not at present being carried out. To take only one instance: there was no restriction on the immigration of British Indians. At present, as these columns have shown repeatedly, no new Indians are being allowed to enter Transvaal territory, and the old residents are only allowed to enter in small numbers, and after they have undergone tedious, inconvenient and expensive formalities. That pressure is being brought by the Imperial we know and appreciate. We question, however, whether the pressure is commensurate with the gravity of the situation. For the third statement made by the Right Honourable Gentleman gives rise to many a misgiving. It betrays a feeling of helplessness. The Transvaal is not yet a self-governing Colony,¹ but, by implication, Mr. Brodrick has considered it as such. Mr. Brodrick does not deny the promises referred to by Sir Mancherji; nor can it be denied that, when the promises were made, the responsible ministers knew what was coming. They knew that there was to be only one conclusion to the war, and that after the declaration of peace self-government was bound to come. It, therefore, means that the Home Government are now prepared, in their eagerness to conciliate the Transvaal European opinion, even to recede from their promises. It is apposite here to inquire why, so soon as peace was declared, the promises made to the Indians were not immediately fulfilled; also, why, even now, as suggested by Sir William Wedderburn², so long as the Transvaal has not received actual self-government, the Home Government do not repeal the old restrictions on the British Indians, and thus throw on the Council that would be elected, under complete self-government, the onus of repealing such legislation and proving the necessity for it.

About the same time that Mr. Brodrick made the above statement, in a different place, but still as Secretary of State for India, he informed his audience that India had the first claim on their consideration, next only to Great Britain itself, in that the trade of Great Britain with India was larger than that done with Canada, Australia and South Africa combined. Had the interests of British

¹It became one in 1906.

²Distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, later connected with the Indian National Congress.

Indians in the Transvaal been considered in such a spirit on the conclusion of war, when Lord Milner¹ put his pen through scores of old Transvaal Ordinances which were not consistent with British principles, he would not have hesitated to do likewise in connection with the anti-Indian legislation. Nor was it a matter of oversight; for immediately the country was opened up, British Indians approached Lord Milner for a cancellation of the anti-Indian laws. If that step had been taken, nothing would have been heard, probably, of anti Indian agitation to-day; nor, in our opinion, is it yet too late to put into practice the theory propounded by Mr. Brodrick.

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

289. LORD SELBORNE² AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

In view of what we have already said with reference to Mr. Brodrick's statement,³ it is interesting to examine the definition of self-government given by Lord Selborne to a deputation that waited on him last week in the Orange River Colony, in order to request the grant of self-government to that Colony. His Excellency has thus defined that

within the British Empire responsible government means, in strictly local affairs, absolute independence; it means absolute local independence so long as that independence does not encroach on the general harmony of the British Empire, or infringe any of those principles on which it is founded, or any of those imperial considerations which bind it together.

This is a definition worthy of a distinguished representative of the King Emperor, and it is in accord with the professions repeatedly made by the Imperial Colonial Secretaries. The question, then, is whether the disabilities which British Indians suffer in the Transvaal do not encroach on the general harmony of the British Empire, or infringe any of those Imperial considerations which bind it together. The question is self answered. Let us hope that His Excellency, when he is called upon to deal with the Indian question, will apply the definition given by him, and remove the present anomaly.

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

¹ Viscount Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa, 1897-1905, Governor of the Cape Colony, 1897-1901 and of the Transvaal, 1901-5

² High Commissioner in South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, 1905-10

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

290. DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Lord Curzon¹ has frequently declared that, in making public appointments, he made no discrimination between the white and the Coloured. On one occasion, he burst out with vehemence saying that Indians had no reason to complain in the matter of appointments. Moreover, he published a statement with figures to prove that quite a number of appointments were given to Indians. But the statement was misleading, for he had cleverly included in it many Indians drawing a salary of Rs. 75. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale² has exposed this hollow pretence.³ He has shown that those who receive high salaries are almost all Europeans and that all the newly created posts have gone to them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

291. MAXIM GORKY⁴

A comparison can be made, up to a point, between the people of Russia and our own. Just as we are poor, the Russian people are also poor. We have no voice in conducting the affairs of State and have to pay taxes without demur; the same is true of the Russians also. Seeing such oppression, some Russians do come out bravely against it from time to time. Some time ago, there was a rebellion in Russia and one of the chief participants was Maxim Gorky. This man was brought up in extreme poverty. At first he served as an apprentice to a shoemaker, who discharged him. Afterwards he served as a soldier for some time. While in the army, he evinced a desire for education, but being poor could not get himself admitted to any good school. He then served under a lawyer and finally worked as a hawker at a baker's. All this time he continued educating himself through his own efforts. The very first book he wrote in 1892 was so excellent that he soon became famous. Thereafter, he wrote many things, all of them with a single purpose, viz., to stir up the people against the tyrannies they were labouring under, to warn the authorities and to render public service, in so far as this was possible. Without caring to make

¹Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1899-1905

²Gopal Krishna Gokhale, (1866-1915), Indian leader and politician; presided over the Indian National Congress session in 1905.

³In one of his budget speeches in the Imperial Legislative Council.

⁴(1868-1936), Russian novelist

money, he writes with such vehemence and bitterness that the authorities keep a stern eye on him. He has also been to jail in the service of the people and considers imprisonment an honour. It is said that there is no other writer in Europe who is as great a champion of the people's rights as Maxim Gorky.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

292. *THE CHINESE AND THE INDIANS IN SINGAPORE*

Singapore can be said to be as near to the Chinese as it is to us. In that Colony an Indian has all the facilities a Chinese has. Despite this, our people there cannot hold their own against the Chinese. Many Chinese are in Government service, in the Public Works Department or are contractors, and are all very well off. Some even own motor cars. The number of Chinese who entered Singapore territory was 200,947 in 1900, 178,778 in 1901, 207,156 in 1902 and 220,321 in 1903; while the number of Indians who migrated there was 21,000 a year, most of them from Madras. This shows how much is yet to be achieved by our people in the matter of emigration to, and settling in, foreign territories. It is a shame that we cannot keep abreast of the Chinese.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 1-7-1905

293. *LETTER TO HIGH COMMISSIONER'S SECRETARY*

JOHANNESBURG

July 1, 1905

TO

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of communications exchanged between the Government of the Orange River Colony and my Association,¹ in connection with the bye-laws from time to time

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Colonial Secretary", 11-4-1905 to which the Government had replied that no legislation for the restriction of the powers Of municipalities in the Colony was contemplated.

sanctioned by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony, regarding Coloured persons. My Association ventures to draw His Excellency's attention to the fact that no fresh legislation has been asked for in my letter. In the humble opinion of my Association, the powers already possessed by the Lieutenant-Governor enable him to veto bye-laws which are contrary to British traditions and to the Letters Patent. My Association is informed that such legislation as the municipalities have been allowed to pass would have to be reserved for His Majesty's assent, if it were passed by the Legislative Council. My Association also ventures to think that the last paragraph of the letter, written by the Acting Colonial Secretary, is a complete justification for the complaint made by my Association, for, if the question raised is of no practical importance as there are so few British Indians, it cannot be of practical importance to pass legislation of the character referred to in my communication. While it is of no use in the Colony, it wounds, unnecessarily, the feelings of the British Indian community in South Africa, and my Association, therefore, ventures to trust that His Excellency will be graciously pleased to inquire into the bye-laws that have been passed and sanctioned for the various municipalities in the Orange River Colony, and grant the necessary relief.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDUL GANI,

CHAIRMAN

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

294. *LETTER TO KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK*

[JOHANNESBURG]

July 3, 1905

MY DEAR SHRI KAIKHUSHROO AND ABDUL HUK,

Your letter to hand. I am satisfied with your reply.¹ It is not proper for you to want to know the writer's name. I have written to you that it is not at all necessary for you to know it. There is nothing for you even to be afraid of. You should forget all about it. He who would do his duty should remain undaunted by what others say. Let

¹To Gandhiji's letter dated June 27, 1905. Vide "Letter to Abdul Huk and Kaikhushroo", 27-6-1905

me know the amount that stands debited to my account. I have not yet credited the money that has been advanced to the press.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

MESSERS JALBHOY SORABJEE BROS.

110 FIELD STREET

[DURBAN]

From the Gujarati in Gandhi's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 511

295. *ORANGE RIVER COLONY LEGISLATION*

We publish two important communications in this issue on the status of British Indians in the Orange River Colony. The one is a short and belated reply from the Colonial Secretary of that Colony to the protest of the British Indian Association at Johannesburg, against the anti-Asiatic municipal legislation that has been sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor from time to time by the municipalities of the Orange River Colony. The second letter is from Mr H. R. Fox-Bourne the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton.¹ The two communications are a contrast. The Colonial Secretary writes saying that the Government are not contemplating any legislation with a view to restricting the powers of local government at present enjoyed by municipalities in the Orange River Colony. This, in our opinion, is purely begging the question. The British Indian Association has never asked for any legislation to restrict the powers, because the veto is already [vested] in the Lieutenant-Governor. No bye-laws are of any force unless sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor, and we know of no statute, even for the Orange River Colony, which compels the Lieutenant-Governor to sanction any bye-laws that the municipalities may pass. On the contrary, the instructions issued to His Excellency are that he is not to sanction any colour legislation; and one would suppose that, if he may not do that in respect of laws applying to the whole of the Colony, he cannot also do so in respect of laws applying to a particular municipality in that Colony. The reason given by the Colonial Secretary is sarcastic. He says: "As there are so few British Indians in the Colony, I think you will agree that the question raised by you is not of great *practical* importance". The word *practical* is underlined in the letter. What is the meaning? It simply shows that the

¹ Alfred Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1903-5

gates of the Orange River Colony are for ever to remain barred against the British Indian, and also that, if he ever entered the Colony, he would do so in the face of all the restrictive powers, and if he protests, he would be told that such laws could not be repealed. 'Too late' will be flung in his face. May we not ask the Colonial Secretary why, as there are so few British Indians in the Orange River Colony, the wanton insult is offered at all? Is it practical statesmanship to wound the feelings of a whole nation, even when there is not an iota of justification for it? Surely the municipalities of the Orange River Colony could not be so unreasonable as not to listen to expostulations from the Lieutenant-Governor on a matter which, on the Colonial Secretary's own showing, is of no importance to them, unless they delight in heaping unnecessary insults on a community which has never done them any harm. But we would not pursue the examination of the letter any further. We are glad that the-British Indian Association has already moved in the matter, and approached the High Commissioner.

In pleasant contrast to the letter we find Mr. Fox-Bourne's communication to the Colonial Secretary. We invite the attention of all South African Imperialists to this important communication, which we have copied from our contemporary, *India*. Much has been often said in South Africa against the Aborigines Protection Society. We hope, however, that the South African Press and South African readers will treat each act on its own merits, and not condemn, by reason of pre-conceived prejudice, anything that may emanate from the Aborigines Protection Society, which, after all, counts among its members some of the noblest of Britons. Mr. Fox-Bourne has also assurances to be fulfilled in this matter. He has reminded the Colonial Secretary that, before the war, in reply to his Society's representations, certain promises were given. He, therefore, "ventures to hope that no time will be lost in fulfilling those assurances", and he is "encouraged in the hope, at any rate as regarding Coloured persons who are British subjects and not uncivilised, by remarks made by Lord Milner". The Imperial Government have a hard nut to crack. They have either to adopt the advice of Sir Arthur Lawley¹ and boldly commit a breach of their promises, or to fulfil them in accordance with British traditions.

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

¹ Former High Commissioner in the Transvaal

296. THE CHINESE AND ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

A deputation on behalf of whites from the Transvaal mines waited upon Lord Selborne on July 1, and prayed for protection for the whites against Chinese labourers. It stated that the whites did not behave badly towards the Chinese; that, since thirty or forty Chinese worked under a white supervisor, it was not difficult for the Chinese to take his life in the event of a riot; that the Chinese frequently insulted their white boss by using foul language and making indecent gestures; and that the language they used was so foul that it was impossible for the deputation to reproduce it. They said that a white man would not take such an insult lying down. In his reply, Lord Selborne said that there had been only twenty cases of assault by the Chinese until then, though the Chinese labour numbered 40,000; that their complaint about the language was without substance, for the white himself used abusive language and set a bad example. It was harmful to the whites themselves to indulge in drink and indecent behaviour in the presence of the Chinese. If one uses abusive words while addressing persons utterly ignorant of the language, they pick them up parrot-like, and it is then very difficult to mend matters. Moreover, he said, the whiteness of the whites should not be limited to their skin only but should permeate within also, that is, they should have the art of inducing respect, obedience and awe in others by their own exemplary conduct. Then only could they be called white in reality. In brief, he held the whites themselves responsible for the ugly behaviour of the Chinese, and indicated the need of winning the Chinese over by their own good behaviour. Several other difficulties also were placed by the deputationists before Lord Selborne, who promised to give adequate attention to them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

297. SALT TAX IN INDIA

DR. HUTCHINSON'S STRONG CRITICISM

The tax levied on salt in India has always been a subject of criticism. This time it has been criticised by the well-known Dr. Hutchinson, who says that it is a great shame for the British Government in India to continue it, while a similar tax previously in force in Japan has been abolished. The tax should be immediately

abolished. Salt is an essential article in our dietary. It could be said that to a certain extent, the increasing incidence of leprosy in India was due to the salt tax. Dr. Hutchinson considers the salt tax a barbarous practice, which ill becomes the British Government.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 8-7-1905

298. LETTER TO DADA OSMAN

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 8, 1905

DEAR SHETH DADA OSMAN,

I have your letter. I see that it is absolutely necessary for you to go to Vryheid. I am afraid you will be able to do nothing without making the necessary arrangements there. I can do precious little, sitting here. In case a fine is imposed, I cannot advise you to have the shop kept open in your absence.

A lot will depend on Hoondamal's appeal.¹ Please see that all possible care is taken in the matter of that appeal. Let me know who will appear at the appeal. If it is won, you will be able to reopen your shop. Meanwhile it might be profitable to see the Town Clerk and other officials.

I do not see any cause for worry if Abdulla Sheth does not give the accounts. All hope of Dada Sheth's getting more money has already been given up, so that there is no cause for worry at all.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

MR. DADA OSMAN

BOX 88

DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 582

¹ *Vide* "The Hoondamal Case", 11-2-1905 "Indian Licences' Need for Vigilance—I", 18-2-1905 & "Indian Licences' Need for Vigilance —II", 4-3-1905

299. LETTER TO PARSEE COWASJI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 8, 1905

DEAR SHRI PARSEE COWASJI,

Your letter to hand. I am not in a position to give you monetary help.

M. K. GANDHI

MR. PARSEE COWASJI,¹
115 FIELD STREET
D URBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 584

300. LETTER TO J. DE VILLIERS

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 12, 1905

TO

J. DE VILLIERS, ESQ.
L8 AEGIS BUILDINGS
JOHANNESBURG
DEAR SIR,

Re: Ismail & Lucas

I have purposely delayed sending you cheque for this bill in the hope of being able some time to wait upon you with a view to getting a reduction. Owing to pressure of work, however, I have not been able to get out of the office. All that Said Ismail had was this claim. To him, therefore, the loss of £1,300 and payment of costs are a very great loss. May I, therefore, ask you to make a substantial reduction in your account? I approached Mr. Leonard and he was good enough to grant a reduction.

¹ Gandhiji has spelt the name here as "Kavasji".

I enclose your bill herewith.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

1 Enclosures¹

Letter Book (1905): No. 630

301. LETTER TO COLONIAL SECRETARY

JOHANNESBURG ,

July 13, 1905

TO

THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
PRETORIA

SIR,

On behalf of my Association, I am respectfully to protest against clause 3 of the draft Ordinance to “generally amend the Municipal statutes” of the Colony, as published in a supplement to the *Government Gazette* dated the 7th inst.

My Association ventures to submit that the giving of the control of Asiatic Bazaars to the Town Councils is premature and calculated to prejudice the status of British Indians in the Colony in view of the fact that the whole question of anti-Asiatic legislation is now under consideration by the local Government as also by the Imperial Government. Law 3 of 1885 contemplates government control, and seeing that the municipalities in the Transvaal are swayed very largely by colour prejudice, my Association humbly thinks that it would be an injustice to British Indians to give over control of Asiatic Bazaars to the municipalities or local boards.

My Association, therefore, trusts that the Government will be pleased to withdraw the clause in question, and allow the matter to remain in abeyance until the whole question of the status of British

¹ Not available

Indians in the Colony is placed on a final footing.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDUL GANI,

CHAIRMAN,

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

302. LETTER TO JALBHOY & SORABJEE BROS.

[JOHANNESBURG]

July 13, 1905

MESSRS JALBHOY & SORABJEE BROS.

110 FIELD STREET

DURBAN

DEAR SIRs,

You have forgotten to send me an extract of the Press account against me. Please let me have it at your convenience. I hope you will be good enough to execute with promptness orders that may be given in connection with the Press, as things are not yet quite in order at Phoenix.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I have your letter of the 11th instant. I am glad you have got the credit from Mr. Laughton,¹ which I return. I thank you [for] having paid Chhaganlal £100; I note you have sent a draft for £80 to Mr. Rustomji.²

Letter Book (1905): No. 633

¹ F. A. Laughton, a leading advocate.

² Parsi Rustomji, Indian merchant and co-worker of Gandhiji.

303. LETTER TO HINE & CARRUTHERS

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 13, 1905

TO

MESSRS HINE & CARRUTHERS

P. O. BOX 26L

JOHANNESBURG

DEAR SIRs,

Re: Estate Abdul Karim Deceased

I regret that I have only just broken the back of the document left by you with me for translation. There are still 24 closely written sides to be translated. I need hardly say that this will be a most expensive translation. The amount of work already put in is over £2, and by the time I have finished, it will be quite £12. However, from what I have already read, it appears that my agents at Porbandar had to go by a most circuitous route to get a certified copy, the reason being the changes of the law which prevent any but the interested parties within the jurisdiction of the court getting certified copies. However, if you wish me to continue the translation, I will do so, and it will take me quite a week before I can let you have the whole of it, as under my present engagements it would not be possible for me to devote two full days to it, which is the necessary time for the work. I am in a position to devote only a little time from day to day.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 649

304. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 13, 1905

DEAR SHETH OMAR HAJI AMOD,

Your letter to hand. I am returning herewith the newspaper clippings. They show that the influence of the *Opinion* is increasing.

I am enclosing a letter written in English so that you may show it to your lawyer. Some trustee should be appointed by the courts in virtue of the terms of the will. Then when the papers come here, the

property will be entered in the names of both of you. Thereafter the lease will be registered. As you will be able to understand what I have written in English I do not dilate upon it any further.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI¹ ESQ.

BOX 441

DURBAN

From the Gujarat; in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 651

305. LETTER TO TOWN CLERK²

[JOHANNESBURG]

July 14, 1905

TO

THE TOWN CLERK

JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

Re: Indian Travelling on the Tram-cars

I have now slept over our conversation herein, and have also compared notes with my client. If a definite assurance can be given to the effect that facilities will be provided for Indian[s] travelling on the new tram-cars, my client will refrain from testing his right in a law court, but if it cannot, it appears very advisable that the issue should be definitely decided now. My personal experience has been that, where an absence of certain rights has been assumed without reason, rearrangement has, as a rule, proceeded upon such assumption, and what was once an open question has upon rearrangement been definitely decided against the granting of such right or rights. I venture, therefore, to think that the proposal above made is quite reasonable.

I have the honour to remain

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter-Book (1905): No. 659

¹ The original Gujarati has, however, "Johari",

² Vide "Letter to Law Society", 22-6-1905

306. THE CAPE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT

We publish in another column the text of a letter received by the Chairman of the British Indian League at Cape Town from the Colonial Secretary's Office, in reply to representations of the League on the working of the Cape Immigration Act. The Colonial Secretary brushes aside in a single sentence the request made by the League as to the recognition of the Indian languages. We hope that the British Indian League will not leave the question at that. With reference to the interpretation of the term "domicile", the reply is most unsatisfactory. It is not every Indian who can show possession of immovable property, or presence of wife and children in the Colony. If such an interpretation is insisted upon, it cannot but cause unnecessary hardship, in spite of the intention of the Colonial Secretary not to do so. A man may leave his business at the Cape, pay a temporary visit to India, and find himself for ever shut out of the Cape, because his wife and children are not in the Colony, or he does not own immovable property. It would then simply mean ruin to the poor store-keeper who, under a false sense of security, may have gone to India, leaving his business in temporary charge of his manager. Nor is this illustration an imaginary one, for we understand that cases of such Indians having been refused re-entrance have actually happened. The least, therefore, that Colonel Crewe¹ could do to satisfy the requirements of justice is to recognise the rights of those who may have left business or employment in the country to re-enter. It will then be possible for them to talk of an exercise of leniency, for, in the definition given by him, so far there has been no leniency but a very strict application of the law; and then only will it be possible for the British Indian League to recognise the reasonable attitude of the Government. For the present, we think, with the greatest deference, that it is unjust, unreasonable and calculated to impose very serious hardship on the British Indians residing in the Cape Colony.

Indian Opinion, 15-7-1905

¹ Colonial Secretary, Cape Colony

307. MR. WACHA¹ AND INDIANS

Mr. Wacha, the genial Joint Secretary of the National Congress, has written to us a letter which is full of encouragement, hope and suggestion. We reproduce the main portion of it in another column. He has given a parallel case which is of some importance in the controversy that is going on in South Africa over the status of British Indians. "The settlers," says Mr. Wacha,

on your side, seem to have forgotten how merchants and traders themselves used to complain in the bitterest terms of the East India Co., which, up till the Act of 1833, interdicted them from trading in India. Those who came were styled 'interlopers', but the interlopers were persevering and earnest,

and we know that they succeeded. Earnestness and perseverance are also the keynote to the situation in South Africa. We have far greater justice on our side than they of 1833. British Indians have a threefold right to have their status made good in South Africa. The Proclamation of 1858, no matter what may be said to the contrary, guarantees them full British subject rights. They have shown themselves to be industrious, sober, law-abiding and honest in South Africa, and, as has been often admitted, they have been very useful in developing its resources. They have also had promises of fair and equal treatment, especially regarding their civil rights in South Africa, from responsible ministers.

Indian Opinion, 15-7-1905

308. HOUSE TAX IN NATAL

Popular feeling is growing against the House Tax Bill published in the Natal *Government Gazette*. A public meeting was held on the night of the 10th instant in Maritzburg to consider the Bill, and a meeting was also held in Durban on Thursday evening. A large number of people has signed various petitions protesting against the Bill. The proposed house tax has become even more irksome than the

¹ Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, (1844-1936), presided over the Indian National Congress session in 1901 and was nominated member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council.

poll-tax. The measures proposed are very defective and the Bill is objectionable even if passed as a temporary measure. If introduced, this tax would be regarded more equitable than the poll-tax as a permanent levy. The poll-tax cannot be tolerated for ever, though it is true that it is levied in some countries. In view of the public feeling against the house tax, it should either be modified or dropped altogether, so that the feeling against the poll-tax may not be intensified.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 15-7-1905

309. JAPAN'S PREPARATION FOR PEACE

THE CAPTURE OF SOUTHELIAN ISLAND

The Japanese have captured the Southelian Island from the Russians and landed their troops there. This island is 670 miles long, and 20 to 150 miles broad. Its area is 24,550 square miles, that is, more extensive than that of Kathiawad. The southern part of the island was in the possession of Japan till the year 1875, but was later passed on to Russia in exchange for the Kuril Islands.¹ In that island, there are many kerosene wells, and coal also is found in abundance. The negotiations for peace now in progress have been very greatly influenced by the capture of such a big island by Japan. The Times says that no other event during the war has hit the Russians so severely. This event has proved that Russia is quite incapable of defending her boundaries. It is not yet fifty years since this island came into the hands of the Russians. She had taken possession of it through political machinations and Japan had to suffer a lot on that account. But for this great war, the island would have continued to be in Russian hands. Japan had had her eye on the island for a long time, and it is believed that this timely victory will strengthen the Japanese position in the peace negotiations at Washington. By the time the Peace Committee is in session, we might possibly hear of Marshal Oyama having dealt a severe blow to the Russian General, Linewich. The Japanese army declines to suspend hostilities for a short spell of truce, but intends to wage furious war and force Russia into concluding a lasting peace. And they will show that there is no

¹ A chain of small islands in the North Pacific Ocean.

alternative for Russia but to sign a peace treaty. They confidently declare that the Russian emissaries of peace will ultimately have to accept Japan's terms.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 15-7-1905

310. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

21-24 COURT CHAMBERS,
CORNER RISSIK & ANDERSON STREETS,
P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
July 15, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. An account has been sent to you up to date from which you will find the monies received regarding the Earthquake Fund.¹ You will notice also there are some monies received for the Durban flood fund from Miss Neufliess, which you may hand to Mr. Omar. Continuing sheets have been received, so also the scribbling blocks. I do not quite understand your reference to supervision. You should send me concrete instances, and I would understand the working much better. I should also like to know where loss has been incurred or sustained. Dahya Jogi's money has been received; the amount is £1-2-6. I know the matter was sent late. I am now sending you as much as possible to-day. Balance, if any, will be sent tomorrow. West² writes to me saying that Maganlal should leave about September, returning by December, telling me also that such is your opinion. If it is possible to manage without Maganlal, I have no objection. How are Kaba and Anandlal doing? Is Pillay now

¹ *Vide* "Earthquake in India", 13-5-1905

² Albert West met Gandhiji in 1904 in a vegetarian restaurant in Johannesburg and offered to nurse plague patients. Instead Gandhiji entrusted him with the management of Indian Opinion and the International Printing Press where it was printed. "From that day until I left the shores of South Africa," says Gandhiji, "he remained a partner of my joys and sorrow". *Vide* Autobiography, Part IV, Chapter XVI.

completely cured ? Did Maganlal receive the Tamil books ? Has he commenced the study ?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Please send Y.M.C.A. Johannesburg for one year *I.O.* The money has been received from Mr. Macintyre.

M. K. G.

Memo re. Earthquake and Miss Neufliess will be separate.

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

C/O INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESS

PHOENIX

From a photostat of the original: S. N. 4245

311. LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 17, 1905

MY DEAR SHETH OMAR HAJI AMOD ZAVERI,

Your letter to hand. I am returning herewith both the letters of Sheth Haji Ismail¹. I do not at all like the way he has written them. I can see from it that it will be difficult to exercise control over his expenditure. If the expenses there come to as much as the rent, you have to consider what is to be done about it.

If the business here does not yield profit enough to meet the expenditure at Porbandar, it will amount to consuming the capital. I believe it will be necessary to remit £100 a month for the present to Porbandar in order to obviate further bitterness. I am writing to Sheth Haji Ismail today.²

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 678

¹ Nephew of the addressee.

² *Vide* the following item.

312. LETTER TO HAJI ISMAIL HAJI ABOOBAKER

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 17, 1905

DEAR SHETH HAJI ISMAIL HAJI ABOOBAKER,

I have received a letter from Omar Sheth in which he says that this expenditure is too much. I have also read your last two letters. I think they lack in the requisite courtesy. Omar Sheth is your uncle; therefore the letters from your end should be full of courtesy as only befits your noble family.

What Omar Sheth says about expenses deserves to be carefully considered. There is a world of difference between the time when Omar Sheth visited England and the present. The rents have gone down by half and will go down still further. The expenses here are met from the rents received, so that the time has come when you have to live on capital. I think your estate is such that it should never be necessary for you to live on your capital. Even millionaires who fell back on their capital have run through it. My earnest advice to you, therefore, is that you should be very careful in spending money on your household. I believe some of the expenditure can be reduced. Please take good care of your health. Exercise and regulated diet are the essential things.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

HAJI ISMAIL HAJI ABOOBAKER AMOD ZAVERI, ESQ.

PORBUNDER

KATHIAWAD

VIA BOMBAY

From the Gujarati in Ganthiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 693

313. LETTER TO "THE DAILY EXPRESS"

JOHANNESBURG,

[After July 17, 1905]

TO

THE EDITOR

The Daily Express

SIR,

I trust you will allow me to reply to your correspondent who, under the elegant pseudonym of "Sinkramsam", has attacked British

Indians through your columns in your issue of the 17th instant. There is a homely Indian saying that you can take a horse to a watercourse but cannot compel him to drink the water. So also those who shut their eyes to facts placed before them are not to be disabused of their misconceptions. Your correspondent, I very much fear, belongs to that category. For his information, however, I ask again the question, if there were only thirteen Indian (not “coolie”, as your correspondent would have it) “store-keepers, traders and hawkers” before the war, how is it that the challenge issued by the Chairman of the British Indian Association has not been taken up by Mr. Kleinenberg¹? Remember that the names of these store-keepers have been supplied to the Press. I note that your correspondent has gone one better, in that he makes bold to say that the number thirteen includes store-keepers, traders and hawkers. Unfortunately for him, he has chosen a fatal number, and I am prepared to deposit with you the sum of £100 to be forfeited to any anti-Indian Association your correspondent may name if I fail to prove to the satisfaction of two arbitrators, one to be chosen by him and the other by me, with power to them to appoint an umpire, that there were more than twice the number of store-keepers, traders and hawkers mentioned by your correspondent prior to the war in the town of Pietersburg; provided that he forfeits to the British Indian Association an equal sum in the event of the award being in my favour. So much for Sinkramsam’s figures.

As to the charge that the Native is being fleeced by British Indians, I can only refer your correspondent to Sir James Hulett’s testimony² before the Native Affairs Commission as to which is the greater evil-doer, the European or the Indian. With reference to the other charges made by your correspondent, and based on “information” supplied to him, I can only say that sensible people will rate them at their true value. If there is any nefarious trade done by Indians, and he has received the information, surely the remedy is in his own hands, and if the question of trading licences is not yet settled once and for all, it is because Sinkramsam and his coadjutors would not accept the very reasonable compromise suggested by British Indians, whereby the control of new licences would be handed to the Town Councillors to be elected largely by Sinkramsam and his friends. You, Sir, have some experience of the British Indian question as it was prior to the war. You have experience of British Indians also. You have adopted an independent attitude in journalism. I am sure

¹ Vide “Mr. Klingenberg and Mr. Abdool Gani”, 7-1-1905 & “Potchefstroom Churlishness”, 7-1-1905

² Vide “Sir J.L. Hulett and Indian Traders”, 24-9-1903

you do not wish racial hatred between the component parts of the British Empire to grow. It must be within your knowledge that some of the facts stated by your correspondent are untrue. Will you not be carrying out your mission by correcting what are undoubtedly palpable mis-statements? Indians want only a fair field and no favour. Justice ought not to be a dear commodity under the British flag.

I am, etc.,

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 29-7-1905

314. LETTER TO REVASHANKAR JHAVERI

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 18, 1905

RESPECTED REVASHANKARBHAI,

Your letter to hand. Please debit Rs. 45 to my account for Capt. McGregor. I have debited the sum to his account crediting the same to yours.

I think it best to send Chi.¹ Harilal here. It is quite necessary to reduce to the utmost the expenditure that is being incurred there. The burden on me here is so heavy that it is difficult for me to meet the expenses there. Nor do I see that Harilal's interests are served thereby. Please write to Raliatbehn² that she should limit her expenses to about Rs. 20 to 25. I, too, have written to her to cut down on her expenses.³

I am glad to read the news about Chi. Manilal⁴ and Suraj.

Yours respectfully,

MOHANDAS

MESSRS REVASHANKAR JAGJIVAN & CO.

JHAVERI BAZAAR

NEAR KHARA KUVVA

BOMBAY

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 696

¹ Abbreviation for Chiranjeevi, meaning "long-lived". Prefixed to the name of a younger person, it implies the blessing, "May you live long!"

² Gandhiji's eldest sister.

³ This letter is not available.

⁴ Son of the addressee.

315. LETTER TO RAVISHANKAR BHATT

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 21, 1905

DEAR SHRI¹ RAVISHANKAR BHATT,

Your letter to hand. In my opinion, we are all bound to honour and welcome any learned Indian who happens to come here. We have nothing to do with his religious preaching. Both Hindus and Mahomedans should join in honouring him. I, therefore, regard it our duty to honour Prof. Parmanand². As to his religious teachings, those who are his associates in those teachings might do whatever they like later on. I, therefore, think that you should not refrain from honouring him. I have not given my consent to the collection of subscriptions, etc., nor do I intend to do so.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

R. P. BHATT

BOX 529

DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 727

316. LETTER TO MAGHRAJ & MOODLEY

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 21, 1905

DEAR SIRs,

I have your letter of the 9th instant. I do not think that a collection is called for in Johannesburg just yet. I have already had a complaint before me saying that my name is being used in connection with the collection³ being made there. I should very much like you not to give the reception a religious aspect. You may be aware that there are differences between the Samajic teaching and the orthodox

¹ The original has "Shri 5", which means that the "Shri" is to be repeated five times—a sign of respect

² A missionary of the Arya Samaj, later known as Bhai Parmanand; visited South Africa and delivered a series of lectures. Vide "Prof. Parmanand", "Letter to Ravashankar jhaveri", 18-7-1905 and "Address to Prof. Parmanand", 27-10-1905.

³ For Prof. Parmanand. Vide the preceding item.

Hindu teaching, and a complaint has been forwarded to me from the latter. We owe respect to any cultured Indian who may arrive from India, and I would rather you gave a suitable reception from Indians representing all classes, but that can only be done if it is bereft of the religious element, and then those who are interested in the Arya Samaj teaching will have to see specially to it.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

MESSRS B. A. MAGHRAJ & A. MOODLEY
P. O. BOX 182
DURBAN

Letter Book (1905): No. 730

317. LETTER TO CAPT. FOWLE

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 21, 1905

TO

CAPT. FOWLE

P. O. BOX 1199

JOHANNESBURG

DEAR CAPT. FOWLE,

I notice that the detectives are still going round in search [of] permitless Indians. In their search, they examined 16-year-old boys also. They are staying in the Colony, especially the one I have written to you about, on your assurance. They are, Sir, from their appearance, under 16 years or were certainly of that age when they arrived. The only defect is that they have not their parents here, but are either orphans and under their natural guardians, or are being brought up by their relations who take the position of parents. I hope, therefore, that you will be good enough to instruct the detectives not to touch these boys while the matter is being fixed up.

I remain,

Yours truly,

M K. GANDHI!

Letter Book (1905): No. 729

318. MR. BRODRICK'S BUDGET

There are features in the Budget statement made by the Secretary of State for India to the House of Commons on the motion that the House should go into committee on the East India Revenue accounts. It is a happy augury that Mr. Brodrick has presented his statement almost for the first time, within recent times, during the middle of the session instead of, as usual, at the end, when the Indian Secretary goes through the farce of addressing empty benches. The departure, too, has been deliberate. "Discussion," said Mr. Brodrick, "at this earlier period is more likely to lead to useful criticism and efficient administration". He hoped, too, that the precedent would be followed, whether in future he was the holder of the high office or an honourable member from the Opposition benches. Mr. Brodrick took occasion to show most clearly the extent of the services rendered to the Empire by much-maligned India, and both the services he laid so much stress upon are such as to command attention and appreciation in South Africa.

Of the one hundred and forty-three million pounds of trade in 1902 and 1903, sixty-two million pounds was trade directly with Great Britain. Of the trade of last year, one hundred and seventy-four million, seven hundred and forty-eight thousand pounds, seventy-seven million pounds was directly to and from Great Britain. That is not an inconsiderable item in the trade of Great Britain, and if we compare these figures, as some people from different points of view are now occupied in comparing the trade of the Colonies with the trade of India, I could point out that the exports from the United Kingdom to India in 1902, which were thirty-three million five hundred thousand pounds, were equal to the exports to Canada, the British Colonies, and North America, and to Australia, and last year those exports, which had grown to forty million pounds, equalled the whole of the exports from this country to Australia, to Canada and to Cape Colony combined.

There was no difficulty in Mr. Brodrick's drawing the natural deduction. He, therefore, went on:

I trust I shall carry every member of this House with me when I say that the trade of India with the United Kingdom tends continually to increase. The stake of the United Kingdom in the trade of India and the stake of India in the trade of the United Kingdom are such that we are entitled to claim a first place for India in all the discussions that may take place as regards trade within the Empire.

Another statement that Mr. Brodrick made was with reference to the defences of the Empire. India forms a training ground for

seventy-five thousand British troops and a breeding ground for one hundred and forty thousand British Indian troops which are held at the disposal of the Empire in any emergency. The whole cost is borne by India, representing an expense of twenty-and-a-half millions out of a revenue of eighty-two millions. Distinguished generals from Lord Roberts downwards have testified to the efficacy of the services of the Indian Army. Sir George White and his army gave a striking illustration of this preparedness during the Boer War. These are all facts pregnant with meaning. They ought to be studied and pondered by South African politicians; and, after they have done so, we respectfully suggest to them that they should ask themselves the question whether it would pay, even from a purely selfish standpoint, to continuously treat the inhabitants of India as complete aliens undeserving of any consideration whatsoever at their hands.

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

319. ASIATIC BAZAARS IN THE TRANSVAAL

A recent issue of the Transvaal *Government Gazette* contains a Draft Ordinance which has the following amongst other clauses:

(1) The Council may, with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, set apart, maintain, and carry on bazaars or other areas exclusively for occupation by Asiatics, and control and supervise the same in accordance with Regulations made from time to time by the Lieutenant-Governor, and may lease the land and any buildings or other erections thereon to Asiatics upon such terms and at such rents as may be prescribed from time to time by such Regulations aforesaid.

(2) The sites of any bazaars or other places pointed out under the provisions of Law 3 of 1885 or any amendment thereof may be transferred by the Lieutenant-Governor to any Council of a Municipality, subject to existing leases thereover, and every such transfer shall be free of transfer stamp duty, and registration or other charges, and any such-bazaar or site so transferred shall be deemed to be a bazaar or area set apart under sub-section (I) of this section.

(3) The provisions of section two of this Ordinance shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply for the purpose of enabling a Council to close such bazaars and areas and lay out other land suitable for the same.

(4) The term 'Council' in this section shall include a Council of a Municipality whether constituted under the Municipal Corporations

Ordinance, 1903, the Municipal Corporations Amendment Ordinance, 1904, or under any special law.

The British Indian Association at Johannesburg has lost no time in protesting against the contemplated transfer of the control of the Bazaars to the municipalities.¹ The objections to such transference are, in our opinion, unanswerable. The whole of the Asiatic question is still pending, and is the subject of correspondence between the Imperial Government and the local Government. Law 3 of 1885, as both the Parties have stated, is only a stopgap to be swept away as soon as possible. Any legislation, therefore, based on that law and amplifying the restrictions is inconsistent with the attitude of openness which the local Governments are bound to maintain. If not, what becomes of Mr. Lyttelton's statement that at least the *status quo ante bellum* would be kept up? Moreover, the prejudices of the town councils and local boards of the Transvaal are very strong on the colour question. They do not hesitate to proclaim them from house-tops, and some of the councils and boards would even go so far as to use violence, if they could. Under the circumstances, whilst there is a position of uncertainty as to the future, it seems strange that the Transvaal Government should bring in legislation as if Law 3 of 1885 were never to be erased from the Statute-book.

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

320. A SECRET CONCLAVE

Our contemporary, the *Transvaal Leader*, publishes a message from its Pretoria Correspondent to the effect that His Excellency Sir Arthur Lawley granted a private interview to the leaders of the anti-Asiatic Convention, among whom were present Messrs Loveday and Bourke. The *Leader's* correspondent also states that the interview was prolonged and that the interviewers left Sir Arthur with complete satisfaction. The curtain is then drawn over what actually took place. Lord Selborne, when he met the Boer leaders and members of the Responsible Association, adopted a different attitude. He invited the Press, and saw to it that the proceedings were made public. Why, then, should there be so much secrecy about Asiatic affairs? If the interviewers sought it does it mean that they are afraid of broad daylight being shed upon their doings and their statements; and if Sir Arthur courted privacy, we respectfully ask what was the motive? Was

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Colonial Secretary", 22-7-1905

it that he anticipated the wildest statements from Mr. Loveday and was anxious to hide his shame? British Indians court fullest publicity as to whatever may have to be said against them or for them. They have nothing to fear, exaggerating nothing and minimising nothing, and having absolute justice on their side. Let us, therefore, hope that there may yet be an opportunity given to British Indians in the Transvaal of at any rate, examining statements made by the interviewers to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor behind their backs.

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

321. INDIANS IN KRUGERSDORP

The Town Council of Krugersdorp has received the doctor's report after the meeting about Indians was held there.¹ The doctor says that the houses Of Indians are found to be mostly unclean; that they spit all around; that their lavatories are very dirty and water collects on the floor and never dries; and that they sit and sleep on the counters, etc. We know that much of this is untrue, and it is now up to the Indians in Krugersdorp to obtain another report to counter all this. Nevertheless, we will have to assent to these accusations to some extent. Nobody can deny that we spit any and everywhere and allow the lavatories to remain dirty. Our people are generally disinclined to cleaning lavatories themselves. We feel it necessary to overcome this. It is an established fact that many diseases spread through lavatories. It is very easy to keep them clean. One should spread dry dust or ashes into the bucket every time after use, wash the wooden planks with a disinfectant liquid and wipe them clean. If done regularly, this does not take much time and the cause for this antipathy disappears.

The matter of spitting also needs to be thought about. Everything considered, it is very necessary to cultivate the habit of spitting into a handkerchief or a spittoon, instead of all over the house or shop.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion 22-7-1905

¹ On June 23, 1905

322. INDIAN HOTELS IN THE TRANSVAAL

No laws have so far been enacted in respect of Indian hotels in the Transvaal. Licences are taken out for Kaffir eating-houses and European hotels. Chinese hotels came to be opened when the number of Chinese increased in the Transvaal. No licences are necessary for them. But the Chinese, apprehending trouble in the future, applied of their own accord to the Government for licences. The latter replied that no licences were necessary. The Chinese believed that no hotel could be opened without a licence, and, therefore, applied to the Government saying that a licensing law should be enacted. A Bill on the subject has now been published in the *Government Gazette*, which shows how one has to suffer the results of one's actions.¹ The Indian hotel-keepers will now have to take out licences. It is not even possible to oppose the Bill. All Indian innkeepers in the Transvaal should, therefore, take heed. We believe that licences will be granted only if the premises are quite clean.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

323. JOSEPH MAZZINI

A REMARKABLE CAREER

Italy as a nation came into existence recently. Before 1870 Italy comprised a number of small principalities, each with its petty chief. Before 1870, she was like the India or Kathiawad of today. Though the people spoke the same language and had the same character, they all owed allegiance to different petty states. Today Italy is an independent European country and her people are regarded as a distinct nation. All this can be said to be the achievement of one man. And his name—Joseph Mazzini. Joseph Mazzini was born in Genoa on June 22, 1805. He was a man of such sterling character, so good-natured and so patriotic, that great preparations are being made throughout Europe to commemorate the centenary of his birth. For, although he dedicated his whole life to the service of Italy, he was so broadminded that he could be regarded a citizen of every country. It was his constant yearning that every nation should become great and live in unity.

¹ The original has "What is wrought by the hand hits the heart",

Even at the early age of thirteen, Mazzini showed great intelligence. In spite of great scholarship that he evidenced, he gave up his books out of patriotism and undertook the study of law, and began using his legal knowledge gratuitously to help the poor. Then he joined a secret organization which was working for the unification of Italy. When the Italian chiefs learnt of this, they put him into prison. While still in prison, he continued to advance his plans for freeing his country. At last he had to leave Italy. He went to Marseilles and lived there. The Italian princes, however, using their influence, had him banished from that city. Though obliged to fly from place to place, he did not lose heart and kept on sending his writings secretly to Italy, which gradually influenced the minds of the people. He suffered a lot in the process. He had to run about in disguise to evade spies. Even his life was frequently in danger, but he did not care. At last he went to England in 1837. He did not suffer so much there but had to live in extreme poverty. In England he came into contact with the great leaders of that country and sought their aid.

In 1848 Mazzini returned with Garibaldi to Italy, and set up the self-governing State of Italy. But it did not last long, thanks to the activities of crafty persons and though Mazzini had to flee the country once again, his influence did not fade. The seed of unity that he had sown endured and, though Mazzini remained in banishment, Italy became a single united kingdom in 1870. Victor Emmanuel became its king. Mazzini was gratified to see his country thus united. But as he was not permitted to enter the country, he used to go there in disguise. Once when the police went to arrest him, he opened the door for them as if he were an usher and gave them the slip.

This great man died on March, 1873. His foes had now become his friends. People had come to recognise his true worth. Eighty thousand people joined his funeral procession. He was buried at the highest spot in Genoa. Today Italy and the whole of Europe worship this man. In Italy he is considered one of the greatest of men. He was a pious and religious man, ever free from selfishness and pride. Poverty was for him an ornament. The sufferings of others he regarded as his own. There are very few instances in the world where a single man has brought about the uplift of his country by his strength of mind and his extreme devotion during his own lifetime. Such was the unique Mazzini.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

324. IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIANS GOING TO THE TRANSVAAL¹

Indians are now-a-days being subjected to very great severity in the matter of permits in the Transvaal. Many persons who were staying on false permits have been deported. Some, whose permits did not bear their thumb-impressions, have been sentenced to imprisonment for six weeks. It is probable that many more persons will be subjected to hardships. It is also believed that Permit Officers will visit different villages for investigation. It is therefore necessary that those who hold false permits should immediately leave the Transvaal. They should not under any circumstances make use of false permits; otherwise they will have to suffer imprisonment.

So far boys under sixteen and women were allowed to enter without a permit; but since the scrutiny of permits started, greater strictness is being exercised on the border. Boys under sixteen not accompanied by their fathers and women not accompanied by their husbands are being detained for want of permits. A woman proceeding to the Transvaal was made to detrain at Volksrust as she was not accompanied by her husband. Indians entering the Transvaal should therefore bear the following things in mind:

- (1) one should not enter with a false Permit;
- (2) unless accompanied by their husbands, women should not enter without a permit;
- (3) boys, even if under sixteen, will be able to enter without a permit only when accompanied by their fathers.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 22-7-1905

¹ This was published as "From Our Johannesburg Correspondent".

325. LETTER TO INSURANCE AGENT¹

[JOHANNESBURG,]

July 25, 1905

TO

THE AGENT

NEW YORK MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY

JOUBERT STREET

JOHANNESBURG

DEAR SIR,

You may recollect that Messrs Anandlal A. Gandhi and Abhechand A. Gandhi were insured through me. Their policies are numbered, respectively, 3369009 and 3369004. I understand that the premium on these policies has not been paid for some time. Will you kindly let me know if it is possible to revive these policies, and if so under what conditions, and whether, if the holders do not wish to revive them, they can have a refund of any of the premiums already paid?

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 771

326. INDIANS IN KRUGERSDORP

The Krugersdorp Town Council has sent a representation to the Government that a law should be enacted for the compulsory removal of Indians to Locations. The Transvaal Government have replied saying that nothing can be done at present as the matter was still the subject of correspondence between them and the Imperial Government. It appears from this that the controversy between Mr. Lyttelton and Sir Arthur Lawley is still going on. Sir Arthur wants laws enacted that would apply to Indians alone. The outcome is not likely to be known before the next year. Meanwhile, we hope Indians in Krugersdorp will keep their houses clean and tidy.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 29-7-1905

¹ Gandhiji wrote an exactly similar letter on August 8, 1905, to the Agent at Bombay, probably under instructions from the Johannesburg office.

327. *TRANSVAAL PERMITS*

We have already reproduced from the *Transvaal Government Gazette* the list of permits¹ bearing certain numbers that have been cancelled. Some people have interpreted it to mean that even the holders of genuine permits bearing the said numbers have to quit and that their permits are rendered invalid. This is a mistaken view. Those whose permits are genuine and bear their thumb-impressions need not be alarmed at all; their permits are not cancelled, though their names may have been published in the *Government Gazette*. This applies to the registers also.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 29-7-1905

328. *THE INNER STORY OF THE BALTIC FLEET*

Admiral Rozhdzhestvensky's² letter addressed to the Czar setting forth all Acts about the defeat sustained by the Baltic Fleet makes sad reading. Though the letter is written by a defeated Admiral, no one will take the reasons he has mentioned therein as excuses to explain his defeat. The secret facts, now revealed, clearly show that the crushing defeat sustained by the Fleet was only to be expected. The ablest of the world's naval officers used to say that the Baltic Fleet would teach the Japanese the lesson of their lives. They made this forecast because the men-of-war in the Fleet were gigantic, they were very well equipped with armaments, and could move very swiftly. They carried the best artillery of the latest type, and their admirals were considered very capable. But, as Admiral Rozhdzhestvensky says, the greatness of the Fleet existed on paper only. In his letter to the Czar, he says that, thanks to the corruption in the administration, not only was the building of the ships disgraceful, but they were not in fact properly equipped with the necessary armaments, etc. The guns were incapable of discharging shots as desired; enough coal could not be stored in the hulk; the speed of the ships was falsely praised; the engines always made a creaking noise as if in a ramshackle condition; two-thirds of the sailors were unfit for their jobs; the gunners had no sense of duty; and the worst of it all was that, after leaving

¹ Published in two instalments in *Indian Opinion* issues of July 8 and 15, 1905.

² Rear-Admiral Rozhdzhestvensky, Commander of the Baltic Fleet

Madagascar, all the men on board became rebellious. When such a fleet joins battle, defeat can be the only result. The letter gives a graphic account of what happened after they left Formosa. The Admiral was already aware of this condition of his Fleet; and the fact that he undertook to fight under these circumstances and showed such bravery is sufficient testimony to his loyalty.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 29-7-1905

329. *INDENTURED INDIANS IN NATAL*

Mr. James A. Polkinghorne has issued his yearly report ending 31st December last. As a contemporary states, the report is belated, as are most of the Government reports in Natal; consequently, there is no doubt there is not the same interest taken in them that would be if they were issued promptly. The present report is a document of more than ordinary interest in that it throws a good deal of light on the working of the Immigration Law as to re-indenture and poll-tax. It gives also a more accurate census of the indentured Indian population than hitherto. The information given by the Protector is an "eye-opener". The Indian population has increased very considerably during the past three years. Between 1876 and 1896, it was 31,712, in 1902, it was 78,004, at the end of 1904, it was 87,980, showing an increase in two years of nearly 10,000; and yet the Protector states in another place that he has not been able to supply the full number applied for in 1902, namely, 19,000. The demand for such labour is so great that it has been necessary to refuse fresh applications altogether. The reason for this large increase is obvious. This class of labour is very popular and is daily growing in popularity in the Colony. The men who come out give great satisfaction, and the bread and butter of thousands of Colonist depends very largely upon a steady inflow of indentured labour from India. The moral, too, is obvious. The noise that we find here about the Indian being an undesirable citizen is largely hypocritical or selfish. We had a striking corroboration of the deduction to be made from the above figures in the observation-recently made by His Excellency the Governor of Natal at the time of the opening of the Agricultural Show, when he stated that the Indian agriculturist was indispensable for the development of the coast lands of Natal.

The Protector is very much dissatisfied with the working of the Law as to the poll-tax and re-indenture. He states that the Law is very

much evaded, and that it has failed in inducing the time-expired Indian to return to India. Many of those who have remained have succeeded in escaping the poll-tax. Last year, 888 men and 345 women completed their indenture under the new Law. Out of this number, only 137 men and 32 women offered themselves for re-indenture. 201 men and 58 women returned to India, 375 men and 146 women paid the tax, and 170 men and 105 women were at the time of drawing up the report unaccounted for. Nor is this to be wondered at. The poll-tax is never at any time a satisfactory mode of raising revenue. It has not been a deterrent to settlement in the Colony. The framers of the act never expected any such result. It constitutes a source of irritation to the indentured Indian. It levies from them unjustifiable contribution and constitutes a blot on the fair name of Natal. What is more, it is imposed on men whose services are considered, as has been already shown, to be indispensable to the welfare of the Colony.

Indian Opinion, 5-8-1905

330. WHY DID JAPAN WIN?

The reply given by Baron Komura to a question from the Press representatives in New York wanting to know the cause of Japan's victory deserves to be inscribed in one's mind. One reason he gave was that Japan's demand was just; the second was that she was united; there was no corruption either among the officers or the people; every one did his duty; the Japanese were not indolent; they did not shirk work; and they lived in great simplicity. Thanks to this simplicity, they were able to hold their own against the Russians. As their needs by way of clothing and food were few, these could be transported to the soldiers in fewer vehicles. Consequently, it was not very difficult for the Japanese to transport large numbers of men over long distances.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 5-8-1905

331. LETTER TO DADA OSMAN

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 5, 1905

DEAR SHETH DADA OSMAN,

Your letter to hand. I am sending you a copy of the letter written to Mr. Wylie, giving all the details. I have not so far debited you for

any fees after you gave me a cheque in the matter of your licence. Please let me know whether I should do so or not.

It is good that you procured advertisements. Did you take the cheques or not ?

Send me, from the office, Mr. Labistour's opinion and other papers.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

MR. DADA OSMAN
BOX 88
DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 871

332. LETTER TO MISS BISSICKS¹

[JOHANNESBURG ,]

August 5, 1905

DEAR MISS BISSICKS,

I am very sorry for your troubles. I am afraid it would not now be possible to recall the things mentioned by you, as they are included in the sale, as I understand from the Trustee. The sale has realized only £210-0-0 as a going concern. I understand Brown Bros. have bought the business.

I am sorry I shall not be able to cycle to you on Monday as I told Sister Heliel I might do.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

MISS BISSICKS
C/O BOX 4207

Letter Book (1905): No. 872

¹ "An enterprising theosophist", who ran a vegetarian restaurant. On being approached for help to expand business. Gandhiji loaned her a thousand pounds belonging to one of his clients with the latter's consent. The amount, however, was never repaid and Gandhiji made good the loss. Vide Autobiography, Part IV, Chapter VI.

333. *LETTER TO OMAR HAJI AMOD*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 5, 1905

DEAR SHETH OMAR HAJI AMOD,

Your letter to hand. I am glad to know that you have secured advertisements in Maritzburg.

I am sure you have visited Phoenix. Please do so regularly. You should see that your sleep is not disturbed.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

OMAR HAJI AMOD, ESQ.

BOX [441]

DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 874

334. *LETTER TO ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 5, 1905

MY DEAR ABDUL HUK AND KAIKHUSHROO,

Your letter to hand. I am returning herewith Mr. Rustomji's letter. I shall write to him. It is possible to interpret the matter concerning rent the way you do. But you need not worry about it. It will suffice if you take adequate care to see that the house does not remain vacant. I have not yet done with Azam Moosa Hussain's power [of attorney]. You had under-stamped the letter.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

Encl: 1

MESSRS JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.

110 FIELD STREET

DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 876

335. LETTER TO CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 8, 1905

TO

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

P.O. BOX 1199

JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

Re: Abdul Cadir's¹ Duplicate Permit

With reference to your letter of the 14th ultimo, No. 650, I note that you have now examined my client's thumb-impression and traced his permit and registration.

I venture to submit that in all such cases the issuing of a duplicate permit or some certificate is necessary in order to enable the registered residents to return without difficulty. My client is about to proceed to India, and I shall, therefore, be obliged if you will kindly let him have a certificate. There can be no question of fraud as the thumb-impression on the certificate you may issue would prevent its use by any one else.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 889

336. LETTER TO ABDUL HUK

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 8, 1905

MY DEAR ABDUL HUK,

Parsee Cowasji writes that you will stand guarantee for him for one year if a loan of £50 is advanced to him. I believe you know what instructions Rustomji Sheth has left. If you deem it proper that the amount be debited to your account and paid to Parsee Cowasji, do let

¹ President, Natal Indian Congress, 1899-1901

me know, so that I may write to Omar Sheth to make out a cheque for that amount.

Let me know the monthly rental received at present.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

ABDUL HUK, ESQ.

C/O MESSRS JALBHAI SORABJI BROS.

110 FIELD STREET

DURBAN

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 890

337. LETTER TO TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 8, 1905

DEAR SHETH SHRI TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED,

I have sent a reply as per copy enclosed in regard to your claim.¹ I am sorry I do not think there is anything more to be written to Lord Selborne. The fight is to be put up in England or here if Tayob Sheth comes here.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

Encl:

MESSRS TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED & CO.

BOX 357

PRETORIA

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 900

¹ Relates to war losses.

338. *LETTER TO HAJI HABIB*¹

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 9, 1905

DEAR SHETH SHRI HAJI HABIB,

I have received your letter regarding Karodia. I have sent the notice.

Salaams from

M. K. Gandhi

[PS.]

I went to Pretoria last night on business. Since I returned by the 7.30 train in the morning, I could not see you, for which please excuse me. I have sent word through Mr. Kallenbach.²

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 907

339. *LETTER TO ABDUL KADIR*

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 10, 1905

DEAR MR. ABDUL KADIR,

I have not had the time up till now to write to you. Before coming to business, I wish to write to thank Mrs. Abdul Kadir for the sandwiches that she sent to me. What was asked for in jest came-in very handy. As you know, Mr. Omar and Mr. Dada Osman were with me, and we all made our evening meal of them. Then again, there was an accident. An engine had been derailed, and at midnight all the passengers had to change trains. The result was that from midnight the train was running three hours late. The meals were not, therefore, provided at the usual stations, and the sandwiches were appreciated under those circumstances, not only by me, but by my other companions in the train, who, although Europeans, liked them very

¹ Secretary, British Indian Committee, Pretoria

² Herman Kallenbach, a wealthy German architect introduced to Gandhiji by Mr. Khan who had discovered in him a vein of other-worldliness; became a friend of Gandhiji and an associate in his experiments in simple living; courted arrest during the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa. Vide Satyagraha in South Africa, Chapters XXIII, XXXIII to XXXV.

much. So tasty they were. The basket, therefore, before it reached Johannesburg, was half empty. Once more, then, I thank Mrs. Abdul Kadir for her kindness.

Mr. Abdul Gani¹ has shown me the guarantee taken by the bank. I think it is totally uncalled for. In my opinion the deed of dissolution does not in the slightest degree affect the bank's security. I do not understand the reason for altering the bond. However, seeing that all the transfers have to be newly made, it does not much matter. I hope you will hurry the matter forward. There should be no difficulty about taking out Mr. Mahomed Ebrahim's name, because even if he does not consent, the order of court will be quite enough. I understand that it is the desire of all parties to advertise the dissolution in the *Gazette*. I think it is as well. I, therefore, send a draft advertisement². If you approve of it, it can be signed by all the five partners and advertised in the *Gazette* there, the *Gazette* here, and a daily newspaper there and a daily newspaper here. I enclose also draft letter³ to be written to your London agents.

I was pleased beyond measure at the extreme prudence and calmness with which you approached the conferences we had there, and it is my earnest hope and prayer that both the businesses may flourish and that all of you may remain in perfect harmony. I would also ask you to be extremely cautious about your undertakings, though in the long run the future of South Africa is assured. We will have to go through yet worse times, and those who realize this fact will come out best in the end. I have no doubt that there is a great deal of business to be done, but a very large measure of circumspection is necessary.

I am,

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

MR. ABDUL KADIR

C/O MESSRS M. O. CAMOROODEEN & CO.

P. O. BOX 186

DURBAN

Letter Book (1905): No. 912

¹ Chairman, British Indian Association

² Not available

³ *ibid*

340. LETTER TO MESSRS PEARKS LTD.

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 11, 1905

MESSRS PEARKS LTD.

P. O. BOX 2789

JOHANNESBURG

DEAR SIRs,

Re: Jagannath

In this matter the case was heard this morning. Two witnesses gave evidence to the effect that 1 lb. of butter was asked for and a pat, like the one shown by Mr. Levy to me, was given to the inspector, and after the money had passed, the inspector weighed the pat, and while he was weighing, the accused pointed to the inscription on the pat. This was clearly an offence under the law, but the Magistrate held that the accused was quite innocent in the matter and, therefore, imposed a penalty of £1 only. This was the best I could do under the circumstances. It seems that there was a similar case last week in Court. It also came out in the evidence that the inscription on the pat sold was very illegible. Unless, therefore, there is a very much bolder inscription written on all sides of the label, I am afraid that the retailers would run the risk of being fined and fined very heavily because the ordinary penalty is £20 for selling pats of the above description to a customer to a demand for 1 lb. weight. I, therefore, [think that there] should be better inscription, or that all your customers should be told that each time they sell these pats, they should say that the weight is not guaranteed in any way.

I debit you with £3/3/- in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 922

341. FALLING INTO LINE

Thanks to the action of the Rand Pioneers, the Church Council of Johannesburg has awakened to a sense of their duty. A deputation representing the Council has waited on Lord Selborne on the question of the Native land tenure in the Transvaal to urge upon His

Excellency the desirability of not tampering with the rights of the Natives as they existed before the war. The Attorney-General of the Transvaal has shown how the Native was free to own land in the Transvaal before the war. He was able even to cite an instance when the late President Kruger¹ informed certain petitioners, who wanted to curtail the rights of the Natives regarding land, that he could not comply with their request. It is true that the Natives were not, in practice, allowed to have their titles registered in their own names, but as the Attorney-General has clearly shown, the registration of a Native title in the name of the Commissioner for Native Affairs did not clothe that official with any discretionary power. He was bound to take transfer in his name in trust for a Native and was equally bound to take in any other Native as a *cestui que trust* at the instance of the original holder. In reply to the clamour of the anti-Native agitators led by Sir George Farrar,² Sir Richard Solomon has, much against his own inclinations, promised to introduce legislation to legalise the practice of registration of Native titles in favour of the Commissioner for Native Affairs. Against this, the Rand Pioneers have again commenced an agitation. They insist on the Native Commissioner having the power to refuse to act as trustee. If the request were granted, it would undoubtedly take away from the right of the Native to hold land as it existed before the war.

It is against agitation of this nature that the Church Council has raised its voice. The deputation led by Mr. Hosken made it clear to Lord Selborne that the treatment the Coloured races have been receiving in the Transvaal since British occupation is worse than before. He and his fellow-members also showed that the war was justified in the opinion of many because they considered it a war of emancipation. The Rev. Mr. Philips said that he went at his own expense to England to preach the crusade because he could not bear the hardships that were inflicted under the Boer regime on the Coloured races. But the reverend gentleman now found that these races were no better off under the British rule.

Lord Selborne's reply was as was to be expected. He had not sufficiently studied the question. He could not, therefore, pronounce an opinion. But His Excellency added:

If in any respect the British administration is unjust to the Native, civilised or uncivilised, it is a blot and a stain on our administration, and one

¹ Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, (1825-1904), Boer leader, President of the Transvaal, 1883-1900

² A nominated member of the Legislative Council of the Transvaal.

which I feel personally as an implication of disgrace.

These are the words spoken by one who is the ruler of the Transvaal. May His Excellency have sufficient courage and strength to initiate the policy he has thus boldly enunciated!

The interview is not without significance for the British Indians. What the deputation submitted to His Excellency applies equally to them. And the policy laid down by Lord Selborne is the policy applicable to all British subjects. It is a matter for congratulation that in Lord Selborne the Transvaal has a Governor and South Africa a High Commissioner who is determined to hold the scales evenly between conflicting interests.

Indian Opinion, 12-8-1905

342. THE NEW LAWS OF NATAL

The proposal of the Natal Parliament to enact laws on Locations and the levy of a tax on land has miscarried owing to the rejection by the Legislative Council of both these Bills, along with the Bill to levy a tax on the Kaffirs. Therefore, for the time being at least, our apprehensions about Locations have been allayed. Though we cannot say that these Bills have been thrown out because of our petition, there is no doubt that it has had some effect. The lesson we have to learn from this is that any efforts that we might make are bound to bring some measure of success.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 12-8-1905

343. NATIVES' RIGHTS TO HOLD LAND IN THE TRANSVAAL

The Supreme Court of the Transvaal has always given the benefit of the law to Coloured persons that is, it metes out even-handed justice without fear of the whites, regarding them and Coloured persons equal in the eyes of the law. There is in Roodepoort a church belonging to the Kaffirs. In deciding an application to transfer it to the names of its trustees, the High Court¹ has ruled that land can in that way be transferred to the name of a Native; the law does not prohibit such transfer of land. It appears from this case that the mosques situated in Pretoria, Heidelberg and other places can be

¹ "High Court" seems to be a slip for "Supreme Court".

registered in the name of their trustees. This question deserves to be considered by the communities of Pretoria and other places.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 12-8-1905

344. *TREATY BETWEEN ENGLAND AND JAPAN*

As the time for reviewing the treaty between England and Japan draws near, it is being discussed in English political circles. A peace treaty, to hold good for five years, was signed between the two countries on January 30, 1902. But, if by the end of the fourth year, no notice to terminate the treaty was given by either party, the treaty would continue to be in force even beyond the five years, and thereafter the party desiring to end the treaty would have to give a year's notice. Moreover, if at the end of the treaty period either of the parties was engaged in war, the treaty would remain effective till peace was restored.

Moreover, if either party had to go to war against a third power, the other contracting party should strive to prevent any other power from joining it. And if any such power rendered help to the party opposing either of the signatories to the treaty, the other signatory should rush to the help of the former.

If, therefore, a notice in accordance with the above terms to end the treaty is not served by either party by January 30, next year, it will remain operative beyond five years. If on the contrary such a notice is served in the meanwhile and Japan's war with Russia continues, the treaty would remain in force till the end of the war, even if the period of the treaty as originally stipulated had come to an end.

This treaty has proved very advantageous to both England and Japan. As a matter of fact, the whole world can be said to have benefited from it. For, if a third power had entered the war to help Russia, England would have been obliged to go to the aid of Japan, and this would have obviously disturbed world peace. There is, therefore, every reason to hope that this treaty will continue further.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 12-8-1905

345. *LETTER TO TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED & CO.*

[JOHANNESBURG,]
August 12, 1905

SHETH SHRI TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED & CO.,

I am in receipt of your letter. It is no longer possible to write to the High Commissioner. The only thing that remains to be done is to proceed to England. Or it may be possible if some trouble occurs here again. Please meet the Mayor of your place and find out what he has to say in the matter. I cannot advise you to write to England immediately; for, if Tayob Sheth comes here, the real fight will have to be put up here. With each passing day, it will become more and more difficult. It will be better if you send a cable as follows:

High Commissioner declines interfere claim. Strongly advise you come.

Tayob Sheth will not require a permit, so you have not to worry about that.

Salaams from
M. K. GANDHI

MESSRS TAYOB HAJI KHAN MAHOMED & CO.
BOX 357
PRETORIA

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 934

346. *LETTER TO HAJI HABIB*

[JOHANNESBURG,]
August 14, 1905

DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

Your letters remind me of the speeches¹ I delivered. I had promised to send you the dates of *The Star* issues. The four lectures have appeared in *The Star* issues, dated March 10, 18 and 29. I am ready to send those speeches to any place and invite comments. I have read over these lectures in English again and I must say that there is

¹ A series of four lectures on Hindu Religion. Vide "Hinduism", 4-3-1905, "Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji", 11-3-1905 & "Lectures on Religion", 15-4-1905

not a single hard word about any religion.

I have expressed appreciation of every religion and pointed out the distinctive merit of each. There was not the least intention even in my dream of hurting anybody. Nevertheless, some people have been offended, for which I am really sorry. And I would like to assuage their minds, if I can do so somehow or the other. If you want any further explanation, please do write to me.

Salaams from

M. K. GANDHI

HAJI HABIB

BOX 57

PRETORIA

From the Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: Letter Book (1905): No. 950

347. LETTER TO CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 15, 1905

TO

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

P. O. BOX 1199

JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

I send the bearer, John Soukal, for his permit and registration. The documents in his possession, in my humble opinion, show conclusively that the bearer was in the Colony on the 31st day of May 1902 and has been ever since. The details that he gives with reference to his registration show, I think also, that he must have been registered under the Boer Government. A man of his class certainly could not escape registration, especially living in the country for such a long time as the bearer undoubtedly seems to have done. He tells me that he has no acquaintances in Johannesburg at present who could certify to his having taken out the registration under the Boer Government. The man seems to me to be very poor. I, therefore, trust that you will be pleased to issue him the permit, as also fresh registration, notwithstanding the fact that as usual he is not in a position to produce

affidavit regarding previous payment of £3. The case seems to me to be perfectly *bona fide* and deserving of consideration.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 971

348. LETTER TO ABDUL REHMAN

[JOHANNESBURG,]

August 16, 1905

TO

MR. ABDUL REHMAN

P. O. BOX 12

POTCHEFSTROOM

DEAR SIR,

I have to thank you very much for assisting Mr. Kalyandas¹ in connection with the subscriptions for *Indian Opinion*. You mentioned to me about insurance of stock in Potchefstroom. There is a Company who would insure such stock provided the buildings are nice and suitable, I think at £7-6. If there are any who want their stock to be insured, please let me know.

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

Letter Book (1905): No. 981

349. WILL INDIA WAKE UP?

Lord Curzon has long been considering the partitioning of Bengal into two parts and merging one of them in Assam. In justification of the proposed measure, it is argued that Bengal is too large for one Governor to administer. As against this, it is pointed out that Assam is a small province with a very small population and, that it adjoins Bengal. It is therefore the intention of His Excellency the Governor-General to merge a part of Bengal in Assam. On the other

¹ Kalyandas Jagmohandas Mehta, who accompanied Gandhiji to South Africa in 1903 and stayed with him for about five years. He did much work during the plague in Johannesburg in 1904.

side, the people of Bengal argue that the Bengalis are quite distinct from the Assamese; they are highly educated, and they have been living together for generations. It would therefore be an act of grave injustice to separate and thus weaken them and tag large numbers of them on to Assam. A lot of discussion has already taken place over this matter, and a few days ago Mr. Brodrick declared that he had approved Lord Curzon's proposal. Since this news reached India, meetings have been held in almost every village of Bengal. People of all communities have been participating in them. Even Chinese merchants seem to have taken part. These meetings are said to have been so impressive that long telegraphic reports have reached far-off South Africa. Resolutions challenging the Government were, for the first time it would appear, moved at these meetings. It appears to have been suggested in the course of the speeches that, if the Government did not take heed, Indian merchants should stop all trade with Great Britain. We must admit that our people have learnt these tactics from China. But if the people really act accordingly, there would be nothing surprising if our troubles came to a speedy end. For, if this is done, Great Britain will be put to great loss; and the Government can have no means of dealing with it. They cannot compel the people to carry on trade. The method is very straight and simple. But will our people in Bengal maintain the requisite unity? Will the merchants suffer for the good of the country? If we can answer both these questions in the affirmative, India can be said to have truly woken up.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 19-8-1905

350. SIR MANCHERJI AND MR. LYTTELTON

Last year, the Legislative Council passed a resolution requesting Mr. Lyttelton to appoint a commission to go into the grievances of the Indians in the Transvaal. Sir Mancherji had written saying that he approved of the idea of appointing a commission. A question was again asked about this [in Parliament] by that honourable gentleman, to which Mr. Lyttelton replied that the matter was still under discussion. From this it appears that the Transvaal Government is still carrying on a controversy with Mr. Lyttelton and that there is no agreement between them. Mr. Lyttelton wants that immigration laws should be enacted on the lines of those in Natal while Sir Arthur Lawley wants those laws which would apply to Indians alone.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 19-8-1905

351. ELIZABETH FRY¹

There are many reasons why the British should be ruling over us and why we are in such a deplorable condition. One of the reasons is that in modern times the British seem to have produced a larger number than we of brave and pious men and women of high principles. Nevertheless we believe that we are bound to benefit from a knowledge and constant contemplation of the lives of such devout men and women, and we therefore propose to give the stories of their lives from time to time. We hope that the readers of this journal will read their lives and follow them in practice and thus encourage us. We have suggested earlier that each one of our subscribers should maintain a file of *Indian Opinion*. We remind them of it on this occasion.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fry lived in England a century ago. She was a very religious-minded lady and it was her constant concern to help mitigate the sufferings of man. Though herself a chronic invalid she did not care; she was not to be daunted by personal suffering. There is a prison called the Newgate Prison in England where, a hundred years ago, men and women prisoners were huddled together somehow and lived quite uncared for. They were in an extremely bad state. Crime among them, instead of diminishing, was on the increase. Their life was more like that of cattle. Consequently, the condition of Newgate prisoners who were released after their sentences became very pitiable. This misery, the good Elizabeth could not bear to see. Her heart was deeply grieved, and she dedicated her life to the amelioration of their condition. Having obtained permission of the authorities, she began helping, in particular, the women prisoners, whom she used to comfort. But she did not stop here. By her writings and personal effort she got a number of reforms introduced through the authorities. As a result of her efforts the condition of prisoners improved much. But this she considered quite inadequate. In those days, prisoners used to be deported to Australia. They were subjected to great harassment while on board ships. Even the honour of women prisoners was not safe. Elizabeth saw that all her good work was being undone on board the ships while the prisoners were being thus transported. To remedy this evil, she visited the ships at great personal inconvenience. At last she succeeded in putting an end to the

¹ Elizabeth Fry, (1780-1845), belonged to the Society of Friends. She was a pioneer of prison reform.

sufferings of prisoners on the ships. Further, she effected some improvement in the miserable condition of the prisoners in Australia; and a law was accordingly passed to the effect that prisoners, on reaching Australia, were to be passed on to others for service after being trained there for six months. While thus sharing in the sufferings of many unfortunate persons, this good lady forgot her own suffering, and breathed her last, praying to God.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 19-8-1905

352. *THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION*¹: A SUGGESTION

South Africa has had the unique honour of welcoming on its own soil this body of illustrious scientists. The British Association for the Advancement of Science is an institution of which the Empire may well feel proud. It was a happy idea that prompted the South African Association to invite their prototype to visit this sub-continent. The results are likely to be far-reaching. Not only will something be done for the main object of the Association—viz., the popularisation of science—but the visit will help to secure a more important result in drawing together South Africa and Britain, and the Colonies with one another. This is the third time that the Association has met outside the British Isles; and, in view of the importance of these visits and the cordiality with which the members have been received, it is not likely to be the last. We look forward to the day when the Association will meet in India. Such a visit would, we believe, be greatly to the advantage not only of India, but the Association itself.

We venture to make one humble suggestion. We have said that these external visits will do much to draw together the widely separated portions of the King's dominions; and in order that the Association may be everywhere recognised for what it really is—namely, one of the very greatest assets of the Empire—we would like to see the title amended to “THE BRITISH EMPIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE”.

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

¹ Founded in 1831.

353. LORD CURZON

The inevitable has happened and Lord Curzon is no more an Indian Viceroy. It is an irony of fate that when he seemed to be irremovable, he had to go under circumstances the most humiliating. A Viceroy to whom prestige was everything and who relied greatly on it for success in many things he undertook has been obliged to leave India without a vestige of it remaining. That such a fate should be brought about by the discredit of a War Minister adds point to the degradation Lord Curzon has had to undergo. It would almost appear to be an answer to the prayer of the suffering millions who were groaning under his autocratic rule.

We think that, in all he did, Lord Curzon was actuated by good intentions. He undoubtedly believed that he was doing good to the people of India in spite of themselves, in forcing down their throats what he was pleased to term reforms. No Viceroy excited on the threshold of his career the expectations that Lord Curzon did.¹ His speeches led the Indians to believe that he would out-Ripon Ripon¹ in his treatment of Indian problems. In his minute on the behaviour of the British soldiers, he even translated his promises into deeds. His reduction of the salt tax and his advocacy of the cause of British Indians in South Africa will always stand to his credit. But when full allowance has been made for these things, the net result is such that he has succeeded in earning the dislike of the people at the end of his career, in the same measure that he began with their goodwill. Even though the cause of his resignation is unfortunate in that it betokens the triumph of military autocracy over civilian rule, we can quite imagine that today in thousands of Indian homes there must be a time of joy and thanksgiving for what will be considered, not without reason, a good deliverance.

The career of Lord Curzon makes it very risky to base any expectations upon the new Viceroy; and it would be perhaps far safer to expect nothing if we would be blessed; but in Lord Minto, the Viceroy-designate, India will have a nobleman not unknown to it, as he belongs to an illustrious family which has already given a Viceroy to India. His Colonial experience may be of inestimable advantage in

¹ (1827-1909), Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1880-4, and Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1892-5

Indian administration; and, if the traditions of Colonial Governorship, which are always strictly constitutional, are kept up in India, that portion of King Edward's Empire may look forward to a peaceful and sympathetic rule for the next five years. Heaven grant that it may be so. Famine once again threatens to overtake the land; plague still continues to exact its toll; poverty daily undermines millions of families: only broadest sympathy and kindness to the governed can help them in this dreadful trinity of evils.

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

354. PROFESSOR PARMANAND

Professor Parmanand, the distinguished scholar from the Anglo-Vedic College, has been in our midst now for a few weeks. He has delivered interesting discourses to crowded audiences. His mission seems to be to advance the teachings of the Arya Samaj, which is a body that has done most useful and practical work, apart from its religious doctrines. It has produced earnest patriots, a band of self-sacrificing teachers, and it has also done noble work in connection with the terrible earthquake that took place in India a few months back. The Professor who belongs to such a body of workers has a right to expect a warm welcome from Indians in South Africa. Indeed, we cannot have in our midst too many Indians of attainments and culture.

The question, however, remains as to what we shall make of such men and what they will make of us. We confess that we are not yet ripe for a vigorous missionary enterprise on religious lines. The soil is hardly ready for such work. Not that each religion may not have its own exponent and custodian. The Arya Samaj does not represent any established orthodox religion of India. It takes nothing away from its credit when we mention that it is still a cult struggling for existence and catering for converts. It represents a reformation of Hinduism. We feel that Indians in South Africa are not ready to receive any doctrines of reformation. The needs of the Indians, so far as internal work is concerned, consist of education and as much of it of the right kind as can be had. We have always admitted that there is room for improvement in the Indian household. This is not to be attained without education of the hundreds of Indian youths who are almost totally neglected in this sub-continent. The best thing we venture to think that Professor Parmanand can do is to turn his attention to this phase of the question. It is a most practical and effective mode of

exhibiting the strength, the purity and the usefulness of the Samaj he represents. We believe that to sufficiently educate Indian children in South Africa through paid teachers is well-nigh impossible. We want teachers of the highest qualifications, experience and culture even for primary education.

We venture to present these views to Professor Parmanand, and through him to the Arya Samaj and other like bodies in India, no matter of what denomination or religion, for their earnest consideration.

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

355. *THE WORLD'S RELIGION*¹

The time has now passed when the followers of one religion can stand and say, ours is the only true religion and all others are false. The growing spirit of toleration towards all religions is a happy augury of the future. An article appeared recently in the columns of *The Christian World*, a London religious weekly, over the signature of "J.B.", one of that journal's regular contributors, on this question, extracts from which I intend to quote.

The writer, in a most liberal and generous spirit, reviews the question from the Christian standpoint, and shews how the world's religions are linked one with the other, each having characteristics common to all others. The appearance of such an article in the Christian Press is worth noting, and shews that it is moving with the times. A few years back, such an article would have been classed as heretical teaching, and its author denounced as a traitor to the cause.

After remarking upon the new spirit which was changing the attitude of Christians to other religions, and pointing out how, a few years ago, the idea prevailed of the Christian religion standing out [as] the only true religion amongst a multitude of false ones, he goes on to say:

There has been an immense revulsion, and one of the features of it is the discovery, so vastly surprising to the average man, that the doctrine he was brought up on was not the earlier Christian teaching at all. The noblest of the old apologists thought very differently, he finds, of the outside races and faiths, from what he had been led to imagine. He hears of Justin Martyr, standing so close to the apostolic age, who regards the wisdom of Socrates as inspired by the 'Word'; of Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa, whose teaching is of

¹ This was published as "Specially Contributed".

the entire race of man as under the Divine tutorship; of Lactantius maintaining that belief in Providence was the common property of all religions...

...The finer Christian minds have, in fact, in every age gone more or less along this line. It needed only that men should come into contact with these outside races, whether in their literature or face to face, to realise at once that the 'impassable gulf' theory between one religion and another was false to life and to the soul...

...Religion, by a hundred different names and forms, has been dropping the one seed into the human heart, opening the one truth as the mind was able to receive it.

"J.B." points out that many of the Christian institutions and doctrines were born of the knowledge of other religions. Many of the symbols are relics of ancient days.

How marvellous, too, in this connection, is that ancient cult of Mithras in Persia, where, as M. Cumont says: 'Like the Christians, the followers of Mithras lived in closely united societies, calling one another father and brother; like the Christians, they practised baptism, communion and confirmation; taught an authoritative morality, preached continence, chastity and self-denial, believed in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead'.

It is not surprising that the writer should claim for the Christian religion the premier position, but it is gratifying to find such a broadminded attitude taken up by Christian writers and the Christian Press.

To Europeans and Indians working together for the common good, this has a special significance. India, with its ancient religions, has much to give, and the bond of unity between us can best be fostered by a wholehearted sympathy and appreciation of each other's form of religion. A greater toleration on this important question would mean a wider charity in our everyday relations, and the existing misunderstandings would be swept away. Is it not also a fact that between Mahomedan and Hindu there is a great need for this toleration? Sometimes one is inclined to think it is even greater than between East and West. Let not strife and tumult destroy the harmony between Indians themselves. A house divided against itself must fall, so let me urge the necessity for perfect unity and brotherliness between all sections of the Indian community.

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

356. RUSSIA'S NEW CONSTITUTION

The Czar of Russia has given effect to his promise to his people regarding the introduction of a constitution based on the elective principle. From the cables received in South Africa regarding its clauses, it appears that it resembles very little the more democratic constitutions of modern times, which give wider powers to the people. It is also very doubtful if even this constitution will be given full effect to. Under this constitution the power of making laws is apparently vested in an elected body. Despite all these terms and clauses, however, the Czar has kept his sovereign authority intact. This has given the constitution a strange appearance. It makes imperative the assent of the Czar to whatever laws are passed by the elected National Council. Nobody believes that this Council will be able to exercise any check on the Czar's power. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the new constitution is a step which will enable the people to make greater efforts in the future.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

357. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Last week we gave a life-sketch of Elizabeth Fry. This time we give an account of the life of a former American President.

It is believed that the greatest and the noblest man of the last century was Abraham Lincoln. He was born in America in 1809 of very poor parents. He received very little education until he was fifteen years old. He could hardly read or write and earned his meagre living, wandering from place to place.

At last he thought of bettering his lot. There being no steamers or other means of transport in those days, he voyaged through the big rivers on a country raft made of wooden planks and visited the various towns in America. At one place he got the job of a shop assistant. He was then twenty years old. Once he had a job it occurred to him that he might study further. Thereupon, he bought a few books and began to study them by himself. Meanwhile one of his relatives thought that Abraham might be able to do better if he studied law; and he apprenticed him to a lawyer, with whom Abraham worked with great

diligence and studied books. He showed such ability that his superiors were much pleased with him. He too felt that he was now in a position to serve the people among whom he was born. No sooner had the thought occurred to him than he decided, in accordance with American practice, to stand for election to the Senate. His first pamphlet fully revealed his special qualities. He put up a strong fight; but he met with defeat as he was yet an unknown man, while his opponent was well known. But the defeat only whetted his zeal.

His fervour became more intense. Only a person who has a clear picture in his mind of the America of those days, can properly appreciate Lincoln's virtues and his services. From north to south, America was at this time a camp of slaves. Nobody saw anything wrong in openly selling Negroes and keeping them in slavery. The high and the low, the rich and the poor saw nothing strange in owning slaves. No one thought it was wrong to do so. Religious minded men, priests and the like saw nothing amiss and did not protest against the system of slavery being kept up. Some even encouraged it, and all of them thought that slavery also was a divine dispensation and that the Negroes were born to it. Few could then see that the slave trade was very wicked and irreligious. And even those who did, preferred to remain silent, being unable to assert themselves. There were some who were content to play a minor role in the amelioration of the condition of slaves. Even today our hair stands on end to hear the accounts of the atrocities inflicted on slaves. They were tied up and beaten; they were forced to work, they were branded and handcuffed. And all this was not done just to one person but to all of them. It may be said without fear of contradiction that Lincoln alone, of all men, made and put into execution his resolution to change the ideas of men, ideas which were indelibly carved on their minds, to wage war against those hundreds of thousands of men who depended for their living on the system and to set free the slaves from bondage. He was so tender by nature, his faith in God was so great, and his compassion so deep that he began to convert the minds of men through his speeches and writings as well as by the example of his own life. Eventually there came into existence two parties in America: one headed by Lincoln, another by his opponents; and a big civil war broke out; but Lincoln remained undaunted. By this time he had risen so high up the ladder that he was already the President. The war went on for many years, but Lincoln abolished slavery from the whole of North America by 1858-9. The bonds of the slaves were broken, and wherever Lincoln's name was mentioned, he was hailed as a great emancipator of men in distress. The language of the powerful speeches he delivered during

these stormy days is so sublime that they rank very high in English literature.

Although he had achieved such eminence Lincoln remained full of humility. He always believed that a powerful nation or individual ought to use that power to remove the miseries of the poor and the weak, not to crush them. Though America was his motherland and he was an American, he regarded the whole world as his native land. Just when he was at the height of his glory, and despite the fact that he was such a good man, some wicked men felt that he had ruined many people by abolishing slavery. So when it was known for certain that Lincoln was going to visit a theatre, a plot was hatched to assassinate him. Even the players at the theatre had been seduced, and a leading actor had undertaken to shoot him. As Lincoln was sitting in his special box, the despicable fellow entered it, closed the door after him and shot at Lincoln. The good man fell dead. The people who witnessed this dreadful deed tore the assassin to pieces before he could be taken to a law court.¹ In this tragic manner occurred the death of the greatest President of America. It may safely be said that Lincoln sacrificed his life in order to put an end to the sufferings of others. But Lincoln can be said to be still alive; for the changes he made in the American Constitution are still in force. And Lincoln's name will be known as long as America endures. It will thus be seen that Lincoln has become immortal, for his greatness consisted not in his talent or his wealth, but in his innate goodness. A nation that has such good qualities as Lincoln's is bound to rise.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905

¹ In fact, Booth, the assassin, was shot in a barn which was set on fire by the soldiers pursuing him.

358. LETTER TO GOVERNOR'S SECRETARY

[JOHANNESBURG,]
August 30, 1905

TO
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
THE GOVERNOR OF THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY
SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 18th inst., numbered P.S. 15/05, in reply to the submission by my Association of the 1st July last,¹ regarding certain Municipal Bye-laws affecting Coloured persons in the Orange River Colony.

My Association respectfully submits that, if there are no British Indians in the Location, it is a wanton insult offered to the British Indian community to apply the Location Regulations to it, especially as my Association is still not without hope that some day relief will be granted to the British Indians in the matter of immigration to that Colony. My Association cannot understand why the Location Bye-laws, which are meant to deal with the Natives of the country, should be made applicable by an artificial definition to British Indians.

My Association has not raised any objection to a regulation for the compulsory registration of Native servants, but my Association is respectfully of the opinion that the bracketing of British Indians with the Natives of South Africa is in principle wrong and unjust. I am, therefore, directed humbly to request relief in the matter.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ABDUL GANI,

CHAIRMAN

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

¹ *Vide* "Letter to High Commissioner's Secretary", 1-7-1905

359. LETTER TO CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

P. O. BOX 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,

September 1, 1905

TO

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR PERMITS

P. O. BOX 1199

JOHANNESBURG

SIR,

My Association has been informed that a new rule has been introduced in the Permit Office whereby British Indian refugees are required to furnish two European references instead of any two known references, as hitherto. My Association submits that the proposed rule is, first, an insult to the British Indian community in that it implies want of faith in Indian testimony, and secondly, is impracticable in that there are few Indians who are known to the European residents by name. Store-keepers, assistants, salesmen and domestic servants in the employ of British Indians rarely come into contact with Europeans, and to expect them to produce European references would be tantamount to rejection of their application for a permit. Thirdly, it would put a premium on perjury, as it is quite conceivable that a few unscrupulous Indians will not find it difficult to find a few unscrupulous Europeans who would be prepared to perjure themselves for a consideration.

My Association, therefore, submits that the only safeguard is to be found in the respectability of references, irrespective of race or colour. Even then it is quite likely that some cases of perjury would happen, but that would be purely a matter for action against those who would lend themselves to such practices. One or two successful prosecutions would certainly do away with them. At the same time, my Association draws your attention to the fact that such questionable practices in the face of enormous temptations have been comparatively rare in connection with the permits. It is indisputable that there were over 15,000 British Indian male adults resident in the Transvaal before War. Only about 12,000 appear on your register. It is reasonable, therefore, to presume that most of the men who have received their permits are pre-War residents of the Transvaal.

My Association respectfully trusts that the rule will be withdrawn, and that the refugees who are now awaiting permission to return will have their applications granted without delay, as, in accordance with the information in possession of my Association, they are suffering very severe inconvenience and loss.

I have & c.,

ABDUL GANI,

CHAIRMAN,

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Pretoria Archives: L. G. 92/2132

360. *THE KAFFIRS OF NATAL*

Some members of the British Association in England¹ are at present visiting South Africa. They are all scientists, and possess great knowledge. This is the first event of its kind in South Africa. A few days ago, when they were in Natal, the Hon'ble Mr. Marshall Campbell took them to his residence at Mount Edgecombe. Here these people were shown two things. Firstly, they were shown what the savage Negroes were like, and also their dances, etc. They were thereafter introduced to educated Kaffirs. Addressing them Mr. Dubey, their leader, made a very impressive speech.

This Mr. Dubey is a Negro of whom one should know. He has acquired through his own labours over 300 acres of land near Phoenix. There he imparts education to his brethren, teaching them various trades and crafts and preparing them for the battle of life.

In the course of his eloquent speech Mr. Dubey said that the contempt with which the Kaffirs were regarded was unjustified. The educated among them were better than the uneducated ones, for they worked more, and since they had higher standards of life, they offered more custom to the merchants. It was unfair to burden the Negroes with taxes; also it was like cutting down the very branch one was sitting on. The Kaffirs understood and performed their duties better than the whites. They worked hard and without them the whites could not carry on for a moment. They made loyal subjects, and Natal was the land of their birth. For them there was no country other than South Africa; and to deprive them of their rights over lands, etc., was like banishing them from their home.

Mr. Dubey's speech produced a very good impression on the whites, and he suggested to them that, if they sympathised with the

¹ *Vide* "The British Association: A Suggestion", 26-8-1905

Negroes, they might help him to start a smithy on his farm. The members of the British Association subscribed £60 on the spot and presented the sum to him. The Hon'ble Mr. Marshall Campbell also made a speech on the occasion praising the Kaffirs in Natal and pointed out that they were good and useful and that the ill-will shown to them was due to misunderstanding and was wrong.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 2-9-1905

361. COUNT TOLSTOY

It is believed that, in the western world at any rate, there is no man so talented, learned and as ascetic as Count Tolstoy. Though he is now nearly eighty years old, he is quite healthy, industrious and mentally alert.

Tolstoy was born of a noble family in Russia. His parents had enormous wealth, which he inherited. He is himself a Russian nobleman, and has, in his youth, rendered very good service to his country by fighting gallantly in the Crimean War. In those days, like the other noblemen of his time, he used to enjoy all the pleasures of the world, kept mistresses, drank and was strongly addicted to smoking. However, when he saw the carnage and bloodshed during the war, his mind brimmed over with compassion. His ideas changed; he began a study of his own religion and read the Bible. He read the life of Jesus Christ which made a deep impression on his mind. Not satisfied with the then current Russian translation of the Bible, he studied Hebrew, the language in which it was originally written, and continued his researches into the Bible. It was also about this time that he discovered in himself a great talent for writing. He wrote a very effective book on the evil consequences of war. His fame spread throughout Europe. To improve the morals of the people he wrote several novels which can be equalled by few books in Europe. The views expressed by him in all these books were so very advanced that the Russian clergy were displeased with him, and he was excommunicated. Disregarding all this, he kept up his efforts and began to propagate his ideas. His writings had a great effect on his own mind. He gave up his wealth and took to a life of poverty. He has lived like a peasant for many years now and earns his needs by his own labour. He has given up all his vices, eats very simple food and has it in him no longer to hurt any living being by thought, word or

deed. He spends all his time in good works and prayer. He believes that:

1. In this world men should not accumulate wealth;
2. no matter how much evil a person does to us, we should always do good to him. Such is the Commandment of God, and also His law;
3. no one should take part in fighting;
4. it is sinful to wield political power, as it leads to many of the evils in the world;
5. man is born to do his duty to his Creator; he should therefore pay more attention to his duties than to his rights;
6. agriculture is the true occupation of man. It is therefore contrary to divine law to establish large cities, to employ hundreds of thousands for minding machines in factories so that a few can wallow in riches by exploiting the helplessness and poverty of the many.

These views he has very beautifully supported by examples from various religions and other old texts. There are today thousands of men in Europe who have adopted Tolstoy's way of life. They have given up all their worldly goods and taken to a very simple life.

Tolstoy is still writing with great energy. Though himself a Russian, he has written many strong and bitter things against Russia concerning the Russo-Japanese War. He has addressed a very pungent and effective letter to the Czar in regard to the war. Selfish officers view him with bitterness, but they, and even the Czar, fear and respect him. Such is the power of his goodness and godly living that millions of peasants are ever ready to carry out his wish no sooner than it is spoken.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 2-9-1905

362. THE RISE OF JAPAN

The world over, all eyes are turned today towards Japan. Every one admires that country's bravery and sagacity. Count Okuma, a former Minister of Japan, has written an article in the *North American Review*, wherein he says that the present greatness of Japan is the result of reforms carried out over the centuries. She had remained backward in the eyes of the world simply because of her defective system of education. Japan found that she could not possibly keep

foreigners out of the country. She therefore thought of sending out her sons to foreign lands for learning the various sciences and arts. The patriotism shown by her in this regard saved the country's prestige. She introduced the best educational methods from foreign lands. She also introduced compulsory education for boys and girls. At the same time, she did not fail to attend to crafts and industry. She employed foreign experts until her own young men and women had completed their training.

When the educational scheme came into full operation, the Mikado issued an order to be read out in every school. It ran: "May you, our subjects, be devoted to your parents; be loving towards your brothers and sisters; live in peace and amity with your husband or wife; be straightforward in your conduct; be increasingly good and helpful to others; develop your virtues and intellect; bring credit to your country by benevolent deeds; honour the laws in accordance with the Constitution and, when occasion demands, throw yourself into public service and show your valour." Speaking in New York, Baron Keneko said that this was the foundation of Japan's greatness.

For soldiers and sailors also the following seven instructions were issued:

1. Be straightforward and loyal, and stay clear of untruth;
2. respect your superiors, be loyal to your comrades, and eschew arrogance and injustice;
3. obey the orders of your superiors without hesitation;
4. be courageous and brave, and give up unmanliness and cowardice;
5. do not boast of cruel deeds of daring; do not insult or quarrel with others;
6. be virtuous and thrifty; avoid extravagance;
7. preserve your self-respect, and guard against barbarity and niggardliness.

These orders of the Japanese Emperor have promoted virtue in the people, the army and the officials and welded all of them into a united nation. The greatness of Japan today owes much to the above orders.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 2-9-1905.

363. LETTER TO MINISTER OF EDUCATION

DURBAN,

September 5, 1905

TO

THE HON. THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

SIR,

We, the parents or guardians of Indian children studying in the Higher Grade Indian School,¹ beg respectfully to submit the following for your consideration and relief.

We have come to know that it is the intention of the Government to change the Higher Grade Indian School at Durban into a school for Coloured children generally, and to observe no distinction as to girls and boys.

We humbly submit that the decision to open the school for all Coloured children is unjust to the Indian community, and is a departure from the assurance given by the then Minister of Education, as also Sir Albert Hime and Mr. Robert Russell, that the school will be reserved for Indian children only. It was established when the Government decided not to admit Indian children to the general schools in the Colony,² and we understand that even then a question was raised as to establishing a school for all Coloured children, but after mature consideration the Government decided to give a school to the Indian children alone, and it was on that account that it was given the name it bears today. Moreover, the term Coloured children is an elastic term. Everyone knows the meaning of the expression British Indian, but there is no fixed meaning for the term Coloured person, and seeing that the Government have adopted a policy of making distinctions, it is only fair that British Indians should have in the largest town in the Colony a school reserved for them. The Superintendent of Education, the other day, was pleased to say that the Indian parents did not object in the other places in Natal to such a mixture. We respectfully submit, however, that it is hardly fair to draw an analogy from the small townships of Natal. It is Durban which contains the largest free and well-to-do Indian population, and it is, therefore, only natural that the difficulty about such matters would be

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Indian School", 21-12-1900 & "Speech at Indian School", 28-6-1901.

² *Vide* "Notes", 3-9-1900.

felt keenly in Durban.

As to the question of non-separation of girls and boys, we can only say, as parents having had considerable experience, and speaking for Indian sentiment, that the decision is calculated to give rise to such legitimate complaint. There are not only practical serious objections to such a course being followed, but in many instances there is also the religious sentiment to be considered, and we doubt not that the Government will be pleased to give full consideration to such sentiments.

In conclusion, therefore, we hope that the instructions regarding the two matters referred to would be withdrawn, and that the Government would be pleased to carry out the assurance given to the Indian community when the Higher Grade Indian School was established.

We have the honour to remain, & c.,

ABDUL CADIR,
AND 99 OTHERS

Indian Opinion, 21-10-1905

364. *THE TERMS OF PEACE*¹

Japan has acted generously in waiving more or less two of the conditions for peace which she had announced. Firstly, she would make no claims in lieu of war expenses, except that Russia should pay £12,00,000 to Japan towards the cost of keeping Russian prisoners and treating the wounded. Secondly, the Southeliam Island should be divided equally between the two countries. Whereas the terms have spread jubilation among the Russians, they have caused much dissatisfaction among the Japanese, which shows no signs of abatement. The latest cablegrams show that the emissaries of both the countries are eager to return home, as soon as the terms are finalized and the treaty signed. Not only do the Japanese envoys not expect a warm welcome home, but are afraid that the people will look on them with angry eyes.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 9-9-1905

¹ Peace was signed at Portsmouth (U.S.A.) on September 5, 1905.

365. ATROCITIES ON CHINESE MINERS

In his reply to a question by a Member of Parliament on the above subject, Mr. Lyttelton had promised to make an inquiry and to put an end to the flogging. The description of how the Chinese are flogged, given by *The Daily Express* of Johannesburg, makes pitiful reading. We give below a summary of the same. The correspondent says that the facts given by him have been either personally witnessed by him, or are supported by the evidence of those who had ordered thousands of men to be flogged. On an average 42 Chinese were flogged in a Johannesburg mine every day, not excluding even Sundays, towards the beginning of this year. In the first instance, the Overseer complained against an offending miner, who was then taken to the office of the Compound Manager; the latter, in accordance with the nature of the offence, ordered ten, fifteen or twenty strokes to be administered. Then two Chinese policemen took him about fifteen steps away; the offender stopped at the policeman's word of command, took off his trousers and other clothes, and lay with face to the ground; one of the policemen held down the legs of the offender and the other his head, then the executor of the punishment beat him mildly or violently, according to orders, on his back with a wooden stick three feet long and with a flat end three inches broad. If in the meanwhile, the man made the slightest movement, unable to bear the pain, another pressed him down with his foot on his back, and the number of strokes ordered was completed. In some of the mines, the whip is used instead of the stick¹, and its strokes are so severe that they cause the flesh to swell and cut the skin. When Mr. Cook was Manager at the Norsedippe mines, he used to order any Chinaman, who failed to do 36 inches of drilling, to be punished. His method of punishment was even more cruel than the one described above. That gentleman ordered the use of stout sticks and the blows to be given on the back of the thighs where they were most unbearable; the full number of blows was inflicted even if blood streamed out from the wounds. Sometimes the injury was so severe that the poor Chinaman had to be sent to a hospital. One Mr. Place was later appointed to replace the cruel Mr. Cook. Being considered rather a gentleman among thieves, he ordered Bubber batons to be used instead of sticks. After some time the Mine Directors, finding that the average monthly output did not come up to their expectation, ordered Mr. Place to use more

¹ The original has "the stick is used instead of the whip".

force. On his refusing to do so, he was obliged to resign. On the matter being discussed in the House of Commons, it was ordered that some other mode of punishment should replace flogging. Thereupon, Mr. Place, who had experience of conditions in China, introduced a practice that is prevalent there. He had the offending Chinaman stripped, then had him tied with his pigtail to a flag-pole standing in the compound, and made him stand there for two to three hours, however biting the cold or scorching the sun. Then Mr. Place ordered other Chinamen to make faces at the offender. Another method of punishment was to tie a thin rope to the offender's left hand; the rope was then passed through a ring in such a way that the man was suspended with his toe just touching the ground and kept thus for two to three hours. At some places, again, the poor miners were handcuffed and tied to a beam placed two feet above the ground and kept in that position for a couple of hours in such a way that no movement was possible. The new punishment was like falling from the frying-pan into the fire. When punishment by flogging was discussed in the House of Commons, the cruel mine officers had stopped the flogging; but everyone forgot to mention that a more cruel form of punishment had been substituted.

By exposing this matter, Mr. Peckmann, the Editor of *The Daily Express*, has earned the unspoken blessings of hundreds of Chinese. If all this is true,—and there is no reason to disbelieve it—what answer will the Mine Directors give their Creator? Small wonder it will be if they are ruined as a result of the curses of the poor labourers in South Africa. Was it for this that the British waged war and conquered the Transvaal ?

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 9-9-1905

366. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE¹

We have in an earlier issue of the journal published an account of the career of the benevolent lady, Elizabeth Fry. Just as she brought about an improvement in the condition of prisoners and devoted her life to their service, so also Florence Nightingale sacrificed herself in the service of the men in the army. When the great Crimean War broke out in 1851², the British Government was as

¹ (1820-1910), famous nurse and pioneer of hospital reform

² In fact the Crimean War broke out on October 23, 1853.

usual not alive to the situation. There was no preparation. And just as in the Boer War, so in the Crimean War, too, they committed blunders in the beginning and suffered a crushing defeat. Fifty years ago, the various facilities for nursing the wounded which are available today did not exist. People did not come out to render aid in large numbers as they do now. Surgery was not as efficacious then as it is today. There were in those days very few men who considered it an act of mercy and merit to succour the wounded. It was at such a time that this lady, Florence Nightingale, came upon the scene and did good work worthy of an angel descended from heaven. She was heart-stricken to learn of the sufferings of the soldiers. Born of a noble and rich family, she gave up her life of ease and comfort and set out to nurse the wounded and the ailing, followed by many other ladies. She left her home on October 21, 1854. She rendered strenuous service in the battle of Inkerman¹. At that time there were neither beds nor other amenities for the wounded. There were 10,000 wounded under the charge of this single woman. The death rate among the wounded which was 42 per cent. before she arrived, immediately came down to 31 per cent., and ultimately to 5 per cent. This was miraculous, but can be easily visualized. If bleeding could be stopped, the wounds bandaged and the requisite diet given, the lives of many thousands would doubtless be saved. The only thing necessary was kindness and nursing, which Miss Nightingale provided. It is said that she did an amount of work which big and strong men were unable to do. She used to work nearly twenty hours, day and night. When the women working under her went to sleep, she, lamp in hand, went out alone at midnight to the patients' bedside, comforted them, and herself gave them whatever food and other things were necessary. She was not afraid of going even to the battle-front, and did not know what fear was. She feared only God. Knowing that one has to die some day or other, she readily bore whatever hardships were necessary in order to alleviate the sufferings of others.

This lady remained single all her life, which she spent in such good work. It is said that, when she died, thousands of soldiers wept bitterly like little children, as though they had lost their own mother.

No wonder that a country where such women are born is prosperous. That England rules over a wide empire is due not to the

¹ On November 5.

country's military strength, but to the meritorious deeds of such men and women.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 9-9-1905

367. *THE LATE MISS MANNING*¹

The latest number of *India* brings the sad news of the death of Miss Manning, the energetic Secretary of the National Indian Association, which owes its vitality to this noble lady's self-sacrificing work. She was a true friend of young Indians who went to England for study. Her house was ever open to receive them.² Her guidance was always at their disposal. Her soirees had become an annual feature, and they brought together Anglo-Indians and Indians and thus promoted mutual goodwill. She was quite unassuming, and as *India* states, she avoided rather than sought public recognition. Her death is a distinct loss to the ever-increasing number of young Indians who visit England year after year for study or otherwise. We refer our readers to our London Letter for further information about this lady.

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

368. *WHO WILL BE THE NEXT CONGRESS PRESIDENT?*

India reports³ that the following names are being mentioned in connection with the presidential election for the forthcoming

¹ Elizabeth Adelaide Manning, daughter of James Manning, a county court judge and learned lawyer. Became Secretary of the Froebel Society and was one of the founders of Girton College, Cambridge. In 1877, became Honorary Secretary of the National Indian Association and held the post till her death on August 10, 1905 at the age of 77. Edited *The Indian Magazine and Review* and was interested in all social movements in India.

² Gandhiji appears to have often visited the house when he was in England for his legal studies. *Vide Autobiography*, Part I, Ch. XXII.

³ As from the *Madras Mail*.

Congress session: the Hon'ble Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mr. Eardley Norton¹, Rao Bahadur Mudholkar², Sir Guru Das Bannerji³, Dr. Rash Bihari Ghose⁴ and Babu Kalicharan Bannerji⁵. All these are worthy gentlemen and have rendered great service to India. Even so, Mr. Gokhale's name among them is outstanding. He has put up an admirably tough fight against Lord Curzon in the Imperial Legislature.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

369. HIS HIGHNESS THE GAEKWAD OF BARODA AND HIS MINISTER

Lord Curzon is not pleased with the appointment, by His Highness the Gaekwad, of Mr. Dutt⁶ as his Minister. He has therefore, as *The Bengalee* reports, issued a confidential circular to all the Indian princes to the effect that, if any of them wanted to employ persons who had resigned from the Indian Civil Service, he should obtain the previous sanction of the Government. This appears to be one of Lord Curzon's last battles.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

¹ Barrister and public worker in Madras.

² Later, presided over the Congress session at Bankipore in 1912; the original, however, has Akolkar.

³ Ex-Justice, Chairman of the Banga Jatiya Vidya Parishad (Society for the Promotion of National Education in Bengal)

⁴ Presided over the Congress Session at Madras in 1908.

⁵ An Indian Christian, who took a keen interest in Congress affairs.

⁶ Shri Romesh Chandra Dutt (1848-1909). Member of the Indian Civil Service; a close student of ancient Indian culture and civilization; author of *The Economic History of India since the Advent of the East India Company*; presided over the Congress Session at Lucknow in 1899; associated as Revenue Minister and later Diwan or Prime Minister with the former Baroda State. *Vide* "Letter to H.J. Hofmeyr", 2-6-1905

370. BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR INDUSTRIOUS PERSONS

The construction of railways is going on in British Central Africa, for which, we learn, labour is needed. We are making further inquiries in the matter. Meanwhile, those desiring to go there may please send us their names and addresses in a neat and legible hand. We shall maintain a register of their names; and if we find that the conditions of migration are favourable, we shall let them know through this journal.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

371. EARTHQUAKE IN ITALY

A severe earthquake rocked Calabria¹ in Italy a few days ago rendering thousands of people homeless and pitiably crying for aid. The King of Italy has donated £4,000 for relief. The numbers of those either dead or seriously injured are 300 at Parghelly, 200 at Geplo, and 2,000 at Martereno. The big quake was followed by another mild one after two or three days. The people are panic-stricken and are running about from place to place, and some are even leaving the country. It is estimated that the injured and the dead total 5,000. The earthquake of 1857 which involved a larger area took a toll of about ten thousand lives. Calabria has frequently had such calamities. During the 75 years preceding 1857, the total loss of life was 1,11,000, giving an annual average of 1,500 lives. There have been several earthquakes in Calabria during the last fifty years, but none of them caused so much damage as the present one. Many villages have been wiped out, and about a hundred thousand people have been rendered homeless. The government of the country is trying its utmost to give them all possible help.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

¹ Mountainous region in extreme South-west Italy.

372. THE CHINESE AND THE INDIANS : A COMPARISON¹

There are many Chinese living in Johannesburg. They cannot be said to be economically better off than the Indians. Many of them are merely artisans. A few days ago I had the occasion to observe how they lived. On seeing their way of life and comparing it with our own, I felt very sad.

They have founded the Chinese Association for public work, and for this purpose, they maintain a spacious hall. It is a strong structure built of brick and is kept clean and tidy. They meet the expenses for its maintenance by sub-letting the large plot of land they have taken out on lease. Since the Chinese have no facilities for lodging, they have started a Cantonese Club, which serves as a meeting place, a lodge and also as a library. They have acquired for the Club land on a long lease and have built on it a *pucca* one-storeyed building. There they all live in great cleanliness and do not stint themselves in the matter of living space; and seen within and from outside, it would look like some good European Club. They have in it separate rooms marked drawing, dining, meeting, committee room and the Secretary's room and the library, and do not use any room except for the purpose for which it is intended. Other rooms adjoining these are let out as bedrooms. It is such a fine and clean place that any Chinese gentleman visiting the town can be put up there. The entrance fee is £5, and the annual subscription varies according to the members' profession. The club has about 150 members who meet every Sunday and amuse themselves with games. The members can avail themselves of club facilities on week days also.

We have nothing similar to boast of. In no city Of South Africa have we a place of our own where an Indian visitor can be put up. Our hospitality is no doubt excellent, but it is bound to be limited. If we had something like a club, it could be used in a variety of ways. It would be very profitable if people could spend their leisure hours at such a public place instead of in one another's homes: no single person is taxed thereby; friendship grows; and our prestige, too, is enhanced. The rules of cleanliness also can be better observed. There is no doubt that this activity is quite essential and can be carried on without much cost.

It is up to us to take a lesson from the club founded by the

¹ This was published as "From Our Johannesburg Correspondent".

Chinese and start one on the same pattern. The charge of uncleanness made against us is not totally unfounded. To establish such a club is the best way of giving the lie to it.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

373. ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

We have already given in these columns brief biographical sketches of a few good men and women of Europe. The purpose of these sketches is to enlighten our readers and to enable them to make their own lives fruitful by emulating these men and women.

The strong movement that is being carried on in Bengal to boycott British goods is of no mean significance. Such a movement has been possible there because education is more widespread and the people in Bengal are more alert than in other parts of India. Sir Henry Cotton has remarked that Bengal holds sway from Calcutta to Peshawar. It is necessary to know the reasons for this.

There is no gainsaying the fact that a nation's rise or fall depends upon its great men. The people who produce good men cannot but be influenced by them. The main reason for the special distinction that we find in Bengal is that many great men were born there during the last century. Beginning with Rammohan Roy¹, one heroic figure after another has raised Bengal to a position higher than that of the other provinces. It can be said that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was the greatest among them. "Vidyasagar", which means an ocean of learning, was an honorific of Ishwarchandra, conferred on him by the pundits of Calcutta for his profound Sanskrit learning. But Ishwarchandra was not an ocean of learning only; he was an ocean of compassion, of generosity, as well as of many other virtues. He was a Hindu, and a Brahmin too. But to him, Brahmin and Sudra, Hindu and Muslim, were all alike. In any good deeds that he performed, he made no distinction between high and low. When his professor had an attack of cholera, he himself nursed him. As the professor was poor, Ishwarchandra called in the doctors at his own cost and himself attended to the patient's toilet.

¹ (1774-1833), A great social and religious reformer, founder of the Brahmo Samaj, supported abolition of *Sati* and worked hard for the spread of education.

He used to buy *luchi*¹ and curds and feed the poor Muslims at his own cost, in Chandranagar², and helped with money those who needed it. If he saw a cripple or any one in distress by the roadside, he took him to his own house and nursed him personally. He felt grief at other people's sorrows and joy at their joys.

Himself he led a very simple life. His dress consisted of a coarse *dhoti*, a shawl of a similar kind to cover his body, and slippers. In that dress he used to call on Governors, and in the same dress he greeted the poor. He was really a *fakir*, a *sannyasi* or a *yogi*. It behoves us all to reflect on his life.

Ishwarchandra was born of poor parents in a small village in the Midnapur *taluka*³. His mother was a very saintly woman, and many of her virtues were inherited by Ishwarchandra. Even in those days, his father knew some English, and decided to give his son a better education. Ishwarchandra began his schooling at the age of five. At the age of eight, he had to walk sixty miles to Calcutta to join a Sanskrit college. He had such a prodigious memory that he learnt the English numerals by looking at the figures on the milestones while walking along the road. At sixteen he became well versed in Sanskrit, and was appointed a Sanskrit teacher. Rising step by step, he at last became the Principal of the College where he had studied. The Government held him in great respect. But, being of an independent nature, he could not adjust himself to the Director of Public Instruction and resigned his post. Sir Frederick Halliday, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, sent for him and requested him to withdraw his resignation, but Ishwarchandra flatly declined.

His nobility and humanity had their true blossoming after he had given up his job. He saw that Bengali was a very good language, but appeared poor for want of fresh contributions. He, therefore, began writing books in Bengali. He produced very powerful books, and it is mainly due to Vidyasagar that the Bengali language is at present in full bloom and has spread throughout India.

But he also realised that merely writing books was not enough; and so he founded schools. It was Vidyasagar who founded the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. It is staffed entirely by Indians.

Considering that elementary education was quite as necessary as higher education, he started primary schools for the poor. This was a stupendous task in which he needed government help. The

¹ A kind of unleavened and fried bread made from flour.

² In West Bengal, then a French possession

³ In West Bengal

Lieutenant-Governor assured him that the Government would bear the cost; but the Viceroy, Lord Ellenborough¹, was opposed to this and the bills preferred by Vidyasagar were not passed. The Lieutenant-Governor was very sorry and suggested that Ishwarchandra might file a suit against him. Brave Ishwarchandra replied: "Sir, I have never gone to a court of law to get justice for myself. How, then, is it possible for me to proceed against you?" At that time other European gentlemen who used to help Ishwarchandra in his work rendered him good financial aid. Not being very rich himself, he often ran into debt by helping others out of their difficulties; nevertheless, when a proposal was made to raise a public subscription for him, he turned it down.

He did not rest satisfied with thus putting higher and elementary education on a sound footing. He saw that, without the education of girls, the education of boys alone would not be enough. He found out a verse from Manu which said that the education of women was a duty. Pressing it into service, he wrote a book on the subject and, in collaboration with Mr. Bethune founded the Bethune College for imparting education to women. But it was more difficult to get women to go to college than to found it. As he lived a saintly life and was very learned, he was respected by all. So he met prominent people and persuaded them to send their womenfolk to the College; and thus, their daughters began to attend the College. Today there are in that College many well-known and talented women of sterling character, so much so that they can by themselves carry on its administration.

Still not satisfied, he started schools imparting elementary education to small girls. Here food, clothing and books were supplied free of charge. Consequently, one can see today thousands of educated women in Calcutta.

To meet the need for teachers he started a Teacher's Training College.

Seeing the very pitiable condition of Hindu widows, he advocated the remarriage of widows; he wrote books and made speeches on the subject. The Brahmins of Bengal opposed him, but he did not care. People threatened to kill him, but he went on undaunted. He got the Government to pass a law legalizing remarriage of widows. He persuaded many men and arranged the remarriage of daughters of prominent men widowed in childhood. He encouraged his own son to marry a poor widow.

¹ Governor-General of India, 1842-4

The *kulin* or high-born Brahmins were given to taking a number of wives. They were not ashamed of marrying as many as twenty of them. Ishwarchandra wept to see the sufferings of such women; and he carried on his effort till the end of his life to eradicate this wicked custom.

When he saw thousands of poor people in Burdwan suffering from malaria, he maintained a doctor at his own cost and personally distributed medicines among them. He went to the houses of the poor and gave them the necessary help. In this way he worked ceaselessly for two years, secured government help and called for more doctors.

In the course of this work, he saw the necessity of a knowledge of medicine. So he studied homeopathy, attained proficiency in it, and began to prescribe medicines to the sick. He did not mind travelling long distances in order to help the poor.

He was equally a stalwart in helping big princes out of their difficulties. If any of them had injustice done to him or was reduced to poverty, Ishwarchandra used to help him with his influence, knowledge and money, and mitigate his distress.

While he was engaged in these activities, Vidyasagar passed away in 1890, at the age of seventy. There have been few in this world like him. It is said that had Ishwarchandra been born among a European people, an imposing column, like the one raised by the British for Nelson, would have been erected as a memorial to him. However, a column to honour Ishwarchandra already stands in the hearts of the great and the small, the rich and the poor of Bengal.

It will now be clear to us how Bengal provides an example for the other parts of India to follow.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

374. *LETTER TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO LT.-GOVERNOR*

BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Box No. 6522,
JOHANNESBURG,
September 16, 1905

TO
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE LT.-GOVERNOR
PRETORIA

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, No. LG 97/3, making certain enquiries about a letter addressed by me to the Chief Secretary for Permits¹ on the 1st day of September current.

The writer of this letter has been in the Colony since 1883 with but brief interruptions, and has been in very close touch with the Indian community whom he has had the honour to represent now for over twelve years, and the first proof, therefore, that is respectfully submitted in support of the statement that there were over 15,000 British Indian male adults resident in the Transvaal before War is the writer's own experience.

My Association further submits the following in support of the statement:

1. In the year 1899, the British Agent submitted to His Majesty's Government a report giving roughly the British population, and the figures were published in the newspapers. To the best of the writer's recollection as to the British Indians, the figures given were 15,000.
2. In the year 1895, a petition was presented to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies by British Indians in the Transvaal which is published in a Blue-Book on the grievances of the British Indians in South Africa. A rough estimate was made of the British Indian population in the Transvaal at the time and, in accordance with it, there were at least 5,000 adult male Indians, but those who were in South Africa between 1895 and 1899 know that the largest increase in the Indian population of the Transvaal

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Chief Secretary for Permits", 1-9-1905

took place between 1895 and 1899. The increase was considered to be so alarming that the late President Kruger was urged by some of the present anti-Indian agitators to take steps, but happily, so far as Indian immigration was concerned, the late President turned a deaf ear to any such suggestion. It was in 1896 that India was visited by the plague followed by two successive famines of extraordinary dimensions. The largest known exodus from India took place during that time. The steamers *Courland*, *Naderi*, *Hooseni*, and *Crescent* were specially run between Bombay and South African ports, each having on board per voyage over 400 Indians bound for South Africa. Most of these, it was then a matter of common knowledge, found their way to the Transvaal.

3. It was in the early part of 1897 that the Natal Immigration Act, was passed. In the December of 1896, the Durban Demonstration¹ took place in connection with the *Courland* and the *Naderi* which brought together over 800 passengers of whom in that month alone 500 went to the Transvaal. Each of these steamers made four trips per year, and, if they brought for the Transvaal without allowing for domiciled Indians only 300 per trip, there would be a yearly increase of 4,800 Indians between the four steamers alone, not to take into consideration Indians brought from the other parts of India by the Kings Line and the British Indian Steam Navigation Co. The facts as to the number of passengers per these steamers can easily be verified by reference to the steamship companies or the Port Authorities in Natal. The writer's opinion is supported by that of other British Indians who are very old residents of the Transvaal.
4. As to the opposite view, if reference is made to the public statements that have been made by what may be termed the anti-Indian party, it is difficult to speak of its representations with moderation. In almost every material particular, the allegations made by the members of that party have been over and over again challenged and even disproved, and yet they have not scrupled to reiterate them and to inflame the prejudices of the people against British Indians. To take only three instances. Certain figures were given by them regarding the number of traders in Pietersburg before War and after War. Both these Statements have

¹ Vide "Memorial to Secretary of State for the Colonies", 15-3-1897

been challenged. Names of the persons trading before War have been produced, and yet the original statement has been reiterated. They have said that it was impossible for British Indians before War to enter the Transvaal and not be registered. My Association has no hesitation in saying that the statement is entirely devoid of truth. Hardly one-third of the people who entered this country were actually registered, and they were only those who had to take out trade licences and even then the number did not necessarily include partners. My Association is in a position to prove from unimpeachable testimony that there were British Indians in the Transvaal before War who never paid the registration fee. Some of them are well known and can be identified by respectable European merchants.

The third statement that has been made is with reference to the alleged Indian exodus to Potchefstroom from Natal. Those that have made this statement can know nothing of the conditions of the working of the Naval laws regarding indentured labourers, and the statement has been made to the effect that it is men drawn from this class who have crowded into Potchefstroom. The detractors of Indians have, so far as my Association is aware, never yet succeeded in introducing any proof in support of the many statements they have made, and have never taken into account the great fact that it was Johannesburg which, before War, supported the largest Indian population, and it is from Johannesburg that the Indians have now radiated into other parts of the Colony. The trade in Johannesburg before War, so far as the Indians were concerned, as it was confined to the Dutch and the Natives, was very fair. Both the Dutch and Native trade at present stands at its lowest ebb. The result is that many traders who found it impossible to eke out a living in Johannesburg have now established in the different parts of the Transvaal. The Johannesburg Location supported a large number of Indian landlords. These have not only been impoverished, but have been obliged to leave Johannesburg and go to other parts of the Colony. If the original condition of Johannesburg was resumed and security of tenure re-assured to the British Indians which they enjoyed before War, most of the Indian population, which is dispersed over the different areas in the Colony, would again gravitate to Johannesburg and the anti-Indian gentlemen would have the satisfaction of knowing that the Indians have certainly disappeared from the many townships.

My Association will be pleased, if an enquiry were to be held, to adduce proof to verify every word of the statements made above. As

the Chief Secretary for Permits has forwarded my letter of the 1st September to His Excellency for direction, may I venture to express the hope that what appeared to my Association to be impossible rules, as to European references, will be withdrawn without delay. While all kinds of unsupportable statements are being made with reference to British Indians, innocent and honest men have to suffer much inconvenience and loss without any fault of their own, a hardship which they were never obliged to undergo when they were under a flag not their own.

I HAVE &C.,
ABDUL GANI,
CHAIRMAN,
BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Pretoria Archives: L. G. 92/2132: Letter No. 504

375. THE HOONDAMAL CASE AGAIN¹

The Supreme Court had another opportunity of deciding upon a point arising out of the Dealers' Licenses Act of Natal. This time it was a review of the decision, some time ago published in these columns, of the Town Council of Durban, confirming that of the Licensing Officer, who refused to register the transfer of Mr. Hoondamal's licence from Grey Street to West Street. The judgment given by the learned Chief Justice is most disappointing. It may be in accordance with law but certainly not with justice or equity. The obvious answer to this is that judges have to interpret and not to make law, but we respectfully think that it must be a serious state of law if it does not provide a remedy for an admitted evil. The Licensing Officer has extensive powers with reference to granting of licences to trade in the Colony. The learned Chief Justice said that, under the law, he was not to exercise judicial discretion. It, therefore, amounts to this, that the Licensing Officer may, in order to spite a personal enemy, decline to grant him his licence, and the Courts would be powerless to intervene. The dividing line between political animus and personal enmity, so far as such cases are concerned, is very narrow. The Dealers' Licenses Act is an administrative enactment. It is not a political law, in any sense of the term. In not granting the licence to Mr. Hoondamal, the Licensing Officer has been undoubtedly guided by political animus against the class to which the appellant belongs.

¹ *Vide* "Hoondamal's Licence", 15-10-1904

Indeed, he has said so in his reason, which is that it was not advisable to grant further licences to Asiatics in West Street. However, the mischief is done. The highest tribunal in the country has felt itself powerless to correct the evil. Every Indian licence is at stake; and if there is to be any relief secured, British Indian merchants must gird up their loins, rise to the occasion, and carry on ceaseless warfare until the disgraceful Act is blotted out of the Statute-book. Representations must be made to the Government, to the local Parliament, and to the Colonial Secretary, inviting their attention to the matter. If the local Parliament, whose members, in the words of the late Sir John Robinson, are trustees for the unrepresented British Indians, would not listen, the India Office, which is the paramount trustee for the millions of India, should intervene and induce Natal to grant the very small measure of justice to which Indians are entitled. The late Mr. Harry Escombe, at the time of introducing the Bill, said that the success of the measure would depend upon the moderation with which the powers given under the Act were used, and that, if the local authorities failed to exercise their powers moderately, they might have to be taken away. The Act has been in operation for over eight years, and no one can deny it has been capriciously enforced on many an occasion, and it has always hung like Damocles' sword over the heads of the Indian merchants in the Colony. It is time that the sword was removed, and that the sufferers were permitted to feel that they are under British constitutional rule and not under Russian autocracy.

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

376. MR. GOCH AND INDIANS

Mr. George Goch, the Mayor of Johannesburg, let himself go, as the phrase goes, at the meeting recently held in Potchefstroom under the auspices of the Transvaal Progressive Association. He spoke, not as simple Mr. Goch holding independent views, but as a representative of the Progressive Association, and as one bound to express the official views, whether they coincided with his own conscientious opinions or not. Mr. Goch, in 1903, was among the few who raised their voices in favour of British Indians, at the deliberations of the Johannesburg Municipality. He then considered Asiatic competition to be quite healthy. He considered the British Indian as a desirable citizen, because he was industrious, thrifty and law-abiding. Mr. Goch, the Mayor of Johannesburg, does not hesitate to retail the falsehoods that were set in motion by Mr. Loveday and his friends. He does not

scruple to vilify British Indians. He sees in them a danger to the white community, whereas only a short time ago he considered them to be a strength to any community in which they were placed. To him, Asiatics are, to-day,

totally different in their social conditions, whom it is not fair to allow to compete against the white traders, because they could not compete against each other. The Asiatics have very little sense of the burden of citizenship in the country. They avoid all the necessary burdens and duties which the white people have to undertake, and consequently,

says Mr. Goch, triumphantly,

it is not fair to pit the white trader against the Asiatic and to allow the white trader to go to the wall because there is some far-fetched sentiment (to which, by the way, he himself succumbed in 1903) that, because the Asiatic is a British subject from another section of the Empire, he has the right to their sympathy.

Mr. Goch has not told us what constitutes the burden of citizenship. If it consists in giving public entertainments, if it consists in opening champagne bottles, we must confess that the poor Asiatic has very little sense of such burden; but if it means a readiness to comply with the laws of the country, to pay one's taxes, to earn one's livelihood by the sweat of one's brow instead of becoming a public charge, to conform to the social laws relating to morality, to assist in defending one's country of domicile, no matter how or in what humble capacity, then we have no hesitation in saying that the Indian has well discharged the burden of citizenship. We are afraid, however, that there is no arguing with people who would wilfully mislead. Mr. Goch knows all that we have been saying about the Indian, but expediency, an eagerness to snatch votes, required from him a change of front. Mr. Goch's example shows to what pass public life has come under modern conditions. The gods must be pleased at any cost. Nothing is too sacred to be sacrificed in order to appease them, and if this is to be the outcome of popular government, the time is not far distant when it will stink in the nostrils, and become a byword for hypocrisy and insincerity.

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

377. INDIANS IN THE O. R. C.

We publish in another column the correspondence¹ between Lord Selborne and the British Indian Association at Johannesburg with reference to the status of British Indians in the Orange River Colony. Lord Selborne's reply is extremely courteous, but equally disappointing. In spite of His Excellency's anxiety and desire to soothe British Indians, he has been undoubtedly led away by the reports from the local officials who have smartly succeeded in confusing the real issue. The British Indian Association naturally protested against Indians being classed with all sorts of Coloured people, including the Natives of South Africa. It resented the application of regulations aimed at the Natives of the soil to the Indians who may go to the Colony. The injustice is all the more serious because, in practice, very few Indians are affected, as the application of such legislation to them is not called for by the circumstances of the case. The utility of the registration of servants has never been questioned. The regulations that have been reproduced in these columns from time to time have been shown to be restrictive of the personal liberty and insulting to those affected by them. It was of such legislation that the British Indian Association has rightly complained. What does it get in return ? An illustration, shown from Ceylon, to justify registration of servants, which has never been questioned! The Association, in its concluding reply,¹ has also very properly drawn Lord Selborne's attention to the fact that British Indians do expect in the near future to have the right to enter the Orange River Colony, and if the expectation is justly entertained, restrictive legislation in anticipation is open to exception. The matter is one that calls for immediate action, and we hope that Lord Selborne will be pleased to see that justice is done to British Indians who have now settled in the Orange River Colony, or who may have to go there in the future.

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Governor's Secretary", 30-8-1905

378. THE FIRST COLONIAL-BORN INDIAN BARRISTER¹

We extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Bernard Gabriel, who has just returned a full-fledged barrister from England. Under ordinary circumstances, it would be no cause to specially notice a lad becoming a barrister, but the event in which we are now interested is very significant. Mr. Gabriel comes of Indian parents who are among the earliest settlers in the Colony and who are drawn from the indentured class. It reflects the highest credit on them that they and their elder sons sacrificed almost all they had in order to give their youngest son a sound education. It speaks well for their public spirit and parental love. They have raised the poor Indians, who for their livelihood have to serve under indenture, in the estimation of all right-thinking men. Mr. Bernard Gabriel has also shown that, under the circumstances, the children of poor Indians are capable of attaining to a high degree of proficiency, and we think that the Colonists, too, ought to take pride in the event. There is another aspect. Whilst, as an Indian, Mr. Bernard Gabriel has every right to congratulate himself on being a barrister in legal education, he has to recognise the fact that his career is only commencing. He has to consider himself as trustee for his fellow young men in the same walk of life, and it is his example which, if well set, will induce other parents to send their children to England to finish their education. He has adopted an honourable profession, but if it be used as a means for amassing wealth, there may be failure staring him in the face. If his attainments are placed at the service of the community, they will grow more and more. We hope, therefore, that Mr. Gabriel has brought with him a real knowledge of the traditions of his profession, and that in all he does he will be prudent, calm, humble and patriotic.

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

¹ An address couched in similar terms was presented to Bernard Gabriel on September 19 at a meeting of Durban Indians in the Congress Hall (*Indian Opinion*, 23-9-1905). Though Gandhiji does not appear to have been present and is not among the signatories, it is not unlikely that he had a hand in drafting the address, which contains the following sentence: "We have no doubt but that the interest and betterment of your countrymen, and the advocacy of their cause in South Africa will have your warm support, and that your influence for their well-being will ever be used on their behalf."

379. PERMIT REGULATIONS IN THE TRANSVAAL

STRONG REPRESENTATION BY BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Recently the Permit Office has introduced a regulation to the effect that persons seeking permits can get them only on furnishing the names of two Europeans for reference. This is outrageous. The Association has made a strong representation against it. It has been stated therein that there could be very few cases where a European would know Indians by name. The making of such a regulation only means that the Government does not intend to allow any more Indians to enter the Transvaal. This regulation will, moreover, encourage fraudulent practices; for many dishonest Europeans will come forward who will not hesitate to take a false oath for the sake of money. So far only 12,000 Indians have entered the Transvaal. Before the war their number was 15,000. Hence there is reason to believe that 3,000 more of the former residents are still to return. They are suffering many hardships, and it is the duty of the Government to admit them without delay. The permit Officer had forwarded the petition to H. E. the Lieutenant-Governor, who wanted to know the grounds on which it had been stated that there were 15,000 Indians before the war. In its reply the Association has submitted the following grounds :

- (1) the personal experience of the President, Mr. Abdul Gani;
- (2) the personal experience of other early Indian residents;
- (3) the Report of the British Agent before the war in which the Indian population was shown to be about 15,000;
- (4) the population in 1895 was stated as 5,000.

It would not be surprising if those who entered the Transvaal between 1895 and 1899 were to number 10,000. Thousands of men left India, because of the plague in 1896 and the severe famine in 1897-8. Again stringent-laws were enacted in Natal in 1897. All this resulted in many Indians entering the Transvaal. Though there was at that time alien rule in the Transvaal, Indians could freely enter the country. The late Mr. Kruger did not listen to the suggestion that this be stopped. At the time, four steamships, *the Naderi*, the *Courland*, the *Hooseni*, and the *Crescent* used to ply between Bombay and South Africa, and each of them brought hundreds of Indians to South Africa. Each of the steamers made four trips a year, and calculating at the rate of three hundred passengers per trip, the sixteen trips in a year

must have resulted in the immigration of 4,800 Indians.

Besides laying this evidence before the Government, the Association has also shown the statements of Mr. Loveday¹ and others to be quite untrue and has made an appeal to the Government to pay no attention to them and immediately admit the poor Indians that still remain stranded outside.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 23-9-1905

380. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,
September 23, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

Your letter to hand. What you write bout Kitchin is astounding. You have nothing to do with his temperament. He is not your boss. You can certainly reply to what he says without losing your temper. You are both equals, and can discuss matters as such. When I say, "You should tolerate him whatever he might say", it does not mean that you should not reply; it only means that you should not get excited while opposing his statements. I know the West incident. There the mistake was mine. I had asked him to go to Kitchin; but I forget the fact that the venerable Mr. Kitchin cannot tolerate anybody's presence. This is his shortcoming which we should ignore.

I have made it quite clear to you that I do not care in the least even if Kitchin or any other person goes away. The press will not close down on that account. My ultimate reliance is on you and West. The press is not going to close down so long as you two are there. It in spite of this you entertain any doubt, I would call that a weakness in you.

Though the expenditure on the electric lights, etc., in the press is not going to be incurred without reference to me, you may declare in the meeting that it cannot be done without reference to me, I have agreed to sanction £40 for it at the most. I have not given permission for the construction of an office in Kitchin's house at the expense of the press. I do not mind giving him a telephone.

You may give money to Mannering.

¹ Member, Transvaal Legislative Council, *Vide* Vol. IV, pp. 207-8.

You should speak to Kalabhai¹. I have no idea how much money has been given to him. But he has most probably drawn Rs.500 from Revashankarbhai. I shall write again to Kalabhai about the work, if you want me to do so. You should not be diffident in such matter. I shall write to Shri Revashankarbhai.

Hemchand² is not to be dispensed with. Ramnath also is not to be relieved without the matter being given serious thought.

MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I have received the telegram regarding Gokuldas. I wonder if he has brought his permit with him or left it with Kalyandas. If Suleman Ismail wants the bill for the money, the receipt of which we have acknowledged, do send it to him.

From a photostat of the original Gujarati: S. N. 4250

381. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,
September 27, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have received your letter. There is a letter from Hemchand today saying that a notice dispensing with his services has been served on him. I have thereupon sent a telegram asking that he be not discharged. I do not relish the idea of discharging even Ramnath. But if he can be posted with Chi. Jayashanker, you may do so. I am not at all inclined to discharge Hemchand for no fault of his. I intend to make some special use of him. I have already informed you that I have written to Kitchin about this.

I have written a letter³ to Virji today reprimanding him. I have written to Kalabhai asking him to pay up the money by the end of the year.

Hemchand, it appears, does not get my letters. I am enclosing herewith a letter for him which you may read and then pass on to him. Let me know whether you receive the letters sent to the Grey Street address or not.

As he has asked for it, I have written to you to send Suleman

¹ Gokuldas alias Kalabhai, son of Permanand, a cousin of Gandhiji

² A relative of Shrimad Rajachandra

³ Not available

Ismail the bill for the amount we have acknowledged in the paper. If after that, he does not pay, we shall write it off.

I do not think I shall be able to train Gokuldas for Gujarati in two months. He seems to be very weak in Gujarati.

You have arranged Manilal's time-table very well. Since he likes working on the land, ask him to do some work around the house. The main thing is to clear the big plot of land and water the plants. He will get to know more by himself if he looks after the trees. What is he learning? I shall write to you about his English composing. It will be all right for the present if he takes training in Gujarati.

I see that your mind has weakened a little. The real need is for you to stay here with me for a few months, which, however, does not seem to be possible. It is not enough that you are firm about staying on in the press. I have already shown you conclusively as in a mathematical problem that the press won't break down. You had agreed with me in that, and now you write that the circumstances are unbearable and precarious. This is exactly what I consider a sign of weakness. You have not been able to consider—nor did you have the time to do so—what our duty is in regard to the press, what your own duty is or how to deal with the workers; and your weakness is brought out by the adverse circumstances. I consider it a good thing that this has happened; but it can be so considered only if you understand the purport of it. I cannot explain all this in a letter. But this much I do say that: (1) the press will not break down so long as even a single man is entirely devoted to it; (2) I do not see anything better for you or the others than the press; (3) however bitter a man might be, he is sure to come round if we bestow upon him pure love in thought, word and deed; (4) but, whether he comes round or not, our duty is to follow the same course without misgivings. I believe it will be better if you train Hemchand and free yourself a little. And I want you to do so.

Blessings from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the original Gujarati: S.N. 4252

382. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,
September 29, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

Orchard writes to me saying that you gave Ram directly an order for binding a book, and he complains that, if he is the foreman, this was irregular. He also states the book is not well bound. I have written to him saying that if you have done so, the giving of the order directly is irregular, but that you could not possibly have meant any offence to him or to break the rules, and I have also asked him to have a man-to-man conversation with you. I should, therefore, like you to have a chat with him and let me know also what this is about. It is quite true that all the orders should be delivered to him and not to the different men directly. Please send a copy of *Indian Opinion* to Karsondas¹, Ranavav², comp[limentary].

Yours sincerely
M. K. GANDHI

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.
c/o *Indian Opinion*
PHOENIX

From a photostat of the original: S. N. 4253

¹ A brother of Gandhiji

² A town near Porbandar in Kathiawad

383. PETITION TO COLONIAL SECRETARY, TRANSVAAL¹

[Before September 30, 1905]²

TO

THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY

PRETORIA

THE PETITION OF HOLDERS OF STANDS IN THE MALAY LOCATION,
JOHANNESBURG, BEING MALAY AND OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE CROWN
HUBLY SHEWETH,

That your petitioners have been resident in what is Known as the Malay Location in Johannesburg for a number of years.

The Malay Location was established about the year 1893.

Your petitioners have held stands in the Location as monthly tenants for a number of years, but they have never been hitherto disturbed in their occupation.

Many of your petitioners have built very substantial premises of burnt-brick. Others have wood and iron buildings, but the majority of them are, in your petitioners' estimation, more or less expensive structures.

Some time before the year 1899 an attempt was made by the late Boer Government to dispossess your petitioners and to remove them to some other site, but through the intervention of the then British Agent, the attempt was frustrated.

Your petitioners often approached the then British Agent during the Boer regime for a fixed tenure of tile stands in their possession but they were not able to secure relief although the fullest sympathy was expressed with your petitioners.

Your petitioners are law-abiding British subjects. They have always observed the sanitary regulations and there never has been any complaint made either with reference to the quality of their residences or their mode of living.

The want of definiteness about their holdings very considerably hampers your petitioners.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that the Government

¹ This was signed by most of the stand-holders in the Malay Location.

² From the date of publication of *Indian Opinion*

will be pleased to allow your petitioners to have some fixed tenure of the stands in the Malay Location, and for this act of justice and mercy your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall for ever pray.

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

384. *LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY IN THE TRANSVAAL*

Although Sir Richard-Solomon, the Attorney-General for the Transvaal, stated that no contentious legislation would be introduced during the present session of the Transvaal Legislative Council, the latest *Government Gazette* to hand gives a list of ordinances passed by the dying Council, some of which are without doubt highly contentious, if, that is to say, the feelings of those whom they are intended to affect are of any consequence. There is, for instance, the Municipal Amending Ordinance which gives any Town Council in the Transvaal the power "with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor to close any Locations for Natives established or laid out by it or under its control", provided that the Lieutenant-Governor may, before giving his approval to the closing of such Location, require the Council to lay out other land suitable for a Location. It makes further provision for compensation to be paid to the Natives for the value of their huts, etc. Section 10 gives the Council the power to set apart and maintain Asiatic Bazaars, and it makes the provision with reference to Native Locations above referred to applicable to the Asiatic Bazaars, which means that there is only this distinction between the two, namely, that, whereas Natives may be compelled to reside in the Location, Asiatics may not be compelled to remove to the Locations, which are euphemistically described as Bazaars. This legislation regarding Asiatic Bazaars arises from the struggle of the Pretoria Municipality for obtaining control over the Asiatic Bazaars at Pretoria. In theory, there may be no difference between governmental and municipal control; but, in practice, it will very largely depend upon the temper of the municipality that may happen to be in authority. Instead, therefore, of there being a continuity of policy regarding Bazaars, there will now be differences in accordance with the fancy of each municipality. It is very difficult to know why such legislation has been passed during the last days of the existing Council, in view of the fact that the whole of the Asiatic question is still a matter of correspondence between the Home Government and the Transvaal Government. Many more important and pressing matters have been naturally held in abeyance, in view of the establishment next year of an elective Council. The amending ordinances, however,

authorise the municipalities to impose licences for tea-rooms or eating-houses which may be used exclusively by Asiatics. For this, we believe the Asiatics in the Transvaal have to thank some Chinese store-keepers, who, in their eagerness to open Chinese eating-houses and not knowing that licences were not required for them, petitioned the Government to let them have facilities for opening such eating-houses. The Government have met the petitioners with what they deserve, and all Asiatic boarding-housekeepers will now have the pleasure of having municipal control over even small Asiatic refreshment rooms. Municipal control, for the sake of sanitation, we can quite understand and even welcome; but the imposing of licences over businesses which we apprehend are hardly lucrative, so far as British Indians are concerned, is simply preposterous. But British Indians are Asiatics; therefore, if there must be eating-house licences imposed for the catering of 45,000 Chinamen, the Transvaal Government argue there must also be licences imposed for eating-houses for 12,000 Indians. It did not occur to them that Indian eating-houses are very rare, as the custom of the community does not as a rule require them. Indeed, they are so few that hitherto they have not been even noticed.

There is, again, the Revenue Licence Ordinance which requires hawkers and pedlars to take out certificates from magistrates, Justices of the Peace, or Police Officers before being entitled to a licence, exception being made in favour of those who may be already in possession of their licences, provided that these fortunate men, within fourteen days before the expiry of their licences, hand them to the Revenue Officers within their districts.

The Johannesburg Land Ordinance makes it

lawful for the Lieutenant-Governor to grant to the Councils of the Municipality of Johannesburg in such manner and on such conditions as it may deem advisable and subject to all servitudes at present subsisting therein in favour of any person the land described in schedule 'attached to the ordinance'.

Among the lands thus dealt with is the Malay Location in Johannesburg. This Location has been in existence for the last twelve years or more. There has never been any objection raised to it either on account of the habits of the inhabitants or its situation. The inhabitants, under a sense of security fostered by the different British Agents who represented the Government before the war, have built substantial houses. The tenure, however, from a legal standpoint is only a monthly tenancy. What, then, are the inhabitants to receive as

compensation, assuming that they will be removed ? We cannot but here recall the invidious distinction that has been drawn between one portion of Vrededorp and the other portion, for the whole of the Malay Location is part of Vrededorp. That portion which is inhabited by the old indigent burghers has received most favourable treatment at the hands of the Government. As our readers must have seen from these columns, they are not only not to be dispossessed but they are to have their monthly tenure converted into long leases. Why should not the same facility be given to the inhabitants of the Malay Location? It will be for the latter to see to their rights being properly safeguarded. These are only a few samples of legislation which has been termed non-contentious. It has in some shape or other dealt with the rights of the Coloured people who have no choice whatsoever in their government.

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

385. *THE CAPE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT*

The following appears in the Cape *Government Gazette* for the 19th September, 1905:

In the event of a 'Prohibited Immigrant' having entered this Colony in contravention of the Act, it shall be lawful, after due enquiry into the facts by the Magistrate of the District in which Prohibited Immigrants shall have been found, to order such Immigrant to be detained and accommodated in such place as the Minister may from time to time direct, pending the removal of such Immigrant from within the territorial limits of the Colony, and where such Immigrant is in possession of sufficient means, the whole or the part of the cost of such removal to such port or other place as the Minister may direct shall be borne by such Immigrant.

The provision is very drastic. The Restriction Act has been passed in the supposed interests of the Colony. It is quite conceivable that a man may unwittingly enter it in contravention of the Act. It is hardly just, then, if he is found to be in possession of just enough to pay the cost of his removal to make him bear the burden. Although ignorance of law is in theory held to be no excuse, there are, perhaps, cases in which in practice ignorance is a valid plea. There is already in the Act a clause requiring the masters of all steamers that may bring Prohibited Immigrants to take them back. If a Prohibited Immigrant enter the Colony, it shows also lack of supervision on the part of the authorities, and it seems hardly fair that an innocent man should be punished, either because there is not complete supervision at the Cape,

or because the masters of vessels have been careless in selecting passengers. We, therefore, trust that the British Indians at the Cape, whom the new Rule is likely to affect most, will take the necessary steps to have the Rule amended.

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

386. *THE CHINESE AND THE AMERICANS*

The loss already sustained by the United States on account of the boycott of American goods by the Chinese is estimated at £5,000,000. This has led the American traders and merchants to urge their Government to abolish the anti-Chinese laws¹. To counter this move, the working classes there have held large meetings and passed resolutions demanding that the anti-Chinese laws should not be repealed, whatever the loss they might cause to the traders. Thus, on the one hand, there is a split between the traders and the working classes in America, and on the other, the cablegrams received from China show that the Chinese boycott is gathering strength. This resolution by the Chinese is sought to be applied to all the places where anti-Chinese laws are in force. Moreover, it is also said that the feeling against the whites has become so strong in China that fears are being entertained about the safety of those residing in the interior. It is difficult to say what all this agitation will lead to.

The great advances said to have been made in the nineteenth century are now being put to the test in the twentieth. And it would appear that the present century might witness great upheavals. In all this commotion one thing stands out clear, namely, that where there is unity, there alone is strength, and also victory. This deserves to be carefully borne in mind by every Indian. The Chinese, though weak, appear to have become strong on account of their unity, thereby bearing out the truth of the Gujarati verse, “Thus do ants when united take the life of a fierce snake”.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

¹ Intended to exclude Chinese labour

387. MOVEMENT TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY IN NATAL

COMMISSION APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR

The current issue of the *Government Gazette* announces the appointment of a Commission to recommend measures that should be adopted so that goods consumed in Natal may be manufactured locally and to suggest changes, if any, that should be made in customs levies to encourage the use of goods thus produced. The members of the Commission are: Mr. Moore, the Commissioner; Dr. Gubbins; Mr. Ernest Act; Mr. James King; Mr. George Pane; Mr. Saunders; and Mr. MacAllisker. We believe it would be a very good thing if our marchants gave evidence before this Commission. There are many things that can be produced in Natal and about which experienced merchants can be of help.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

388. SCHOOLS IN NATAL

THE REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

In his Annual Report, Mr. Mudie, Superintendent of Education in Natal, states that sufficient attention is not being paid to the cleanliness of children in the schools for Indians and other Coloured people. This comment by Mr. Mudie deserves careful consideration. Though Mr. Mudie is not one of our well-wishers, we ought to ponder over our shortcomings when he points them out to us. Parents should give enough attention to this matter. Though we may not ourselves observe rules of cleanliness, it is very essential to teach them to our children. If they learn to follow them, muchimprovement is likely to result in the course of a generation. The following points about children should be borne in mind:

(1) Their teeth should be clean. They should be made to rinse them every morning and again before retiring at night.

(2) Their hair should be clean. It should be cut short and washed and brushed every day. No oil need be used.

(3) Their nails should be clean, clipped from time to time and always washed clean.

(4) Their clothes and shoes, however simple, should be neat and tidy.

(5) Their satchels and books, too, should be clean likewise. They should handle books with clean hands.

We need hardly add that it will accrue to the benefit of the children if these rules are kept in mind and they are made to follow them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

389. INTIMATION TO RESIDENTS OF JOHANNESBURG

We find from the Johannesburg newspapers that the season for epidemic fever has set in there. The Municipality has issued a public notice that those who keep their latrines unclean will be prosecuted. The local rules require that after a person has used a latrine, he should spread dry dust, ashes or some disinfectant powder over the faeces so as to cover them over completely. The latrine should not be wet or smelly. Any default in this respect is punishable with a fine up to £5. This is a very good rule. Ashes or dry dust can be had free of charge. We earnestly appeal to our readers to keep a tin filled with dust in the latrine and cover the faeces with dust or ashes.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

390. GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF AMERICA

Students of English must have read in their text books about one George who one day cut off, for the fun of it, a berry plant that was dear to his father. When he saw the fate of the plant, his father asked the boy about it. George replied: "Father, I wouldn't tell a lie. I cut the plant." When the father, who questioned him in an angry tone, heard this straight reply from George who had tears in his eyes, he was pleased and forgave him. George was then a mere child.

The boy, on whose mind devotion to truth was thus firmly imprinted, became at fifty-five the first President of America, which is today the admiration of the world. When he was elected to the presidency, the American people offered to crown him king, but he simply rejected the proposal.

George Washington was born in a wealthy family in the city of Westmoreland in Virginia on February 22, 1732. Little is known about

the first sixteen years of his life. Until then he had read little. Later, he was appointed manager of some estate. While on this job, he gave proof of his intelligence and courage so much so that, at twenty-three, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Virginian army.

At this time North America was under British rule, and quarrels were going on between England and the American people. The people in America did not like certain taxes imposed on them by England. There were other matters also that troubled the Americans. Consequently, the feelings between the people of America and those of England ran high and resulted in war. The English armies were trained and well equipped, while the Americans were simple, rustic folk. They were not conversant with the use of arms. They were not accustomed to working in the disciplined manner of an army and suffering hardships. Washington was called upon to control such men and exact work from them, so that America could become independent and free from the British yoke. The people made him Commander-in-Chief. Washington protested: "I do not deserve this honour, but since you are pleased to appoint me to the post, I accept it in an honorary capacity with a view to serving the people." This was no mere formal sentiment, for he sincerely believed that he was not sufficiently capable and wrote in similar terms to his personal friends. But once the responsibility was entrusted to him, he braved all dangers, worked day and night, and so impressed the people that they began to act upon his word even before it was spoken and faced any danger they were asked to. The result was that the English armies were defeated, and America became independent. And once the task was accomplished, Washington relinquished his post. But the people had found in him a gem which they would not part with. So, when the American Republic was founded in 1787, George Washington was elected its first President. Even when he assumed this high office, he never thought of using it to gain selfish ends. At the end of a war, it always happens that false patriots come forward to fill their pockets. But all such people had to live in awe of Washington. In 1792-3¹ Washington was elected President for a second time. During his term of office, he showed the same courage and bravery that he had displayed in war in introducing land reforms, in keeping the people united and in enhancing the country's reputation. A writer has said: "Washington was first in war, as well as first in peace, and occupied the first place in the hearts of his countrymen!" When he was pressed to accept the Presidency for a third term, he refused the offer and

¹ The original has 1892-3, obviously an error.

went to live on his estate.

This heroic person died of a sudden illness on December 14, 1799. He was very tall; his height, it is said, was six feet three inches. No one in his time had such massive arms. He was always humble and kind. The high position to which America has risen today is due to his patriotism. The name of Washington will live as long as America lives. May India too produce such heroes.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 30-9-1905

391. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

September 30, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

Anandlal writes that it has been decided to hire an office in Mercury Lane. If this is so, it should not be done. I feel it is essential that I should be consulted before such changes are introduced. There is no harm, I believe, if the new office is located either in Grey Street or in Field Street.

You may place Ramnath under Jayashanker's charge, that is, of course, if he is willing to go. Jayashanker must now be experiencing difficulty in carrying on his business. Mansukhbhai is likely to come here. I have a long letter from him, he appears to be very anxious to come. He is only awaiting the permission of his parents.

I am enclosing the letter received from Klerksdorp. We have not received any money at all from there. In which issue have you acknowledged that money? I remember, as I write this, that an amount from Krugersdorp was at first acknowledged as a whole but, on my suggestion, contributions were later acknowledged individually. It is possible that some confusion has crept in.

I received your letter in the afternoon.

As regards the office, I still think it is not proper to shift it to Mercury Lane.

Send me any letter that you may have received from Krugersdorp. All the moneys that came to me have been acknowledged.

I am enclosing Sumar Latif's letter, which you may return to me

after writing whatever you like on it.

MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I have seen today the boot written by Sheikh Mehtab¹. Do not take any notice of it in the *Opinion*.

MOHANDAS

[PPS.]

I am sending the Gujarati matter. As two life sketches have already accumulated there, I shall not send any this time.

Blessings from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the original in Gujarati: S. N. 4254

392. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

October 2, 1905

DEAR MR. CHHAGANLAL,

Mr. Kitchin writes to me that at one of your meetings it was unanimously decided to dismiss Hemchand. When Hemchand wrote to me he had received notice of dismissal, I immediately assured him that the notice would be withdrawn, and I entered into correspondence with both Messrs Kitchin and Chhaganlal.² When Hemchand's services were retained, I had a chat with him and I told him that he would be trained in the Press, and that, so long as he behaved and worked well, he should consider himself a permanent fixture. Hemchand I know well, his people I know better. I consider him to be a good and valuable hand who, if the press had to undergo serious difficulties, would stick to it.

Apart, however, from all that, when I heard of Hemchand's dismissal, I felt that my pledge was at stake. It was for that reason that I gave him the assurance I have done.

May I now ask you to ratify my assurance and revoke your decision as to his dismissal in the light of what I am now telling you? For the future, I think that in all such matters I would appreciate the

¹ Gandhiji's companion during his school days. *Vide Autobiography*, Part I, Chs. VI and VII.

² This letter was sent to others in the Press besides Chhaganlal. See the Gujarati note following it.

consideration greatly if I were to be consulted before arriving at any final decision.

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

[*To this is added a handwritten note in Gujarati.*]

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

Please read the above letter. I have written a similar letter to others. Kitchin has, it seems, made much of the matter. I have sent him too a telegram. If you find it necessary to be present at the meeting, you may do so.

Lachhiram is not getting the paper still. Let me know to which address you send it.

You should get a *kavad*¹ made for Manilal for fetching water. It seems, he finds it difficult to carry water.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Gabru, Box 5709, says that he received the *Opinion* only for a week and that he is not getting it now. I do not understand why the names of [subscribers to the] Madresa² [Fund] have not appeared. This should not happen in future.

From the typewritten (English) and handwritten (Gujarati) office copy signed by Gandhiji: S. N. 4377

393. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[After October 2, 1905]³

. . . will send it after inspecting it. Enclosed are a credit note and the particulars of a new subscriber. Please see if they are in order.

¹ A pole carried over the shoulder and having a bucket (or basket) suspended from either end: a yoke.

² A Muslim school at Dabhel in Gujarat for which donations were being collected in South Africa.

³ From the reference to Dabhel Madressa Fund the letter appears to have been written after the one to the addressee, dated October 2, 1905; *vide* "Letter to Chhaganlal Gandhi", 2-10-1905.

Send me a list of subscribers in Johannesburg who have not yet paid their subscriptions for [previous years].

Let me know the rate we charged for [publishing] in the Gujarati section [of *Indian Opinion*] the names of contributors to the Dabhel Madressa Fund¹, as the Sanatana Dharma Sabha of Germiston wants to have names of contributors published in *Indian Opinion*. That. . .

From a copy of the Gujarati: S.N. 4742

394. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,
October 5, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

Your letter to hand. Please send me my office letterheads and blank continuation sheets. Add “Telegrams: ‘Gandhi’ ” to it. I have got the name registered. Get this done immediately.

Regarding a house for Anandlal, I was under the impression that he wanted to take Abhechand’s house. If he wants to build a new house altogether, I would advise against incurring any expenditure for the present. I am writing to him accordingly.

I see no alternative to getting the house colour-washed for Mr. Bean.

Take full work from Hemchand. Please write to me from time to time how he is doing. Changes like recruitment, dismissal, etc., must not be made without my approval. I have already taken action in regard to this. We need not worry if Orchard² and Sam² are angry.

Mansukhlal will come here merely for a change for the present. If he comes at all, I shall have him with me for some time to give him bath [treatment], etc. He will then go and stay there for some time.

Kalabhai has written to me saying that he will give £3 every month. Write in the paper about Vasant Pandit. We do not know what is happening.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

¹ A Muslim school at Dabhel in Gujarat for which donations were being collected in South Africa

² Workers in the Phoenix press

[PS.]

You still do not publish all the notices from the *Gazette*. There are many notices from page 1705 onwards in the current issue of the *Gazette*, viz., of (1) Iyer, (2) Ramsaroop, (3) Bogha, (4) Gisiavan, (5) Parathi, (6) Hoosan Amod and (7) Randeri. I have found these from a casual glance at the paper. All these notices should appear in all the three languages. Therefore carefully scrutinize the *Gazette* henceforth. Some of this work can be entrusted to Hemchand.

Please send me some small envelopes bearing the Phoenix address.

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the original Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: S. N. 4256

395. *LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI*

JOHANNESBURG,

October 6, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I enclose letter from Virji for your information. Please return it. I am writing¹ to him about the incident you related to me in one of your letters. You may discuss the whole matter with him. I am telling him that I have sent you his letter to me. I wrote to him the letter²² to which he has replied pointing out that I should be unable to keep him after his year is out if he did not give you satisfaction.

Why do you say the £20 given to Anandlal is a waste of money? If it was so, you should have told Anandlal. From your last letter I understand that Anandlal wanted you to give him £30 for making purchases in town and that he had given up the idea of buying from Tongaat.

I return Desai's letter. As you have found out the mistake, it was

¹ Not available

² *ibid*

not necessary for you to send the letter to me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Enclosures³

C. K. GANDHI, ESQ.
c/o Indian Opinion
PHOENIX

From a photostat of the original: S. N. 4257

396. *COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN INDIA*

Whilst every attempt is being made in South Africa to discourage Indian education, signs are not wanting to show that in India itself the desire for education has taken deep root in the hearts of the people, and that, before many years are out, we may even find compulsory education adopted in the advanced parts of India. Macaulay penned the famous Education Minute in 1836.¹ It was then that Indian education received its real impetus, and yet “in the census of 1901, it was found that only one in ten of the female population were literate”. Mr. H. D. Kantavala, the Director of Public Instruction in the State of Baroda, contributes a very valuable paper to *East and West* for August. According to our authority, the number of students of all grades in 1901 was 3,268,726, and the expenditure incurred on the education of these students was less than two crores of rupees, that is, one-and-a-third million pounds. Of this amount, a little over one-fourth was spent on primary education. The expenditure on education represents 1.5 per cent. of the total revenue of Government. It is admitted that primary education has not received sufficient attention in India, and the main reason is that the Government of India has found it impossible to spend more owing to lack of funds. We will not at present go into the question of why money has not been available for further development of education, but we may say that the matter no longer remains absolutely in the hands of the Government.

Those who have appreciated the sweets of education are eager that their less fortunate brethren should have a share. The Corporation

¹ Thomas Babington Macaulay, (1800-59 President of the General Committee of Public Instruction and Law Member of the Executive Council of the Governor-General, wrote his Minute on February 2, 1835 in favour of introducing English education in India. Till this issue was decided as between opposite schools of thought, the Government could not launch a unified scheme of education in India.

of Bombay has lately passed a resolution approving of the system of compulsory education. His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar has taken a practical step, and it is the experiment that is now being tried in Baroda in compulsory education that Mr. Kantavala has largely dealt with in his paper. It was in 1892 that His Highness expressed his intention to introduce compulsory education in some portions of his territories and Mr. Kantavala was entrusted with this responsibility. He laid down the following principles for his own guidance.

(1) Before applying the compulsory law to a place, the Government should provide it with means of education.

(2) The law of compulsion should be made applicable to both sexes.

(3) The age of compulsion should be from seven to twelve in the case of boys, and seven to ten in the case of girls.

(4) The course of study should be elementary.

(5) Compulsory attendance should not exceed 100 days in the year.

(6) The defaulters should not be dealt with criminally but only civilly, and be subject to a fine recoverable only by a civil process.

With characteristic energy, and undaunted by serious difficulties of a complex nature, Mr. Kantavala selected a group of ten villages, the most backward in the State (as it was the Gaekwar's intention to see the working of the system at its worst), and enforced the principles above laid down. Several interviews which the Director of Education had with headmen, how he lived down all opposition, how he brought round to his way of thinking the recalcitrant spirits, are all very interesting incidents. We would, however, state the result only in the writer's own language:

It was thus that I was able to introduce compulsory education in the most backward part of the Baroda State within a very short time. I had to pay special attention for months in order to work out the scheme successfully. By the end of the year, almost all children within the age of compulsion, that is, over 99 per cent. entered school, a result which, even in England and other advanced countries, is not achieved. The successful working of the measure induced His Highness to extend compulsory education by taking up fresh groups of ten villages at a time. Compulsory education in the Amreli Taluka has stood the test of more than a dozen years, showing always that nearly cent. per cent. of the children attend the school, and that people have never raised any complaint of a serious nature against it. His Highness has recently sanctioned a scheme for applying to two parts of his territories the law of compulsory education to those children whose parents have a certain annual income.

This is a remarkable achievement, and yet it is only a little germ, when we consider the illiterate millions in India. No one can foretell to what stature the germ will grow in course of time. The experiment is not without its lesson to us in South Africa. It is but right that we should expect the different governments to provide suitable education for Indian children. It is the duty of those Indians who are better situated and who see the advantages of education to see that, if the governments in South Africa will not help them, they themselves make suitable provision for the education of Indian children.

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

397. THE G. O. M. OF INDIA¹

Our Indian exchanges bring news with reference to the meetings held to commemorate the eighty-first birthday of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, on the 4th September last. Public meetings were held all over India. The services rendered by Mr. Naoroji to India, in our humble opinion, are far greater than the services rendered by England's Grand Old Man² to England. Mr. Naoroji's work has been pioneer work, and when he commenced it, few indeed were his helpers. The self-sacrificing devotion with which he has pushed forward the cause of India, in season and out of season, has hardly any parallel in India; and it is no wonder that he stands unequalled by any one in the estimation of millions of his countrymen. The spectacle of an old man of over eighty years wooing a British constituency, not for the sake of glory or honours, but in order that he may serve India the more, is most pathetic and magnificent. If the electors of North Lambeth send Mr. Naoroji to the new Parliament, they will have done themselves a unique honour. We echo the prayers that were offered by the millions in India for long life and health to Mr. Naoroji.

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

¹ *Vide* "The Grand old man of India", 19-11-1903.

² William Ewart Gladstone, (1809-98), Prime Minister 1868-74, 1880-5, 1886 and 1892-4. *Vide* "Mr. Gladstone's Biography", 14-1-1904.

398. *THE INSULT TO SIR MANCHERJI*

It is with great regret that we notice the insult that has been offered to Sir Mancherji Bhownaggee at Calcutta recently. Because he differed from the [common] opinion on the Partition of Bengal¹, he was burnt in effigy on College Square. Sir Mancherji may surely hold his own opinion, even though it is seldom allowed nowadays to individual members of that temple of freedom—the British House of Commons. To offer such flagrant insult to a member of that assembly, who has proved his zeal in the cause of India, is unwise; nay, it is stupid. Indians may not always see eye to eye with Sir Mancherji, but they cannot fail to acknowledge that he is ever loyal to his native India and that he has always her interests at heart. Indians in South Africa will especially feel this insult; for he has proved himself a true friend to the unrepresented thousands here. Indians will do very wrong to value a man according to the power of his invective and the bitterness of his denunciation of Britain's perfidy. The more moderate opinions of a man like Sir Mancherji have far greater weight than the extravagances of hot-headed Radicals. It is the conviction of calm reasoning alone that will get the full measure of justice for India; and for this reason Sir Mancherji is, of all men, the least deserving of the ingratitude of his fellow-countrymen.

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

399. *THE BOYCOTT*

From cables and Indian papers recently to hand, it is evident that the boycott movement in Bengal is not destined to fizzle out in an inglorious fashion. Though there appears to be a deal of mob-law in preventing persons from buying British goods, the movement is so general as to show that it results from deep feeling on the part of the people. Whatever may be the result of the present agitation against the Partition, the effect of the boycott will be productive of only good to India. It has resulted in a wonderful stimulation of native industries which, we trust, will grow more and more. It is a result unlooked for, but not the less eminently desirable. The great need of India is that

¹ On grounds of administrative convenience, Bengal was divided into two provinces, one of which was predominantly Hindu and the other Muslim. The Partition, which raised a storm of protest throughout India and led to the movement for boycott of British goods, was finally annulled in 1911.

national characteristics should be fostered and improved. If the resolve to use only Indian goods, so far as possible, be maintained, it will be no small help in developing the national spirit.

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

400. DR. BARNARDO

The news of Dr. Barnardo's death last month has been cabled throughout the world. Our readers must be eager to know who this Dr. Barnardo was. We are, therefore, giving this time in these columns an account of the worthy doctor's life.

Dr. Barnardo was regarded as the father of orphans and waifs. In his early years the doctor felt deeply depressed whenever he happened to see an orphan. But he had then no means of helping them. Although he was poor, the idea occurred to him that he should undertake to bring up orphans and thus earn his own livelihood.

As the Gujarati saying, 'giving a needle in charity after stealing an anvil', goes, we want first to earn plenty of money and then spend it on some good cause. The entire lives of many are spent in the process of amassing wealth. Some others forget their original resolution when they have earned enough, yet others, when they have amassed money, do not know how to use it properly, waste it on all sorts of things and feel satisfied that they have spent it well. Never having been benevolent, they cannot use the money properly.

The intelligent Dr. Barnardo had seen all this. So he told himself: "My heart is pure; those who trust me and give me money will also realise that I too must support myself with it. At the same time, if I undertake to shelter and bring up orphans, I shall earn their blessings and the people, too, will see that I have no intention of making money for myself." With these thoughts in his mind, the brave doctor plunged into the work, and opened the first Home for orphan-waifs at Steveny-Causeway in London. People at first opposed him, many saying that he had only found a fine way of making money by deceiving the public. Dr. Barnardo, however, was not to be discouraged. He collected money from those who trusted him. By and by, more and more children began to flock to his Home. Instead of becoming vagabonds, they became studious, honest and industrious and secured employment. All the children thus brought up served as good publicity for Dr. Barnardo's Home. They saw that Dr. Barnardo looked after them better than their own parents would have done. The doctor founded more such Homes, till at last he established a colony

for orphans in a wood, six miles away from London. There he put up fine buildings, churches, etc., and the place has now become so famous that many people visit it and feel they are on a pilgrimage; and in course of time similar homes have been founded in many parts of the world. Dr. Barnardo himself brought up in this way during his lifetime 55,000 homeless children. There were some wicked parents who took unfair advantage of the facility provided by the doctor. They quietly left their children at night in Dr. Barnardo's backyard and went away. Undaunted, the doctor brought them up with care and returned them to their parents when they claimed them. Every year, in the big Albert Hall in London, a fair is held in which the children from these Homes take part and thousands of people pay to visit it. It has come to be known after the doctor's death that he had insured his life for £70,000. He has enjoined in his will that all this money should be spent on the maintenance of the Homes founded by him.

Such was this great man, Dr. Barnardo. He was pious and very kind. Though acts like insuring one's life, etc., do not accord well with our idea of religion, it was according to Western practice wise on the part of the doctor to have done what he did.

Dr. Barnardo has provided us, during the present age, a very good example of what a poor man could accomplish by dint of enthusiasm and kindness.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

401. AN. INDIAN POET

By his English translations of the poems of Hali, Mr. Ward has made the poet widely known. It is said that there is no other poet who can equal him. His full name is Maulvi Sayed Altaf Hussain Ansari. He was born in Panipat, near Delhi. Most of his poems are in Urdu, though he has written quite a lot in Persian also. The poem he wrote on the occasion of the Jubilee of 1887¹ was so excellent that it resounded throughout North India. His works do not concern themselves with the pleasures of life, but with such useful themes as the duty of Muslims in the present age, the way both Hindus and Muslims should acquit themselves, and the way to know God. Sheth Abdul Kadar of Lahore tells us how during their school days he and his mates used to read Hali's poems, how they read them also when

¹The Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign

they were grown up, and sang them at community gatherings. He further tells us that they listen to them even now at their *anjumans*¹, and seldom feel tired of reading and hearing them again and again. He has written in very eloquent language of the life of the great poet Sheikh Saadi². Writing about the work of the poet Hali, Prof. Morrison says: “What this poor poet has done unaided for the community far surpasses what the wealthy Muslims have done with their money.” In appreciation of the services rendered by the poet to the community, the Government have conferred on him the title of *Shams-ul-Ulema*. We are sorry we do not have with us his Urdu poems, but we recommend that our readers obtain and read them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 7-10-1905

402. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,
October 7, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

Your letter to hand. It is good that you have shifted the office. Please go on appealing repeatedly to maintain cleanliness in regard to plague. Let me know where Hemchand stays. There seems to be some misunderstanding between us regarding him. But I consider it my fault because I gave you no details. You will learn more from my letter to West. Let me know if Hemchand gives you complete satisfaction in his work. Where is Ramnath ? Have you entrusted him to Jayashanker or not ? Jayashanker is very short of men. Send the *Opinion* to the enclosed address. I shall collect the subscription from here. Debit it to my account.

Will not the shifting of the office to Mercury Lane affect our Indian clientele? Did Sheth Abdul Cadir say anything? Why did you not find a place for the office in Field Street or Grey Street?

I am sending the Gujarati material today. I shall send more tomorrow.

Blessings from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the original Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: S. N. 4258

¹ Meetings

² A Persian poet of the 13th century

403. ADDRESS TO LORD SELBORNE¹

[POTCHEFSTROOM,
Before October 9, 1905]

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

We, the undersigned, representing British Indians residing in Potchefstroom, hereby extend to Your Excellency a hearty and loyal welcome to this historic city.

We venture to hope that you will carry with you pleasant recollections of your stay among the people of Potchefstroom.

The difficulties that we labour under in Potchefstroom are common to British Indians all over the Transvaal. A charge has been laid² against British Indians in Potchefstroom as to their mode of life and the manner in which their business premises are kept. We would venture respectfully to invite Your Excellency's inspection of the premises³ and form your own conclusions about them. We are most anxious, so far as it is possible, to conform to local customs, and to conciliate popular sentiment. All we ask for is freedom of locomotion, trade, residence, and ownership of property under such general sanitary and other regular general regulations as may be necessary without introducing class legislation.

We approach Your Excellency with all confidence that we will receive justice at your hands.

We beg you to convey sentiments of our attachment to Their Most Gracious Majesties the King-Emperor and the Queen-Empress.

S. D. ROBERT,
PRESIDENT,
E. H. GETTA,
E. M. PATEL,
M. E. NANABHAY,
HAJEE OMAR,
A. E. GONGAT,
A. M. CASSIM,

¹ The address was presented on behalf of the Potchefstroom Indian Association. Similar addresses were presented at Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Krugersdorp. *Vide* "Lord Selborne on Trek", *Indian Opinion*, 14-10-1905.

² By the Potchefstroom Vigilants Association

³ This is evidently a slip and should read: "We would venture respectfully to invite Your Excellency to have an inspection of the premises and form your own conclusions about them."

HASSIM TAYOB,
A. G. SALEY
MAHOMED,
EBRAHIM BROTHERS,
MOOSA HASSAN,
D. I. VARYAVA,
A. RAHMAN,
SECRETARY.

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

404. *POTCHEFSTROOM INDIANS' STATEMENT*¹

[POTCHEFSTROOM,
Before *October 9, 1905*]

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Did we not know that what has been called the anti-Asiatic Vigilance Society is to make representations to Your Excellency with reference to the British Indians, so far as regards Potchefstroom, we would not have given any trouble whatsoever to Your Excellency, especially as we are aware that Your Excellency is to meet very shortly a deputation of the British Indian Association at Johannesburg.

Mr. Loveday it was who stated that Potchefstroom was being inundated with indentured Indians from Natal. To this we beg to give an emphatic contradiction. Some of us know the Natal laws, and we [know that it] is next to impossible for an indentured Indian to escape. In any case not a single instance has been brought forward to prove the statement above referred to.

Another statement was made by the Mayor of Johannesburg when he was here. He is reported to have said that, whereas there were nineteen licences issued to Asiatics before the war, now there were ninety-six traders' licences and thirty-seven hawkers' licences. This statement, so far as traders are concerned, is not true. We supplied before the war a list of British Indian traders in the town of Potchefstroom to the British Agent, and there were twenty-two British Indian stores in the town of Potchefstroom, as distinguished from the district. We have a true copy of the list that was sent to the British Agent, and we are to-day in a position, not only to give the names, but to locate each of the store-keepers. Seeing that Mr. Goch mentions

¹ This was read out by Mr. Abdool Rahman, Secretary, Potchefstroom Indian Association, after he had presented the address to Lord Selborne.

ninety-six traders' licences in connection with the nineteen before the war, we take it that he refers to ninety-six traders' licences for the town of Potchefstroom. If so, this is grossly untrue. There are only twenty-four British Indian stores in this town at the present day. We state this with a full sense of responsibility and knowledge, and we challenge our detractors to prove the contrary.

A third statement that has been made against us in Potchefstroom is with reference to the so-called insanitary condition of our dwellings and shops. These, indeed, speak for themselves, but when the charge was made, we took the opportunity of showing our places to the District Surgeon of Potchefstroom, and the following is the report that he gave:

In going through the various premises, I am pleased to say I was greatly impressed with the general condition of each place I visited, both internally as well as externally. Taking all things into consideration, the backyards are all perfectly clean and sanitary. I saw no accumulation of rubbish, this I understand being carried away daily by the contractor. The bucket system is enforced as in other parts of the town, which is also attended to by the Sanitary Department, and I can find no fault from what I saw. There appears to me to be no overcrowding as regards sleeping accommodation. At the back of each business premises, in addition, I noticed a kind of mess room capable of seating about five to eight persons, and each has its own kitchen; these are also well kept.

We mention these things to show under what disadvantages we have to labour, and what misrepresentations are made against us. We have no hesitation in saying that the whole of the anti-Asiatic agitation is due to trade jealousy. Nothing can be further from our wish than to enter into an unfair competition with the white store-keepers.

Much has been said against our mode of life. We are proud to think that we are sober and simple in our habits, and if thereby we have an advantage over the rival white traders, we hardly think that it should be brought up against us in order to traduce and degrade us. It is totally forgotten, in this connection, by those who denounce us, that the white traders have other advantages which we cannot dream of having, namely, their European connection, their knowledge of the English language, and their better organising powers. Moreover, we are able to carry on our trade only because of the goodwill of the poor whites, and our ability to please the poorest class of customers; also, we have the support of wholesale European houses. It has been said that our competition resulted in many European shops being closed. We deny this. In the first instance, some of the shops that have been closed were not shops with which we could possibly enter into

competition, for instance, hairdressers and others. Some general goods stores have undoubtedly closed, but to connect their closing with Asiatic competition would be [as] unfair as to connect the closing of several Asiatic shops with European competition in this town. There is trade depression all over South Africa, and it has only resulted in getting rid of overtrading that was indulged in soon after the war, based, as it was, on high expectations which have never been fulfilled.

May we also, in this connection, state that much of the agitation against us is kept up not by *bona-fide* British subjects but by aliens who can have very little indeed to complain of against us. The policy adopted to drive us out of the township is a policy of irritation and insults which, though petty in themselves, are galling enough to be very much felt by us.

Without the slightest occasion, we are now served at special counters in the Post Office. We are debarred from having a breath of fresh air in a park which is called a “public” park, and which is kept up from rates which we are called upon to pay in common with other citizens. We mention these instances to draw Your Excellency’s attention to the awkward position in which we are placed without any fault of ours. No opportunity is missed of degrading us and humiliating us. We do not wish to burden Your Excellency with such other instances. We have a right, we submit, to expect the British Government to protect us from such humiliation, and insure for us that freedom to which, as loyal British subjects, we are entitled wherever the Union Jack flies.

We beg to thank Your Excellency for giving us a patient hearing, and in conclusion hope that, as a result of Your Excellency’s visit to this township, there will be an amelioration in our condition.

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

405. LORD SELBORNE AND INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL

His Excellency the High Commissioner has made, during his tour in the Transvaal, two very important speeches on the status of the British Indians in that Colony. His speech at Potchefstroom, which will be found in another column, is the more important. Lord Selborne has shown therein that, during his short stay, he has studied the question. He holds the honour of the Government very dear to him, and recognises the fact that there were promises made to British

Indians before the war which have to be carried out. His Lordship, we are further glad to notice, interprets the Indians' Proclamation¹ as an assurance of the rights of Indians as full British subjects all the world over. For all this, and a great deal more, we are truly thankful to His Excellency. When there is such an evident desire to hold the scales evenly between conflicting interests, there is every ground for hope that, in the near future, a solution will be found for this difficult problem which will be generally accepted.

One thing, however, that Lord Selborne is reported to have promised, fills us with disquiet. These are the reported words:

No Indians who were not here before the war will be admitted into the country till you have your own parliament, and by your own representatives you can express your own opinion. I give you that assurance as your Governor and your High Commissioner.

We are sure that His Excellency could not have, at the time of making the promise, measured the full consequence of its operation. His Excellency is anxious to draw the distinction between Indians already settled in the country and those who may come hereafter. He impressed upon his audience the necessity of giving fair treatment to the old Indian settlers. Now the fact that Indian merchants must draw upon India for confidential clerks, managers, and other trustworthy servants has only to be mentioned to convey conviction. It is well-nigh impossible for them to continue to do business with any degree of safety without such facilities. Are we, then, to understand that, unless the incoming Transvaal Parliament chooses to do otherwise, Indian businesses are to be starved into surrender for want of reliable men?

His Excellency says again that it is not practical statesmanship to allow Indians to compete with white men without restriction. We have often discussed this proposition in these columns, and we think we have shown how hollow it is. For that which is true in it has been admitted by the Indians, and that which is not true arises only from pure trade jealousy. The soundness of the Indian position must be apparent to any but the most prejudiced man, when it is explained that, with proper safeguards, new Indian licences may be granted only at the option of the local boards, which consist largely of traders. But the anti-Asiatic agitators, who are bent on driving every Indian out of the Colony, will not be satisfied until they succeed in making his life totally unbearable. It is against attempts such as these that the Indians have a right to expect Lord Selborne to protect them.

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

¹ The Queen's Proclamation of 1858

406. THE VISIT OF LORD SELBORNE

Today Lord Selborne arrives in Durban, having spent most of the week in Natal¹. In common with the rest of the community, we most heartily give our humble Welcome. Lord Selborne has been in South Africa only a short while, but already he has gained the confidence of all sections of the people that he will do his duty to everyone without Ear or favour. In many ways, His Excellency will find Natal different from the sister-Colonies. Natal presents some interesting problems for study, in that it has a large Native population with a comparatively small white population, which is dependent for the chief industries under As control upon a large indentured Indian population. The presence of the latter has naturally attracted to the Colony Indians of the trading class. We trust that, during his short stay, Hi Excellency be able to give stay of hi valuable time to a study of the British Indians in Natal who form by common consent one of the most loyal and law-abiding sections of Hi Majesty's subjects. And we hope with the rest of the community that His Excellency and family will enjoy their visit to the Garden Colony and carry with them pleasant recollections.

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

407. THE BUBONIG PLAGUE

Plague has come to stay. It is the annual messenger which, year after year, comes as a warning against darkness, filth and overcrowding. Wherever it has once appeared, it has hitherto unfailingly reappeared with more or less regularity. News has arrived that it has travelled as far as Chinde². From there to Durban is not a far cry. It, therefore, behoves every good citizen to take the necessary precautions to ward off the Send. There should be no disguising of the fact that Indians are more susceptible to the ravages of plague than other communities, even as are the whites more liable to catch typhoid fever than the Indians. The latter, therefore, have to be doubly careful. All the surroundings of dwelling-houses and business premises should be kept perfectly clean. People should get as much light, sun and air as possible, and all

¹ An obvious mistake far 'the Transvaal', which Lord Selborne had toured earlier in the week. *Vide* the preceding item.

² A sea-port in Portuguese East Africa, to the north of Durban

suspected cases should be promptly reported to the authorities. These few simple precautions would be far more effective than a large expenditure, or, rather, waste of money, after the disease has once made its appearance. Leaders of the Indian community have in this respect a clear duty to perform. Every educated Indian has a unique privilege: he can become a missionary in hygiene and sanitation.

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

408. *THE SALT TAX*

A rumour is afloat that, to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales to India next November as well as to pacify the Indian people, the salt tax is entirely to be abolished. Every Indian sincerely hopes that this is well founded and will prove true.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

409. *SIR HENRY LAWRENCE*

This great man was born in Ceylon on June 28, 1806. As he was born in the city of Matara¹, in jest, his mother called him “the Jewel of Matara”, and he proved to be a real jewel indeed. In 1823 he went to Calcutta, where he got employment in the Bengal Artillery. The first responsible work entrusted to him was during the First Burmese War². While discharging his duty during that war, he fell ill and had to go to England where, instead of passing his time in sports and amusements, he devoted it to study. He returned to India in 1830, and rejoined his battalion. He then studied Hindustani and Persian. He spent all his free time in solitude. One of his reasons for doing so was that he wanted to save as much money as possible for his mother. In the meanwhile, he was appointed to a very important and responsible post, where he fully utilized the knowledge he had acquired during his illness in England. The work entrusted to him was that of carrying out a survey in the North-West Province for the purpose of levying taxes from the people there. The real merits of Lawrence came to be known then. Though a soldier, he had a very tender and merciful heart. The survey work brought him into close contact with the poor, and this enabled him to understand the feelings and the manners and customs of the people. He became one of them

¹ A seaport in South Ceylon

² 1824-6

and mixed freely with them. As he was very hard-working and persevering, the idlers under him hated him. He did not hesitate to use compulsion against shirkers. Once it happened that one of the survey officers committed a blunder, to rectify which Lawrence ordered him to visit the place again. As the place was ten miles away, the surveyor hesitated to go. He was thereupon sent there in a litter. But despite this the man obstinately refused to work. So Lawrence made him sit on a mango tree, and posted two guards below with drawn swords. When the surveyor felt very thirsty and hungry, he begged pardon of Lawrence, agreed to do the work, and sought his permission to get down. After this the man shed this obstinate habit and began to do very good work under Lawrence.

We have heard that in the days of old, a brother was often ready to die for a brother, a friend for a friend, a mother for a son, sons for parents and a wife for her husband. But Lawrence acted in this manner in modern times. His elder brother had been taken prisoner in the Afghan War, and was released on parole for a few days by the Pathan Chief. He was bound to return after the period of parole was over. Considering that his brother's services were more useful, Lawrence offered to take his place in the prison. Although the brother refused to agree to the proposal, Lawrence as good as did it.

While Lawrence was serving as ambassador in Nepal, his kind-hearted wife spent her days in good works. At that time the two together erected, at their own expense, a big building at the foot of the Himalayas for bringing up and educating the sons of European soldiers. Similar institutions have since been built all over India, and all of them have been called Lawrence Asylums. In the Sikh War of 1846 Lawrence showed great valour. He readily complied with the orders to join active service within twenty-four hours, leaving his ailing wife behind. After the War, he did very good work as Her Majesty's representative in Lahore, for which knighthood was conferred upon him. When in 1849 it was proposed to annex the Punjab, Lawrence alone opposed it and stood up to a Governor-General of the calibre of Lord Dalhousie. Though he did not succeed, the Governor-General had so much confidence in him that he entrusted the main responsibility for work in the Punjab to him. For he had earlier come into very close contact with the Sikhs who greatly loved and admired him. It is because of this that the Punjab was pacified.

But the greatest service rendered by Lawrence was during the

Mutiny of 1857. By that time his health had broken down and he had already been sanctioned leave. But on the outbreak of the Mutiny, he at once proceeded to Lucknow instead of availing himself of the sanctioned leave. 927 Europeans and 765 Indian sepoy were involved in the Siege of Lucknow. Lawrence worked day and night and exacted work from the besieged men also. He sat on in his barracks, indifferent to cannon fire. On July 2, 1857, he was struck by a splinter from a cannon shot. The doctors told him that the wound was fatal and that he would not live more than forty-eight hours. In spite of the unbearable pain, he kept on giving orders. He breathed his last on July 4, praying: "Oh God! keep my heart pure. Thou alone art great. This world of Thine will certainly be pure some day. I am but a child, but it is through Thy strength that I can become strong. Always teach me meekness, justice, good-will and peace. I seek not the thoughts of men. Thou art my Judge; do Thou teach me Thy thoughts, for I fear Thee." He loved Indians greatly. He condemned the atrocities that were perpetrated at the time of the Mutiny and believed that every Englishman was a trustee for India. As trustees, the English were not to loot India, but to make the people prosperous, to teach them self-government and to make over the country to the Indian people in a prosperous state. The English people have progressed because men like Lawrence are born amongst them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 14-10-1905

410. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

JOHANNESBURG,

October 18, 1905

MY DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

I have received a telegram from Mr. Kitchin asking me to leave here so as to pass at least Sunday at Phoenix. He says he has sent a letter which I am to expect tomorrow evening. Much will depend upon the letter whether I shall leave or not. If I do, I shall leave on Friday morning, reach there¹ at 1.16 p.m. [and] take the train to Phoenix at 1.20. Please be at the station and be ready with my ticket

¹ Durban

also. You can buy excursion¹. I should leave Phoenix by the first train on Monday. The Durban clients will grumble, but it is not to be helped. Everything that you want to ask me, please put down on paper so that there can be nothing left undiscussed or undone. You may inform the people in Durban that it is possible I should thus leave, and tell them also that it will be impossible to give them anything but a few hours on Monday. It is impossible for me to prolong my stay. I need hardly say anything more. Please inform Mr. West and others.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

C. K. GANDHI ESQ.

c/o Indian Opinion

PHOENIX

From a photostat of the original: S. N. 4259

411. ANOTHER LICENSING CASE

Mr. Dada Osman², who has been in Natal for the last 15 years or more, is a landed proprietor who settled in Vryheid as a general merchant during the time of the Republican Government. He was allowed to trade in Vryheid unfettered up to the outbreak of hostilities, and now, after a single-handed struggle against the British power for over three years, finds himself face to face with ruin. And Dada Osman is a British subject! If a foreigner were to ask why a British subject should have British machinery put into operation against him in order to deprive him of his civic rights, he not being a criminal, the answer would be—such is the British Constitution. If it is very often strong to protect, it is also often powerless to defend against a palpable injustice. It is unbelievable that a man who has been lawfully trading for a long time should be deprived of the right of continuing his trade at the bidding of half-a-dozen of his competitors, who, being too cowardly to meet him in open competition, take advantage of temporary power placed in their hands to traduce their rival and ruin him. Yet that is what has happened in the present case. The Dealers' Licenses Act of Natal, to which copious reference has been made in these columns,³ places at the mercy of Local Boards,

¹ Return ticket

² *Vide* "Dada Osman's Case", 15-9-1898

³ *Vide* "The Dealers' Licenses Act", 3-3-1904 & "The Dealers' Licenses Act", 8-10-1904.

consisting of big traders, the smaller and the Indian traders. And the big traders have not hesitated to mercilessly use the power thus given them. The Act was passed to crush the Indian. When he is dead or gone, it will be used against the small white traders. Then will be a fight for the gods to see. The poor, humble Indian fights constitutionally. For a fight of that description, the Local Boards, in the intoxication of power suddenly placed in their hands, show supreme contempt.

In Mr. Dada Osman's case, there is not a shred of justification for the action of the Vryheid Board. He was the only Indian merchant in that township. His was not an application for a new licence. His business premises were kept in an exceptionally satisfactory condition. But because he wears a brown skin, the white members of the Board have closed his store without compensation, and, moreover, have rejected his solicitors' application for permission to keep his store open whilst he is trying to secure relief from a higher power. This is not a case of the Vryheid Local Board vs. Dada Osman. It is a case of white British subjects and white foreigners against the British Indian community. It is in that light that every Indian merchant has to look at the case; and it is in the same light that Mr. Lyttelton will have to examine it.

Indian Opinion, 21-10-1905

412. THE EVILS OF SMOKING

The Government of South Australia has noticed that smoking, besides consuming a lot of money, badly undermines the health of the people. More harm is done by cigarettes than by cigars, for the former, being smaller and cheaper, are consumed in excess. The Government therefore propose to introduce a Bill prohibiting the manufacture and sale of cigarettes.

The evil habit of smoking cigarettes has nowadays become very widespread among us, both young and old. This is sheer imitation of the English. Formerly, people were no doubt in the habit of smoking *bidis* or country cigarettes, but they used to keep it within limits. They felt ashamed of smoking any and everywhere. They did it at specific times and that, too, in privacy. It was considered lack of decency to smoke publicly in the streets at all hours of the day, and people rarely smoked outside their homes. Hence the saying about tobacco, that it spoils "a corner [in the house] of one who chews it, the whole house of one who smokes it, and the clothes of one who sniffs it". But the English today never mind smoking anywhere and everywhere, and we

too are copying them. When the people in a country like South Australia have begun to realise the harm done by smoking, we also, we hope, will learn a lesson and come to some decision in the matter.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 21-10-1905

413. RAJA SIR T. MADHAV RAO

Sir T. Madhav Rao was born in 1828 in the city of Kumbakonam¹. His father, Shri R. Langa Rao, had been the Dewan of Travancore, and his uncle, Rai R. Venkat Rao, had been the Dewan as well as Revenue Commissioner of Travancore. Sir Madhav Rao had spent his childhood and received his education in Madras. He studied at Presidency College [Madras] under Mr. Powell. Madhav Rao was a hard-working student, and was proficient in Mathematics and Science. He had learnt astronomy while sitting on the stairs of Mr. Powell's house, and he made a microscope and a telescope from bamboo with his own hands.

Unwilling to part with such an intelligent student, Mr. Powell appointed him Professor of Mathematics and Physics under himself. Later, Madhav Rao got a good post in the office of the Accountant-General, and after some time, on being invited to work as a tutor to the princes of Travancore, he accepted the offer. This was how he entered, for the first time, the service of a Native State. The princes in his charge became good students, and their career as rulers also proved to be very successful. After working as a tutor for four years, he was given the responsible post of an assistant to the Dewan. He was later appointed Deputy Dewan, in which post he earned a good name. The State had been in a very bad condition. The late Mr. J. Bruce Norton has said of him: "He was a great scholar and a political administrator. In the short space of a year he established peace in the land. To everyone he meted out justice without fear or favour. He greatly reduced theft, treachery and deceit."

The Dewan of Travancore was a very weak man, and the Maharaja too was ill-informed. He did not know how the administration was going on, and the officers of the State too had become debased and corrupt. Their salary, moreover, was very low and sometimes fell into arrears for months. The loan advanced by the British Government had not yet been repaid, and the treasury was

¹ In Madras State

empty. The taxes being heavy, trade was in a very bad state and the people were reduced to utter poverty. This caught the attention of Lord Dalhousie¹ who resolved to take over the administration of the State on behalf of the British Government and proceeded to Octacamund with a view to annexing the State to Madras Presidency. At this time, the Maharaja appointed Madhav Rao to the post of Dewan and he successfully pleaded with the British Government to give him seven years' time to improve the State administration. In this way, at the early age of 30, by dint of personal effort and honesty, Madhav Rao attained a distinguished position. The notable event of his career as Dewan pertained to the State revenues. The State finances were in a bad way when he took charge as Dewan. He abolished the excessive land revenue and other taxes imposed in the past as they were harmful to the prosperity of the people. He also abolished the system of monopoly for revenue collection. He met the deficit in the annual revenues by levying an export duty of 15 per cent. on all goods. As the State went on prospering, he gradually reduced the rate of this duty and brought it down to 5 per cent. Next he abolished the monopoly in tobacco also and permitted State subjects to buy it directly from outside, replacing the former system of Government first buying it at its own risk from the contractors and then selling it to the people. The tariff burden being thus made light, imports received much encouragement. He then removed many other petty taxes and cesses as they did not yield much revenue and were also harmful to the prosperity of the merchants. He reduced, at one stroke, the very heavy land tax in a certain village. In 1865, on behalf of Travancore, he entered into a trade agreement with the British Government and the Government of Cochin, as a result of which the customs duty on goods imported from British Indian and Cochin territories was abolished for the most part.

In appreciation of his able administration the British Government conferred upon him the title of K.C.S.I. When this title was ceremoniously conferred upon him before a large gathering in Madras, Lord Napier spoke highly of him. In 1872, Madhav Rao resigned his post. During his tenure he established an orderly government in place of misrule, and thereby ensured security of life and property for the subjects. He constructed huge and massive buildings, thus giving encouragement to the artisans. He had many works of public utility executed and promoted agriculture by reducing land revenue. But for Madhav Rao, the State of Travancore

¹ Marquess of Dalhousie, (1812-60), Governor-General of India, 1848-56

would have been lost to the Maharaja. Madhav Rao did for Travancore what Pericles did for Athens and Oliver Cromwell for England. He was offered a seat in the Imperial Legislative Council, but did not accept it.

A little later Maharaja Tukojirao Holkar of Indore¹ requested the British Government to give him an able Dewan. When the Government offered the services of Madhav Rao, the Maharaja accepted them for a period of two years. The most noteworthy work he did there was the formulation of the Indore Penal Code. During the two years he held office, he did many good things for the people and raised the State to prosperity.

About this time Malhar Rao Gaekwar of Baroda had been deposed for maladministration of the State, and the offer was made to Madhav Rao of the post of Administrator of the State, which he accepted. Baroda was then in a very perilous condition. Treachery, murder and rioting were rampant everywhere. There was discord among the people, life and property were unsafe, and a strong man was needed to restore peace and order. The monopoly of collecting State revenues was vested in big *Sardars*². Money-lenders tyrannized over the people with the aid of the police. The State was brimming over with intrigue and conspiracy, and there was no end of lawlessness. But Sir Madhav Rao was not discouraged. He conducted the administration ably. Troublesome intriguers were banished from the State. The *Sardars* and the *Sahukars*³ were deprived of their monopolies, and the State revenue was placed on a sound footing. The land revenue sepoys were withdrawn and assigned civil duties. The courts of law were reorganised to ensure justice. Libraries were opened. Efficient men were called in from Bombay and Madras and the standards of the services raised. The narrow lanes in Baroda were demolished and burnt down so that beautiful buildings could take their place. Gardens were laid out and a museum was constructed. In this way, he went on for years without any respite, introducing one reform after another. In 1882 the British Government conferred upon him the title of Raja. In appreciation of his services the Maharaja Gaekwar gave him a gift of three lakhs of rupees. From then on he lived in retirement as a private citizen. Even during his retirement he did public work whenever the occasion demanded. He devoted a great deal of attention to education and pleaded for women's education. He

¹ An erstwhile Princely State, now merged in Madhya Pradesh

² Chieftains, big landlords

³ Money-lenders

was in correspondence with Prince Bismarck of Germany. His career was considered illustrious not only in India, but in Europe also. India has known few such administrators. This illustrious son of India breathed his last on April 4, 1891, at the age of 62.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 21-10-1905

414. ADDRESS TO PROFESSOR PARMANAND

JOHANNESBURG,
*October 27, 1905*¹

TO

PROFESSOR PARMANAND, M.A ., ETC.

JOHANNESBURG

DEAR SIR,

We, the undersigned, on behalf of the Reception Committee, hereby extend to you a hearty welcome to Johannesburg.

You, Sir, belong to a band of self-sacrificing workers whom the Arya Samaj has given to India. You, in common with your fellow-workers, have given your lifetime to the cause of Religion and Education. We, therefore, feel honoured in honouring you.

We hope that your brief visit to South Africa will result in the Arya Samaj deciding to send some self-sacrificing educationists to work among the Indians in South Africa. Proper education is one of the greatest wants of the Indian community in South Africa.

We hope that you will enjoy your stay among us and carry with you pleasant recollections.

We remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

M. S. PILLAY,

V. M.

MUDLIAR

MULJI PATEL,

G. A. DESAI,

B. DAYALJI,

CHAIRMAN,

N. V. PILLAY,

N. A. NAIDOO,

S. A.

MUDLIAR,

C. P. LUCHERAM,

V. G. MAHARAJ,

S. P. PATHER,

M. A.

¹ It is reported in *Indian Opinion*, 4-11-1905, that the address was presented at a meeting on October 28, when Prof. Parmanand delivered the first of his lectures. Gandhiji was present and interpreted the Chairman's speech.

PADIACHY,

C. KEVALRAM,

TRIKAMDAS

BROS.,

M. K. GANDHI

Indian Opinion, 4-11-1905

415. HISTORY OF THE PLAGUE IN JOHANNESBURG

The long-promised report of the bubonic plague that broke out in Johannesburg last year is now published. It is a bulky volume covering one hundred and three pages, and containing many charts giving a graphic report of the epidemic. Dr. Pakes, the author of the report has given an immense amount of labour to the work, and has presented to the public a very learned disquisition. The most interesting part of the report must necessarily be the origin of the plague, and while, if the premises laid down by Dr. Pakes were correct, the conclusions drawn by him would be justified we fear that many of his most important premises are totally incorrect.

It is, perhaps, extremely unfortunate that a proper judicial inquiry was not made as to the origin of the plague before so much valuable time and money were spent over the report. In giving the startling reason that Dr. Pakes has done, he has run counter to the findings of the Vienna Commission, as also the Commission that was appointed by the Natal Government when the plague first broke out in Natal as also, indeed, to the cablegram that was received by the late Mr. Escombe from the Indian Government. Dr. Pakes contends that "the origin of the first cases was the plague-infected rice imported from Bombay". The authorities we have just quoted came to the conclusion that rice was not a carrier of plague infection. Amongst the premises that have led Dr. Pakes to his conclusion are that the first cases were those of store-keepers, that the Indian store-keepers were importing rice from Bombay in December 1903, that they said very definitely "this rice contained rat-droppings", and that no special precautions were taken at Bombay to prevent the export of probably and possibly infected rice.

Now, unfortunately for Dr. Pakes' theory, all these premises are without foundation. The very first mistake that has been committed in drawing up the report is to accept only the official date of the outbreak, and to ignore the whole of the previously known history. It was then contended, indeed proved beyond doubt, that

plague had existed in Johannesburg before the 18th March. In spite of the correspondence ¹ that was brought to the notice of the plague authorities in their official capacity, Dr. Pakes has seen fit to ignore the whole of it in his report. He has also ignored the case of the late Dr. Marais, which points unmistakably to the existence of the plague long before he himself succumbed to it. The theory, therefore, that the plague started with store-keepers falls to the ground. Nay, more, the two names given by Dr. Pakes as those of store-keepers were not those of store-keepers at all, as we happen to know. The first cases, taking the outbreak as from the 18th March, were amongst the labourers who came from the mines.

We should very much like to know where the information, that rice was being imported from Bombay, comes from. As a rule, rice is not imported from Bombay but from Calcutta, and, even when it does come from Bombay, the bags are made up in Calcutta. It is a serious reflection upon the Indian Government to state that no special precautions are taken at Bombay to prevent the export of probably and possibly infected rice. Those who know anything of Indian travelling know that precautions taken at Bombay are very severe. Therefore, all the material premises leading to the conclusion that Dr. Pakes has arrived at are not, in our opinion, capable of being proved. How is it, again, that Johannesburg had remained free from the plague in spite of rice having been imported by Indians before also ? For it is not to be contended that rice was for the first time introduced into Johannesburg in 1904. What the real cause of the epidemic was will probably never be known, but so long as it is not found, so long will measures to prevent an outbreak fail. We do not suggest that there will be a recurrence in Johannesburg, for the plague epidemic, in an altitude so high as that of Johannesburg, is hardly possible, except under the most aggravating circumstances. In spite of his usual fairness, we fear that Dr. Pakes has failed to do justice in entirely ignoring the Herculean efforts that were made by the Indian community to prevent an outbreak of plague by placing at the disposal of the authorities all the information of suspected cases, as also warning them of the state of the Location after it passed into the hands of the Municipality. We feel that Dr. Pakes has shirked the real issue by giving extracts from the evidence of Dr. Porter before the Insanitary Area Commission in his work as to the then state of the Indian Location. The measures that were taken to eradicate the

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Dr. Porter", 11-2-1904 /15-2-1904 & Letter to Dr. Porter, 18-3-1904.

outbreak are all accurately described in the report in question, and they reflect very high credit on the worthy Doctor and his assistants. The manner in which the Location and the Johannesburg Market were dealt with was worthy of very high praise, and it was no doubt due to the energetic action taken by Dr. Pakes and his able assistant, Dr. Mackenzie, that the disease was so promptly stamped out.

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

416. A CORRECTION

The Potchefstroom Budget has noticed our remarks on Lord Selborne's speech wherein His Excellency has promised in his official capacity that no Indians except those who were here before the war will be admitted into the Transvaal until the introduction of representative government. Our contemporary says:

This is a new phase of the 'grievances', and is evidently the initiation of a policy which will do much to alienate the sympathy that has been extended to the Indians already here by the moderate section of the white population. If they are wise they will refrain, in their own interests, from forcing us to believe that, after all, their ultimate aim is to make the Transvaal a dumping ground for thousands of Indian subjects. *Indian Opinion* talks glibly about an attempt to drive every Indian out of the Colony. As far as the Potchefstroom policy is concerned, this is absolutely untrue, because it has been amply proved that the desire of the people of this district is to show the utmost consideration to the Indians holding vested rights by reason of their old established businesses. When, however, we are asked to tolerate an importation that will tend only to perpetuate an undoubted evil, the spirit of moderation will, we fear, be eliminated.

We are quite at a loss to perceive how the importation of a few necessary clerks can be "making the Transvaal a dumping ground for thousands of Indian subjects", but it is perhaps too much to expect the *Budget* to view the Asiatic question with even a modicum of common sense. The justice of our remarks is, surely, self-evident. The entire shutting out of new Indians would mean the ultimate driving out of most Indians from that Colony; and, however desirable such a consummation may be to a section of the Transvaal population, we can scarcely be expected to view the matter in quite the same light. We make bold to say that there is absolutely nothing in our remarks to justify the inference above mentioned. We have never advocated that the Transvaal should be made a dumping ground for Indians. But we do maintain that, if elementary justice is to be done, Indians already residing in the Transvaal ought to be allowed to draw upon India for a

necessary supply of clerks and such assistants, whether they are old residents of the Transvaal or not. These men can only number a very few per year. Our contemporary may not know that such facility is given even in the self-governing Colonies of the Cape and Natal, where also there are restriction laws. We have no hesitation in saying that to deny the right of Indian merchants to depend upon India for necessary skilled assistance is undoubtedly to contemplate slow starvation of the already resident Indian population. The position we have laid down is by no means novel. We refer the *Budget* to Lord Milner's despatch wherein he has most clearly laid down that Indians of education, means and ability should not be prevented from entering the Transvaal, whether they be new immigrants or not.

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

417. THE NELSON CENTENARY : A LESSON¹

Horatio Nelson was the name that last week resounded from one end of the Empire to the other. The celebrations that took place on the 21st day of this month suggest very serious reflections, and to the Indian mind they should vividly show the secret of Britain's success. Max Müller has acknowledged in his writings that in Indian philosophy the meaning of life is summed up in four letters spelt—DUTY. Probably at the present day such a meaning of life is not apparent in the conduct of the average Indian. A contemplation of Lord Nelson's life, then, presents in a most striking manner an illustration of duty lived from first to last.

The historic signal "England expects that every man will do his duty" is enshrined in the British heart. The signal was sanctified by the unflinching performance of its author, and has been hallowed by a century of its translation into deeds. The measure of England's success is the measure of her people's acceptance of Nelson's signal in the conduct of their own lives. If the sun never sets on the Empire, of which Nelson was one of the founders, it is because her sons have hitherto followed the path of duty.

Nelson is worshipped today as no other man is worshipped in the Empire, not because he was a naval hero, not because he was a man who never received an answer to his question as to what fear was,² but because he was a living embodiment of duty. To him his country

¹ This was published as "By an Indian".

² Vide "How England Won", 28-10-1905

was first—he himself was last. He fought because that was his duty. No wonder that his men followed where he led them. He it was who made England Mistress of the Seas. But he was much more. There was no self-interest in his service. His patriotism was of the purest type.

In a continent like South Africa, where there are constant deflections from the straight path shown by Nelson, it is well to remind ourselves of a life like his. It ought to sober down prejudices. It ought to set us all thinking more of our responsibility than of our rights. To the Indian especially, if the somewhat disagreeable life in South Africa embitters him against the Englishman who judges him harshly, the events of the past week should reassure him that they are still countrymen of Nelson's, and that they cannot quite forsake the path of duty so long as they cherish Horatio Nelson's memory. Herein there is reason for hope and an incentive to love Britain in spite of the faults of Britishers.

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

418. DEALERS' LICENSES ACT

Last week we related the sad story of the hardships and indignities showered on Mr. Dada Osman.¹ It is necessary to consider from time to time how to protect ourselves against such a downpour. The whites have fully girded up their loins. No wonder if the tyranny let loose in Vryheid today is repeated in another village tomorrow. No Indian trader can for a moment confidently say that his licence will be renewed from year to year. We have shown elsewhere how influential white men like Dr. Campbell² have been doggedly pursuing us with cudgels in their hands. If we sit back at such a time, we shall be washed away by the flood. To wake up when it is too late would be like digging a well after the house has caught fire. The Indian traders, whether big or small, should immediately make it public whenever they encounter any difficulty in obtaining their licences. It is the duty of the Congress to appoint a special Licences Committee to investigate cases in which traders are deprived of their licences. It should be the duty of such a Committee to go from village to village and record such cases. We believe that this journal reaches and is read in every village. We can cope with the work properly only if the following details are sent to us regarding persons who have been unable to get

¹ *Vide* "Another Licensing Case", 21-10-1905

² Dr. S. G. Campbell, a leader of the Europeans in Natal

their licences:

1. the name of the person who has been refused a licence;
2. the place for which the licence was sought;
3. whether or not the person carried on trade before;
4. if he did, where;
5. whether the shop is owned by him or taken out on rent;
6. whether the structure is built of brick or tin: if possible, a pencil sketch should be attached;
7. the amount of the capital declared;
8. the arrangements for keeping account books;
9. whether there are any white merchants' shops in the vicinity, if there are, how distant;
10. the number of Indian traders in the village;
11. the reason given by the Licensing Officer for refusing a licence;
12. whether an appeal was preferred to the Local Board against the decision of the Licensing Officer;
13. all relevant originals or copies of documents, such as the application, the reply received, etc. to be enclosed;
14. if any certificates from well-known Europeans are available, these also should be sent;
15. all these documents should be sent in an envelope addressed to the Gujarati Editor, *Indian Opinion*, Phoenix, with the superscription "Regarding Licences" in a corner, in Gujarati.

If well-known people carefully send the above information from various places, we believe much good will come out of it. This work can be very easily done without money or labour. We intend to use the information in our English columns as well as in our communications to the Government in the matter.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

419. BRAVE BENGAL

Bengal seems to have truly woken up this time. News is received every week that the more the Government is adamant on partitioning Bengal, the more determined the Bengalis are in their

opposition. On the very day¹ the Government installed with great pomp and ceremony the new Governor at Dacca, the Bengalis observed *hartal*² in Calcutta and held a mammoth meeting attended by 100,000 men and laid the foundation stone of the Federation Hall, thus demonstrating their solidarity. The movement to buy and use only *swadeshi* goods is rapidly gathering strength.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

420. OUR DUTY

It has come to our knowledge that some Indians are offended by our article on the plague. We are sorry, but not surprised. We should rather be complimented on drawing attention to the subject, but we are being blamed because we do not hesitate to mention others' faults. Thanks to the plague, many villages in India have been laid waste, numerous families entirely wiped out, and people are running in fright from one place to another. Wherever there has been plague outside India, our people have largely been responsible for importing it, and its quick eradication from those parts has been due to the fact that the task of combating it is generally in the hands of other people. What is the duty of the Press, that is, our duty, on such an occasion ? We could easily win the applause of the people by suppressing their faults. But we would fail utterly in our duty if we did so. Our duty is to serve the people. While championing their rights, if we happen to observe any of their shortcomings, we must bring these to their notice. If instead of doing so we went on flattering them, we would be playing the part of an enemy. As we said at the very outset, we shall boldly defend our people if our opponents speak ill of them; but at the same time, if we notice any shortcomings in our people, we shall fearlessly expose them to the public gaze and urge their removal. Who will do this if we don't ? We have never cherished, nor do we do so now, the idea of doing anything simply to please others. It is our duty to administer the bitter pill. It is quite obvious that, when plague breaks out amongst us, it clearly leads to loss of life; more than that, it means a blow to the whole community. We must not forget how the entire community was affected when plague broke out in Durban,

¹ October 16, 1905

² General strike

Cape Town and Johannesburg.¹ The easiest way to deal with plague is to notify a case as soon as it occurs. When plague broke out in Bombay for the first time in 1896, neither the people nor the doctors did anything to suppress it. If the necessary steps had been taken in time, it is possible that hundreds of thousands of lives that were lost might have been saved. Plague can be rooted out even now if people are properly educated in this matter. There are certain reasons why this has not been possible in India. The people there are poor and ignorant, but here they are not. The people who travel five thousand miles, live amidst unfriendly folk and earn their bread cannot by any means be considered ignorant. If, living in this country, we do not learn how to deal with this contagious disease, we have only our obstinacy to thank. It is, we believe, the supreme duty of those who are in a position to offer guidance in such matters to enlighten people and lead them along the right path. We say this without the least fear; for whatever we have written so far will have been in vain if we try to flatter our readers out of fear. We have been repeatedly telling people to stick to their resolve, to remain courteous under all circumstances, and to discharge their duties courageously. We are publishing the biographical sketches of brave men and women like Sir Henry Lawrence and Elizabeth Fry and exhorting our readers to follow the examples of those heroic souls. In the end, we appeal to all our readers to take our writings in the spirit in which they are written. It is possible that we might unwittingly commit mistakes in the course of our public service. We shall be grateful if those who notice any such draw our attention to them.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

421. AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN

The Government of Australia seem to have realized the strength of Japan. A Government communique recently issued says that students and traders from Japan, going on a tour of that country, will be freely admitted. They have also declared their intention so to amend their Immigration Law as not to hurt the feelings of Japan. This might benefit Indians too. So far and wide have the roots of Japanese victory spread that we cannot now visualize all the fruit it will

¹ Vide "The Plague Panic in South Africa", 20-3-1899 & "The Plague", 9-7-1903.

put forth. The people of the East seem to be waking up from their lethargy.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

422. AN ABLE INDIAN

The Daily Mail, a well-known English paper, has narrated a story of great loyalty shown by an Indian in India. He was a surveyor named Khan Bahadur Mohiuddin. It fell to his lot in 1903 to survey arid waste land in Rajputana. He had with him four messengers, four assistant surveyors and two camels. Once, travelling at night, they found their water-bag burst and all the water drained. The messengers advised return, but brave Mohiuddin was not the man to turn back. He sent one of the messengers in search of water, which was fetched but was found to be exceedingly brackish. Marching on they came upon some water which, however, soon gave out. The Khan Bahadur had by then become absorbed in deep thought. The camel-drivers were tied to the camels, and the animals allowed to go as they pleased, for meanwhile the men had fainted, owing to thirst. At last they came to a watering-place and regained consciousness. When in search of water thus, Mohiuddin strayed from his men, and ultimately, lost his life while doing his duty. However, infected with his enthusiasm, the men bravely completed the task. We rarely come across examples of such bravery and devotion to duty. The Khan Bahadur's body was given an honourable burial and his companions, who survived him, were handsomely rewarded by the Government.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

423. HOW ENGLAND WON

“What is fear ? I’ve never seen it.” The boy who asked this question of his grandmother has made England a world power.

We must often wonder why the British rule over us. Perhaps we often look upon them with hatred. We feel how nice it would be if India were independent.

An answer to such questions and aspirations was had last week.

Horatio Nelson died on October 21, 1805. His death centenary was celebrated on the 21st of this month wherever the Union Jack

flies. He was born on September 29, 1758. This means that at the time of his death he was only 47. Few men in the world have done what Nelson did while yet so young; rare was the daring he showed and the tasks he performed. Togo¹ is said to have done something similar for Japan. But his victories being very recent, their consequences are not yet apparent. Our minds are not yet calm, and we cannot therefore appreciate them correctly.

“What is fear ?” Nelson asked the question of his grandmother when he was hardly twelve. The grandmother could give no reply, and all his life he knew no fear. At twelve he began going out to sea and doing brave deeds such as few men could do.

In 1789 the Revolution broke out in France. Napoleon Bonaparte came to the fore. He was determined to conquer all Europe. And he would have done it too, it is said, but for Nelson. In fact England alone remained unconquered. Napoleon told his Captains: “Hold the English Channel clear for me only for six hours, and I will conquer England.” But Nelson foiled his hopes. A fierce battle ensued between the French and the English navies. In the three great engagements that took place, Nelson successively lost an arm, an eye and, finally, his life.

The biggest of these was the Battle of Trafalgar.² If England sustained a defeat this time, she would lose prestige. Nelson was well aware of this and had made the necessary preparations. The officers and men under him all but worshipped him. There was not a danger that he had not himself braved. When in the Battle of the Nile³ he lost an arm, Nelson busied himself with caring for the wounded utterly regardless of his own pain. So daring was he. He was determined not to own defeat as long as a single British sailor was alive. His army was inspired by the same spirit. In his flagship, *The Invincible*, he roared like a lion. The crucial battle was fought on October 19. Nelson unfurled his flag and sent round the word: “England expects every man will do his duty.” A French ship and Nelson’s ship fell upon each other; there was a torrent of cannon fire; Nelson was wounded. He had himself carried to his cabin. He covered his badges, etc., with his hands so that no one should know that it was Nelson who had been wounded. The battle continued. In spite of unbearable pain, he went

¹ Admiral leading the Japanese fleet that defeated the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War, 1905. Vide “Japan and Russia”, 10-6-1905

² In which the French fleet was destroyed and Nelson killed, 1805

³ 1798, when Nelson defeated the French

on issuing orders. He was informed that the French were losing one ship after another and England was winning. Thus, doing his duty, he breathed his last with the words: "Thank God! I have done my duty".

Since then the English navy has remained supreme. Napoleon's hopes were shattered, and the English grew in strength. Though no more, Nelson is immortal. All his deeds and sayings are deeply engraved in the hearts of the English people, and even today they sing his praise. During the celebrations last week, it seemed as if Nelson had risen from his grave after a hundred years.

It is no wonder that a nation that produces such heroes and cherishes their memory with such care, rises high and enjoys prosperity.

We should not envy the nation, but emulate its example. Those who have faith in God recognize that the British do not rule over India without His will. This too is a divine law that those who rule do so because of the good deeds they have done before. Let us therefore emulate them in their deeds so that our aspirations may be fulfilled.

Let us be as courageous as Nelson and like him know what our duty is. Let us also be patriotic like the nation to which Nelson belonged. Let us forget all thoughts of 'I a Hindu, you a Muslim;' or 'I a Gujarati, you a Madrasi.' Let us sink "I" and "mine" in a common Indian nationality. We shall be free only when a large number of our people are determined to swim or sink together. How can we walk without a staff so long as we are lame?

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

424. THE EVILS OF TEA

The Southwark Council in England has had an inquiry made into the benefits or otherwise of tea. We give below some of the notable facts collected.

The Chinese began taking tea in the ninth century and have done so ever since. Tea was first introduced into England in 1660. By the eighteenth century it had spread all over the country, and at the turn of that century, twenty million pounds of tea were imported into England every year. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the *per-capita* [annual consumption of tea in England was a pound and a half, but during the last decade, the consumption has increased so

much that it now comes to six pounds.

The first to raise his voice against tea was the famous John Wesley. He was a very great religious preacher. He was subject to fits of giddiness; but he did not suspect that it was due to tea, because everyone thought it wholly beneficial. Once, all of a sudden, he swooned and fell down and then resolved to give up tea; his giddiness ceased. Sir Andrew Clarke, a famous doctor, has said that tea weakens the nerves. Thousands of women in England, it is reported, have been suffering for years; they have headaches, they have cramps in their legs and suffer from giddiness—all this is mainly ascribed to the tea habit. The officer in charge of the Southwark inquiry says that tea becomes all the more injurious if it is boiled. It is best of course to do without it; but if the habit cannot be given up, the best way of making tea is to pour boiling water over the tea leaves, and immediately pour it out into a cup. The brew should not at all be red, it should rather be the colour of hay.

Among us the custom of taking tea is of recent origin. In India, there is no need for it, but if, in imitation of the whites, people do want to have some drink, they should instead drink coffee or cocoa which are less harmful.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

425. SIR THOMAS MUNRO

Sir Thomas Munro was born at Glasgow in the month of May, 1761. In 1780, he took service under the East India Company at Madras. At that time, the condition of the British in India was very precarious. Hyder Ali was preparing to oust them. The English employees of the Company were quarrelling among themselves. At this juncture, Munro rendered valuable service.

After he had been engaged for five years in military campaigns, he took up a civil post. He was appointed in the Revenue Department in Berhampur Taluk. Like Sir Henry Lawrence, he also took full advantage of this opportunity, and lived among the people. He was available to them at all times. He used to go out for walks with them, and listened to the long tales of the poor peasants, their joys and sorrows. He used to talk with the people unaccompanied by any clerk or peon, and lived a very simple life. In one of his letters, he says: "Today I made my porridge from wheat flour instead of oat meal, and tomorrow also, I do not think I shall take anything besides

8plantains. I am at present continuously touring village after village, fixing the land revenue to be collected from the ryots. I cannot think of doing anything else. I do not get even an hour's respite for personal work. Even as I am writing this, there are a dozen persons sitting beside me. They started coming in at seven in the morning. It is now twelve." In this way, Munro worked for seven years in the districts, pleased the people and at the same time put Government revenue on a sound basis. It was now that he was entrusted with an even more responsible job. He was placed in charge of the Kanara Taluk. Though the climate of the place was very bad, he worked without any respite for 26 months out of a sense of duty. Every day he spent as many as ten hours listening to the people's grievances. He says how, living in a small tent, in the midst of the people, he could win their hearts more easily than by living in a fine bungalow by the seaside, and how they were becoming loyal subjects. His bed consisted of a bamboo cot, a mattress and a pillow. As soon as he got up in the morning, he came out and was occupied in talking to the groups of people that were always there waiting for him. After breakfast, he issued instructions to the men under him and attended to the correspondence. Then he went to the office. He had tiffin at five in the afternoon, and again he resumed work at eight o'clock, the discussions, at times, going on till midnight. After he had dispensed peace and happiness to the people in the Kanara Taluk, he was given a more important post in the Nizam's territory. The people there had been reduced to utter poverty by famines in previous years. Brigandage and robbery were rampant, and bad characters had become all powerful. By his courage and determination Munro raised the state to prosperity.

Having served thus for twenty-seven years, Munro went home on leave. In England he got married. He returned to India as Chairman of the Commission appointed to inquire into the working of the Judicial Department of Madras Presidency. He gave effective expression to his sympathy for the Indians, and recommended that they should be appointed to higher posts in the Judicial Department. The work of the Commission was interrupted by the Maratha War of 1817, in which he became absorbed. Though the army under him was untrained and inadequate, it was wholly loyal to him, thanks to his popularity with the people. Munro became so engrossed in the War, and underwent so much physical strain that his health broke down, and on the termination of the war in 1819, he went back to England. In 1820 he was knighted and again came out to India as Governor of 8Madras. He held this post till the very end of his life. Even when he

was Governor, he worked as hard and lived as simply as before. He went out for walks alone and saw any one who sought an interview. Whenever there was an opportunity, he appointed or promoted Indians to responsible posts. This kind-hearted Governor died of cholera in 1827. He was never motivated by self interest. He was always keen on finding out what his duty was and how he could discharge it. He had boundless love for Indians. He fully deserved the title "Friend of the Ryot". There have been such simple and kind-hearted Englishmen in the past, and some are to be found even now. That is why, despite many blemishes, the star of British rule keeps on shining bright.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 28-10-1905

426. A PAINFUL DISCOVERY

The Prisons Reform Commission gives rise to many misgivings as to the condition of indentured Indians on some of the estates in Natal. At Verulam recently, according to a Reuter telegram published in the *Transvaal Leader*, evidence was given by gaol officials to the effect that it is customary with certain estates employing large numbers of Indians to get their coolies, when ill, convicted of some minor offence in order that they may be cured of their sickness at the expense of the Government and returned fit for work. Had such a charge been made by an outsider, he would undoubtedly have been hooted out of court, so inhuman and unbelievable does it appear at first sight. We ourselves are loth to credit it but those who have given the testimony must have spoken with a full sense of responsibility, and we may assume that they have rather understated than overstated facts. The matter is too serious to be left where it is. And it is a serious thing also that the public of Natal should get the first news of so grave an allegation from outside its borders. We believe the Natal Press has been wholly silent on this matter, though *The Natal Mercury* noticed in an editorial note the shocking state of the Verulam gaol. We must be content to wait the usual length of time for the publication of the Report before we can know exactly what the evidence was.

We have said we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the charge can be generally sustained, but while thinking it somewhat improbable, we cannot forget the hideous things that were brought to light by a Commission on the treatment of indentured Indians in British Guiana about forty years ago. Then, things far more inhuman

and unbelievable were proved to have occurred, and not in isolated instances. The treatment of sick Indians especially was peculiarly bad, and that in spite of excellent laws for their protection. This can be to some extent understood when it is remembered that a sick indentured Indian is a dead weight on his employer. It is to be hoped that the estate-owners will themselves insist on a thorough investigation for the sake of their fair name. It is not right that the misdeeds of one or two—if the charge be proven— should reflect on others whose aim it is to treat their indentured and helpless employees not only with justice but with something more.

Indian Opinion, 4-11-1905

427. *DIVIDE AND RULE*

The title of this article is a maxim as old as the hills, and the policy underlying the maxim was enunciated by a British statesman in connection with British rule in India. The cablegram from India that has appeared lately in the newspapers brings the aphorism vividly home to us. It is said that twenty thousand Mahomedans at Dacca, the capital of the new province partitioned from Bengal, assembled together and offered prayers of thanksgiving to the Almighty for the partition, and their consequent deliverance from Hindu oppression. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the movement could possibly be spontaneous. It is absurd on the face of it. Assuming that there was any oppression on the part of the Hindus, relief could be obtained without partition, because the might of the British power was there to protect one community against another. It is, therefore, we consider, a response to the very powerful agitation that has been set up in Bengal against partition. The boycott has spread with an intensity never known before. It has permeated classes as well as masses, and, if it is nursed long enough, it bids fair to weld together all the communities in Bengal, not excluding the Mahomedans. Those, therefore, who believe in the maxim above quoted, naturally wanted an antidote and they have found it amongst a few Mahomedans in Dacca. It is short-sighted statesmanship to contemplate the government of millions of human beings on the principle of setting one class against another. We know that such a suggestion would be vehemently repudiated, and we know also that pure British statesmanship would revolt against the idea. At the same time, the policy itself is deep rooted, has been followed before with

temporary effect, and the *tamasha*¹ in Dacca is but a continuation of it. If the Anglo-Indian administrators, who have really built up the Indian Empire, and who depended for its continuance on the goodwill of the people, were to rise from their graves today, they, in our opinion, would be the first to encourage the boycott agitation, at the same time, conciliating public opinion, which has become so excited. What can be more natural than for the people to wish to clothe themselves, to feed themselves, and to supply their luxuries out of home-grown products and home manufactures ? We see such movements worked out more extensively in many Colonies. It is a legitimate and healthy growth amongst the people, not in the slightest degree inconsistent with a feeling of loyalty to the British Crown. It is only a fulfilment of the prophecy uttered by Macaulay in connection with India.

But, if the rulers of India will not see the reasonableness of the movement, why should not the Indians ? It is true that, to a certain extent, the introduction of British rule was possible by reason of internal dissensions but it is the peculiar province, as also the privilege, of Great Britain to bring together the two great communities in India, and to leave to them an heritage for which she would receive not only the gratitude of the millions in India, but the unstinted admiration of the whole world. It behoves, then, both communities to seize the opportunity offered to them, and to sink material² jealousies and dissensions for their common good. Better far, that two brothers should suffer at the hands of each other, than that a third party should step into the breach and gain an advantage over them. We would ask those who see these lines, no matter who they be, to join with us in the prayer that the present agitation in Bengal, which has in it the germs of the unification of the different communities, may grow in strength, and that the people of Dacca or elsewhere, whether Hindus or Mahomedans, may have the good sense to refrain from doing anything that may mar the glorious possibilities that are opened up to the people of India.

Indian Opinion, 4-11-1905

¹ Farcical show

² This is obviously a misprint for "mutual".

428. DADA OSMAN'S APPEAL

The Vryheid Herald, after quoting our remarks on this appeal¹, goes on to say that it is not a question of whether

Dada Osman is entitled to a licence, it is a question of whether he is entitled to trade in any part of the town. Although Dada Osman held a licence for a few years, it did not give him a vested right to remain in the town for ever. Prior to 1886, when a number of Indians entered the Transvaal, they were granted licences on condition that they only traded in locations and in places allotted to them by the Government, and this was only a question of whether Dada Osman should go into a location.

Our contemporary then goes on to say that this is not a question of white and brown. Our remarks have been called an error. Unfortunately for our contemporary, we have to use the same expression for its remarks quoted above. The question whether Mr. Dada Osman was entitled to a licence or to trade is beside the issue, and a distinction has been drawn without any difference. The fact is that the decision of the Board ruins Mr. Dada Osman, and this was the burden of our remarks. That the applicant had no "vested right" in the legal sense of the term shows the strength of our contention that the British constitution, at times, is so full of weaknesses that it enthrones injustice and strengthens it, as in this case. To an ordinary man, the deprivation of a man's right to trade without any compensation, after he has been so engaged for several years, is very much akin to robbery, which is miscalled law when it is done under cover of a statute. We join issue with our contemporary when it says that it is only a question of whether Dada Osman should go into a Location. We venture to inform our contemporary that Law 3 of 1885, dealing with Locations, has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of the Transvaal to mean that it does not require British Indians to trade in Locations. In the Transvaal, an Indian has the right to trade anywhere he chooses, and he can demand a licence against tender of money. Vryheid has taken over the Transvaal laws including the Indian laws, and it has to abide by them. Had it not been, therefore, for the Dealers' Licences Act of Natal, Mr. Dada Osman would today be trading in the town of Vryheid. It is the Licences Act which has been put into operation against him, and which has enabled the rival traders thus to set aside all ideas of justice and to ruin a poor man because, we repeat, "he wears a brown skin". Did not the Licensing

¹ *Vide* "Another Licensing Case", 21-10-1905

Officer also give as his reason for refusal that he did not want to see the conditions of Dundee reproduced in Vryheid? In other words, he did not wish to see so many Asiatic traders in the town of Vryheid as there were in the town of Dundee.

Indian Opinion, 4-11-1905

429. LORD METCALFE

LIBERATOR OF THE INDIAN PRESS

“The right to rule belongs to the ruler only if he works for the happiness of the ruled.” Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, who uttered these words and acted up to them, was born in Calcutta on January 30, 1785. After receiving an indifferent sort of education in England he gave up his studies at the early age of fifteen and [came to] Calcutta the following year. In those days the East India Company was very strict in selecting its employees, and inexperienced youths without proper education were not admitted to its service. Metcalfe was therefore obliged to enter the college at Calcutta. Thus, after receiving education for some time, Metcalfe was appointed to a subordinate post. At nineteen, he became Head Clerk to General Lake. General Lake and the officers under him were annoyed to find the young man in the civil department. Metcalfe took the hint and made up his mind to prove his valour in war. He took the lead in storming the fort of Dig¹ and put in such excellent work that General Lake became greatly pleased with him. Three years later Metcalfe was assigned a very responsible piece of work. The French were conspiring with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Punjab. Metcalfe was entrusted with the task of thwarting their designs and it was through his efforts that a treaty was signed between the British Government and Ranjit Singh. Lord Minto was so pleased with Metcalfe’s achievement that he appointed him Resident in Delhi when he was only twenty-six.

Here he began to interest himself in public welfare. He placed the landholders’ rights on a firm basis. This is what he wrote about it:

The settlement of land revenue should be fixed for a long period, so that the landlords can make large profits and feel grateful to us. In place of the fear that their land might be taken away from them any time, we should create in them the confidence that nobody would deprive them of their land. If we do so, the people will be pleased, and will begin to consider our rule beneficial and in their own interest. There are some who fear that, if people become free and independent, British rule will be in danger. Even granting that this is

¹ A fort near Agra; the original has “Lig”

probable, how can we deprive the ryots of their rights? How can liberal rulers attach any weight to such an argument? The kingdom of man is controlled by the kingdom of God. The Almighty can bestow a kingdom in a moment and take it back in another. Man's ingenuity avails not before His command. The duty of the rulers, therefore, is only to advance the well-being of their subjects. If we but discharge this duty, our Indian subjects will be grateful to us, and the world will for ever sing our praises. What if in future a rebellion should break out as a result of such a policy? Well, if out of the base fear of a future danger we should oppress the subjects, we shall deserve the attacks that may be made against us. And, when we are driven to such a position, the world will scorn us, will spit upon us and call us all sorts of names.

Sympathizing with the ryots in their woes, young Metcalfe wrote such noble words. Metcalfe was later appointed Resident at the Nizam's Court. The Nizam's Government was at that time in great financial difficulty. Some crafty but powerful Englishmen had lent him large sums on interest. Metcalfe was much pained to learn of this. Without caring for what the Governor-General might think, he did his duty and got rid of the crafty men. In 1827 Metcalfe became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council at Calcutta. The good Lord William Bentinck was the Viceroy then. When Bentinck was obliged for reasons of health to proceed suddenly to England, Metcalfe was appointed in his place as Acting Governor-General. At this time he did the greatest deed of his life. He enacted the famous law giving freedom to the Indian Press, which displeased his masters—the Board of Directors. But Metcalfe did not care. When prominent Englishmen opposed him, he made the following reply:

If the argument of my opponents be that the spread of knowledge may be harmful to our rule in India, I say that, whatever be the consequences, it is our duty to educate the people. If British rule can be preserved only by keeping the people in ignorance, our rule then would be a curse on the country and ought to come to an end. But I personally think that we have much more to fear if the people remain ignorant. The spread of knowledge, I hope, will remove their superstitions, will enable them to appreciate the benefits of our government, will promote the goodwill between the rulers and the ruled and will eliminate the differences and disunity amongst the Indians themselves. We, however, do not know what the will of the Almighty is in respect of the future of India. Our duty clearly is to execute the work entrusted to us for the good of the people.

Metcalfe, thereafter, was appointed Governor-General of Canada. There he fell seriously ill, but disregarding his illness went on doing his duty till the last. He was a deeply religious man. Having served the Queen loyally and won the love of the people, he died in 1840.

[From Gujarati]
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