

INDIA IN PARLIAMENT  
& ABROAD

# INDIA IN PARLIAMENT AND ABROAD 1919-20.

Being a Record of Proceedings on Indian Affairs in  
both Houses of the British Parliament, and a  
Symposium of all about India & Indians  
in the Dominions, America  
and Abroad.

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EDITED BY

H. N. MITRA, M.A., B.L.

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## FOREWORD

The following pages relating to Parliamentary Proceedings on Indian Affairs and matters affecting India and Indians in the Dominions and elsewhere constitute a section of the Indian Annual Register for 1921, and are now issued in a separate volume for the convenience of those who are interested in this matter alone and cannot go in for the parent volume. The series "India in Parliament and Abroad," issued by us annually, purports to present to the Indian Public in convenient book-form matters vitally affecting Indian interest which otherwise remain almost a sealed book to us. For, the full proceedings of Parliament and of the Imperial and other Conferences, where Indian matters of momentous importance are discussed and decided upon, are available in this country only in the form of meagre summary Press Telegrams, and, in the absence of a cheap and handy compilation of these proceedings, the general run of educated Indians fails to maintain that abiding interest in these matters as they would like to do. We hope, however, that this publication will meet the desideratum.

PUBLISHER



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# Indians in South Africa

## The South African Asiatic Commission of Enquiry

The Commission of Enquiry, regarding the grievances of Indians in South Africa promised by the authorities by the middle of 1919, was eventually set up early in 1920 with the Hon. J. H. Lange, K.C., Judge, Kimberley, as Chairman and Lieutenant Colonel Wylic, K.C., of Durban and Mr. E. Roth, solicitor, of Pretoria as members. Sir Benjamin Robertson, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, was deputed by Government of India in January 1920 to place the India Government's case before the Commission. [For antecedent matters, see the Register 1920, Part II, pp. 342—52.]

The Commission began its sittings to take evidence from April 1920, at Durban.

On April 30, Mr. H. H. Kemp, Assistant Town Clerk of Durban, stated that he was absolutely opposed to Asiatics as traders and district settlers in this country, for social and economic reasons as also on grounds of colour or race. His only remedy for the thorny question was the complete repatriation of all Indians, clock, stock and barrel with expropriation of their property, subject to reasonable compensation. The question in South Africa was a national one.

Mr. Leon Renaud, advocate, Durban, said that the Indians had played a very important part in the making of Natal and Coast Sugar Industry, as well as in the railway development on the coast. The Indian had done much in the way of production.

Colonel Friedh Addison, retired Sugar planter, said that the Indian was much more regular and reliable than the native. He had never been able to do more than barely pay expenses until he introduced the Indian. It would practically spell ruination for the sugar industry if they were to part with the Indians.

Mr. W. Doull presented a statement on behalf of the Durban Committee of the South African National Indian Congress. The following proposals were submitted :—(1) Standard wages to all labourers, irrespective of race or colour, and subsequent improvement in conditions of life ; (2) Legislation providing for a minimum standard of wages to shop assistants and all other ranks of labour on an equitable basis. (3) Amendment of the licensing laws on the lines of the Transvaal Ordinance, No. 9 of 1912, and providing

that licence can be refused only on the specified grounds contained in that Ordinance, with the following amendments thereto :—

(a) Three convictions within, say, the last two years on any criminal charge other than that of contravening a trading law or by-law ; (b) that the words "in the opinion of the Council" be deleted, and the reason why the applicant is not deemed desirable to be stated by the authority refusing the licence. (4) That there be a right to appeal to the Court in all licensing matters, whether the application is for a new licence or for a transfer or removal or renewal. (5) That the laws affecting land and licences be made applicable to the whole of Natal, which includes the Northern Districts of Natal and Zululand.

The principal evidence given to the Commission on May 1 was that by a deputation of farmers appointed by the Natal Agricultural Union at a Conference held at Pietermaritzburg in April. The Union represented the general body of Natal farmers. The deputation presented the following resolution embodying the views of the Natal Farmers, and unanimously passed.

"This Conference records its considered opinion, that the Asiatic problem presents a serious menace to the Union of South Africa and recommends that :—

(a) While recognising that the existing tenure of land by Asiatics should not be interfered with, no further acquisition of land by purchase, lease, or other means, by Asiatics, should be allowed.

(b) No new licences shall under any circumstances be issued to Asiatics.

(c) No transfer of any existing licences to any Asiatic shall be permitted, but at the expiry of any licence held by an Asiatic by death of the holder, reasonable compensation for land and trading stocks shall be paid.

(d) That the Government shall legislate on most drastic lines against the holding by any European or other person of a licence on behalf of any Asiatic.

(e) At such future date as shall be fixed by legislation, all Asiatic licences now held by companies shall expire, and compensation shall be paid to such holders.

(f) The urgency of this matter calls for immediate settlement by legislation.

#### Colonial-born Indians

A deputation of Colonial-born Indians consisting of Messrs. J. M. Francis, A. Christopher, V. S. C. Pather, L. Panday and J. Hoover presented to the Commission a statement of their views, Mr.

Christopher acting as the spokesman. The statement emphasised the right of the Colonial-born Indians to live in the country of their birth, for which many of them had fought in East Africa and other theatres during the Great War.

On Monday, May 3, Mr. A. J. S. Maritz, Magistrate at Stanger, the centre of a large Indian district on the sugar-growing North Coast, spoke most highly of the Indian. He considered that the only solution of the difficulty was to educate the Indians up to the European standard.

#### Final Evidence

Evidence was then taken by the Commission in the Cape Province, Transvaal, and Natal. Although there was no representative of India on the Commission, Indian interests were very closely watched throughout by Sir Benjamin Robertson, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. Able counsel have been employed by the Asiatics in all these Provinces visited by the Commission, and their case was ably sustained by both Indian and European evidence. Everywhere the Asiatic organisation seemed to be very effective, and superior to that of their European opponents. The Commission did not sit in the Orange Free State, where Indians form but a negligible number.

#### Pietermaritzburg Sitzings

The Commission sat in the Supreme Court, Pietermaritzburg, the Natal capital, from Tuesday May 4, until the end of the week.

Lieut.-Col. A. T. G. Wales was the first witness. He said he had known the Indian for over sixty years. He was brought up among them, and had indeed been nursed by them. He thought that the present rights of the Indians should be retained, but there should be no extension. Indians had been useful agriculturally, industrially, and generally. Every inducement should be put in the way of Indians desirous of returning to India, but there should be no compulsion.

Major W. Comrie, M. P. C., appeared on behalf of the Richmond Agricultural Society. He submitted that the Indian influence in Natal was a very dangerous one, and the prospects exceedingly serious. He pointed out that Indians were exempt from military service, whereas Europeans from 18 to 60 years of age could be called out for military service when needed, as had happened in the Natal Native Rebellion of 1906.

Lieut.-Col. Fawcus, also representing the Richmond Agricultural Society, stated that he considered it to be a manifest injustice to the Native that Indians brought into South Africa should be given rights above those of the natives. The Indian had not a good

influence on the native in South Africa. Every Indian should be encouraged to go out of the country, and those who stayed should be placed in locations. The Asiatic was not a desirable farmer. He considered segregation to be quite feasible, as there was plenty of land. The rate at which Indians were increasing was such as gave the Europeans no chance. Indians were increasing at the rate of 56 per 1,000 per annum; the natives at the rate of 28 per 1,000, and the Europeans at the rate of 14. He suggested that the Indians be put into segregation areas pending their return to India. There was far more room for Indians in India than there was in Natal, and he suggested that a man be given £100 to return to India and his wife £50. He stated that there was a widespread movement in India to have Europeans repatriated. He did not blame anyone; but there should be a similar movement in South Africa to get the Indian away. Australia, Canada and New Zealand would not have Indians. Then why should Natal?

Mr. J. Hunt Holley, farmer of Sandymount, said that he had been farming all his life in Natal. The Indian had anything but a good influence, and he would like to see him out of the country. The Indian store was a centre for immorality: he had often passed Indian stores, and noticed a number of Kafir women round about. His own reason satisfied him that there was no reason for doubting that immorality did exist in the Indian stores.

Mr. P. W. Stride, Town Treasurer of the City of Pietermaritzburg, presented resolutions of the City Council proposing the division of the City into three racial areas, namely, (1) Europeans or coloured persons (St. Helens), (2) Asiatics, (3) Natives, where no other persons may acquire, own or occupy land or buildings. The Council also submitted that trading should be restricted to the areas set apart for the respective races. Mr. Stride stated that the Asiatic population of the City had increased from 1887 by 360.5 per cent. The European increase for the same period had been one-third of that.

The final municipal resolution submitted by Mr. Stride read:—  
“The existence of Asiatic stores and business in Upper Church Street, the principal thoroughfare of the city has been unfavourably commented on for the past thirty years. These places are a blot on the City, and a perpetual eyesore, and should be eliminated.”

#### The Natal Legislation 1908

The remainder of the evidence taken by the Commission at Pietermaritzburg brought forward little new with the exception of the statement put in by Mr. Selke as to the Natal legislation of 1908 affecting Asiatics.



The Natal Parliament passed two Bills in 1908 affecting Asiatic traders. Both were passed with a support that bore witness to the fact that Parliament had the electorate fully at its back. One was passed unanimously through both Houses prohibiting the issue of new licences to Asiatics after December 1, 1908. The second Bill prohibited the holding of present trading licences after December 31, 1918, by Asiatics. This was carried through Parliament in both Houses, by majorities of two to one. Both Bills were reserved, and disallowed by the Crown, owing presumably, to the demur of the Indian Government.

Further evidence at Dundee, in northern Natal, was taken, and this closed the investigating labours of the Commission.

### The Report of the Commission

The Government of India received a copy of the interim report, dated May 12, 1920, submitted by the Asiatic Enquiry Commission to the Governor-General of South Africa. The report is as follows :—

“During the course of our enquiries, evidence has been laid before us which tends to show that there is at present, owing to the shortage of rice and other causes, considerable number of Indians who with their families would be prepared to return to India if the opportunity were afforded to them. We have also had evidence from an influential Calcutta merchant at present on a visit to the Union, who until recently was the Chairman of the Central Employment and Labour Board under the Government of India, that at the present time, owing to industrial development, the labour supply in India is insufficient to meet the demand and that good wages are being paid.

“The evidence on these points is confirmed by Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. G. L. Corbett, the official representatives of the Indian Government. We, therefore, strongly recommended to your Excellency that prompt steps be taken to provide the necessary shipping facilities and to appoint an official well-acquainted with Indian minds and methods to act in a sympathetic manner and lay before the Indians the advantages of immediately returning to India.

#### Militating Circumstances.

“Two main circumstances have hitherto militated against the return of Indians, viz, (1) the excessively long time they are kept at the Durban depot awaiting shipment, during which they spend their available money in subsistence and are consequently driven to re-entering employment to enable them to provide for their families and themselves, and (3) the fact that they are not allowed

to take with them to India their earnings in the shape of gold and their jewellery.

"We, therefore, recommend that immediate steps be taken

(a) to appoint an official not connected with the Protector's Department to organise the return of such Indians as are prepared to go,

(b) to provide frequent shipping facilities at short intervals,

(c) to relax restrictions on the export of gold in so far as necessary in order to allow returning Indians to take their legitimate savings and jewellery with them to India,

(d) to make provision where necessary for enabling Indians and their families to reach their homes after arrival in India.

"Evidence was given before the Commission that at a meeting held at Durban during March last of Indians employed by the South African Railways, 80 per cent. of those present expressed their wish to return to India if assisted thereto. We consider that if action were taken by the Government in furtherance of this desire on the part of their own employees it would become widely known amongst the Indians wishing to return to India and have good results. We feel, too, that advantage should be taken of the presence of Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. Corbett, in whom the Indian community have the utmost confidence and whose influence is consequently great, to obtain their assistance and advice regarding the scheme which we have recommended."

### Ministerial Statement

In the House of Assembly, Cape Town, on Friday, July 9, the Asiatic question came under discussion in the Committee of Supply on the Interior Vote on the Estimates.

Mr. Van Hees (Christiana) asked for a declaration of Government policy on the Asiatic question. The agitation against Asiatics was, he said, particularly strong in the Transvaal. Segregation, he contended, would not solve the problem. The objection to the Asiatic was based on his low standard of living. The European could not compete with the Asiatics, and the latter demoralised his neighbours in the Transvaal. It was felt that the only method to deal with the Asiatics was repatriation.

The Minister of the Interior (Sir Thomas Watt) said, he could only repeat what had been previously stated when the Government was asked what it intended to do towards carrying out the recommendations of the Asiatic Commission. That was that the Government was encouraging Asiatics to go back to their own country (An Hon. Member: minus their gold?) Free passages, proceeded

Sir Thomas, were granted to Asiatics willing to leave the Union, and the embargo on the export of gold had been raised so as to enable them to take with them savings up to £25 each. This included the total value of the gold they had, whether in ornaments or not; but it did not include small personal adornments. The law was the same as that applied to Europeans. He was informed that £25 was a fair average of the value of gold, Asiatics used to take home with them prior to the premium on gold. Of course, if a man were caught trying to smuggle gold out of the country, it was seized and confiscated. It was not a question of whether the law was a moral one or not. There the law was, and, while it remained in force, it must be carried out impartially in the case of Asiatics as well as Europeans.

The Minister, continuing, said that an officer had been appointed to supervise the repatriation of Asiatics, and arrangements had been made to obviate the necessity of a long stay in the depots at Durban which there used to be in the past before a vessel could be obtained. Asiatics had become tired of waiting at Durban, and had abandoned their plan of leaving the country. The Minister assured the House that newcomers were rigidly excluded. The few Asiatics now admitted into the Union were either those entitled to return, or wives and families of Asiatics already in the Union.

Referring to segregation, the Minister said that the word "segregation" had not been mentioned, but the whole matter had been referred to the Commission and segregation was a question the Commission was bound to consider. It would be quite improper for him. (the Minister) to say what the Government's policy was in the matter before the Commission had reported. But it was quite erroneous to say that the Asiatic population had been increasing in the Transvaal. He predicted on the contrary that the Commission would find that it had decreased.

#### Finger Prints.

The Union Minister of the interior (Sir Thomas Watt) replying to an Indian deputation on the subject of the taking of finger-prints of Indians made the following statement:—Government have decided that where Indians travel inter-provincially in the Union, thumb-prints should not be taken in cases in which they are able to read and write either of the official languages of the Union, and their *bonafides* are otherwise established to the satisfaction of immigration officers.

## Indians in British East Africa

Early in January 1920 the Rev. C. F. Andrews, who had gone on a mission of enquiry of the Indian grievances in British East Africa, cabled to India the full draft of the proposed Ordinance menacing the civic rights of the Indian settlers in East Africa. The following is the text :—

"Firstly, the bill may be cited as the removal of undesirables Ordinance 1919.

"Secondly, any person within the East African Protectorate not being a native who from information officially received is deemed by the Governor in Council undesirable may be ordered by the Governor to remove himself from the Protectorate before the date prescribed in such order.

"Thirdly any person contravening such order shall be liable on conviction to a fine up to Rs. 1500 or to imprisonment of either description not exceeding six months or both together. Such conviction shall not affect the Government's power to issue further order under the preceding section against same person."

The Legislative Council in which this draft ordinance was proposed to be passed was to meet in January 19th. This Ordinance entirely lacks the safeguards against political misuse. The volume of evidence in the Economic Commissions report contains no valid substantiation of Indian moral depravity. The proposed Ordinance left every Indian at the mercy of the executive subservient to interested European agitator against Indians. The unscrupulous nature of the agitation is manifest from the utterly false charges flung about the moral depravity against the Indian settler. The Indians claimed the right of priority to the ordinary natural right to live on terms of equality with every other kind of settler in East Africa.

The following Note by Mr. Andrews on the position of Indians in East Africa was published about this time in India.

[See also Register 1920, Part II, p. 310.]

When I reached Mombasa at the end of November, 1919, a copy of the Final Report Part of the Economic Commission of the East Africa Protectorate was put into my hands. It was printed with the Royal Arms prominently displayed on its title page and on its outside cover. In its opening paragraphs it contained two

warrants issued by His Majesty's Ministers, the Heads of Government in March, 1917.

On reading through this Report, I found that it had held its sessions during a period of twenty-two months, and that the evidence had been regarded as of such an important nature that it had all been taken on oath. The Chairman of the Commission was a leading member of the Executive Government of the Protectorate.

This East Africa Economic Commission, thus officially appointed by His Majesty's Ministers, was instituted in direct relation to the Conference of the Allied Nations at Paris, held during the War. It followed throughout the three main headings of that War Conference, dealing with

- (1) Measures for the War period.
- (2) Transitory measures of reconstruction.
- (3) Permanent measures.

It is under the third heading 'permanent measures' that the conclusions of the Commission on the Indian Question are given. If one may judge from a very careful reading of the whole report, not once but many times over, the clear impression is left that these conclusions on the Indian Question were regarded by the Commissioners themselves as by far the most important and convincing part of the whole subject. They are stated at the end of Chapter VII. The heading of the chapter is 'General Native Policy'. The whole problem of the Native Policy of the Protectorate is made to depend upon this one final judgment and verdict:—the exclusion of the Indians.

The pages dealing with the Indian Question read as follows :—

#### **The Economic Commission's Report.**

"We have left to the end what is perhaps the factor which more directly than any other affects the welfare of the Native, that is, the influence of the Asiatic.

"It is hoped that the frank discussion of this subject will not cause offence, but it is one which calls for plain speaking.

"It must be borne in mind that any criticism of the Indians which it may be necessary to make refer specifically to those in this Protectorate. These are mostly drawn from the lowest type of artisan coolie and "banya" or small shop-keeping classes, and include few representatives of the more responsible elements of the population of India.

"Further, such criticisms, like most generalisations, are subject to exceptions. There are some Indians in the country who have proved themselves reliable members of society, and of whom we should be sorry to use disparaging terms. Exceptions, however, have little bearing upon the main argument.

"Before the advent of the Imperial B. E. A. Company, Indians were established on the coast, where they seized the opportunity afforded them by the abolition of slavery, to oust by loan and foreclosure the ancient Arab trade and civilisation of which Zanzibar was the centre. But except for occasional incursions by half-caste Baluchis, the interior was untouched by Indian influence till British control was effected. The introduction of the coolies employed on the construction of the Uganda Railway was the first connection of Indians with the interior. The employment of Indian labour for this work was due, it is believed, purely to considerations of convenience, and here it is instructive to note that not only did the capital cost of the Indian-built Railway work out excessively high, more than double the sum for which a reputable firm of British contractors had offered to execute the task with African labour, but that the working costs per train-mile of the Uganda Railway are higher than those of the railways of the South African Union, though the percentage of white men employed on the latter is more than twenty times as great.

"It may be permitted to question whether the authorities of the time realised the immense Imperial significance, for good or evil, of their action in promoting contact between the Natives of East Africa and the decadent civilisation of India. The inevitable effect of the intervention of an intermediate race between European and African is that that race absorbs most of the occasions of personal contact with the African. Hence such intimate influences as the African of this country is at present receiving are mainly imported to him by the Asiatic, and are predominantly Indian rather than British.

"East Africa is in a somewhat different position from any other countries of Africa in respect of this problem.

"The self-governing States of the Union, together with the Rhodesias, control Indian immigration, with a view to ultimate exclusion. In Natal, Indian labour was at one time introduced, but its introduction was subsequently agreed to have been a mistake, and drastic steps have been taken to limit and localise its effects.

"In the African Protectorates under the Colonial Office, immigration is not prohibited, with the result that in East Africa the immigrants have not been confined to the trading class, but have included coolies, clerks, artisans and mechanics. German East Africa was for long protected from this invasion, but latterly, for political reasons, considerable encouragement was given to Indians there.

"It is the distinguishing peculiarity of this country that here the Indian plays the parts of the clerk, artisan, carpenter, mechanic,

etc., functions which the African is capable with training of performing, and does elsewhere perform, satisfactorily. The presence of the Indians, organised as they are to keep the African out of every position which an Indian could fill, deprives the African of all incentives to ambition and opportunities of advancement.

"It may be admitted that the Indian has played and still plays a useful part in opening up trade, stimulating the wants of the natives and inducing them to part with their products for purposes of export. For this service he is entitled to credit, but the essential point is that the same service might, with due encouragement, have been performed by the Native peoples.

"In every direction, the sphere of the Indian in this country is not complementary but competitive with those of the European and African. Even in the minor spheres the European, if the Indian would submit to the civic, moral and commercial obligations current in European Society, has nothing to fear from Indian competition, the contrary theory, which formerly found in local governing circles, having been completely exploded by the history of the past thirteen years. But with the African, the case is different. He is not strong enough anywhere to stand against the competition of the more crafty race. So long as that race is organised to keep him in servitude, by shouldering him out of all the posts which lie in the path of his advancement, he must be content to remain a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water.

"There are, therefore, strong economic reasons against the free admission of certain classes of Indians into the country.

"There are unfortunately other reasons of even greater weight against all Indian immigration into this, or indeed any part of Africa.

Physically the Indian is not a wholesome influence because of his incurable repugnance to sanitation and hygiene. In this respect the African is more civilised than the Indian, being naturally cleanly in his ways; but he is prone to follow the example of those around him. Plague, though said to be "endemic" in the country, has certainly been imported, if not originally, then on later occasions, from Bombay, and Indian quarters are almost invariably the foci of each successive outbreak. The same may be said of all dirt-born diseases. The Indian is everywhere the despair of the sanitarian; here he is a menace not only to himself, but especially to the natives of the country.

"The moral depravity of the Indians is equally damaging to the African, who in his natural state is at least innocent of the worst vices of the East. The Indian is the inciter to crime as well as vice, since it is the opportunity afforded by the ever ready Indian

receiver which makes thieving easy. If the Indians were eliminated, the number of offences against property, now high, would be reduced to manageable proportions.

“The Empire is faced with a serious dilemma which cannot be evaded. The choice lies between the vital interest of the African and the ambition of India. The presence of the Indian in this country is quite obviously inimical to the moral and physical welfare and the economic advancement of the natives. The matter is one of the highest Imperial importance, and we regard it as imperative that the Empire should definitely decide, and that without delay whether the welfare of the African is to be subordinated in his own country to political considerations and the pretensions of the more restless elements of India. Upon the decision as to East Africa, the future of the whole continent will largely depend, for if Indians are to be allowed to stream in at any one entrance in unlimited numbers, it will scarcely be possible to localise them indefinitely in any particular territory.

“Our own view of this question is that there can be no excuse for meeting out to the African treatment to which India herself would never submit.

On purely economic grounds, we submit that the admission of the Indian was a cardinal error of policy. It involved the economic stagnation of the African throughout a large tract of Africa, and the consequent retardation of progress for the sake of what promised to be at best but a temporary convenience. In our view, the error ought gradually, but without unnecessary delay, to be rectified, by similar means to those by which the same error is being rectified in Natal.

“The Railway and other Government Departments should as quickly as possible replace Indian employees by Europeans in the higher grades and Africans in the lower. Further, Asiatics who are allowed to remain in this country should be obliged to conform to the same sanitary standards as Europeans as a condition of their residence here. It will probably be found that this will result in a great reduction in their numbers.

“The Imperial principle which is to control the migration within the Empire of different peoples has been finally laid down by the Imperial Conference in July last in the following terms:—

“It is an inherent function of the Governments of the several communities of the British Commonwealth, including India, that each should enjoy complete control over the composition of its own population, by means of restriction on immigration from any other communities.”



"It is therefore essential that a decision of policy in reference to East Africa should be come to without further delay and that such decision shall be based upon the principle of self-determination, and shall consider only the interests of the indigenous native and Arab population and of the race responsible for their control.

"It is our firm conviction that the justification of occupation of this country lies in our ability to adapt the native to our own civilisation.

"If we further complicate this task by continuing to expose the African to the antagonistic influence of the Asiatic, as distinct from European philosophy, we shall be guilty of a breach of trust."

A further chapter of the Economic Commission Report, dealing with the 'Political Future of Middle Africa' was drafted and discussed at several meetings, and up to the last session it had been the intention of the Commission to publish it in the main body of the Report, as Chapter XVII. But during the last session it was decided to omit it from the main Report—possibly because it had the appearance of going slightly beyond the terms of reference. One of the Commissioners, however,—named E. Powyss Coob Esq., of Molo,—attaching great weight to this question, as one which (to quote his own words) "towers above all others and casts its shadow across the whole economic future," has himself published this chapter in a Note under his own name. He has been allowed by the Chairman and members of the Commission to take this somewhat unusual course, and the Chapter is thus fully quoted, as an Appendix, at the end of the Report itself. It reads as follows:—

#### Political Future of Middle Africa.

"The East Africa Protectorate is an artificially defined territory without natural frontiers (except on its seaboard). It constitutes one of the group of territories under the British Crown comprising (in addition to British East Africa) Uganda, the conquered territory of German East Africa, Nyasaland, and the Rhodesias. The territories of this group, which in this chapter will be referred to as Middle Africa, are to very large extent homogeneous in character, forming together one predominantly agricultural domain of boundless richness and fertility. Middle Africa, is, in fact, one of the world's great unopened storehouses.

"The acquisition of the conquered territory, which formerly split Middle Africa into two sections, has now made practicable the consolidation of the countries composing into one federated Dominion.

"Federation is required as a preliminary to standardising policies on several of the main questions which confront all the terri-

tories of the group. Hitherto each has gone its own way, with the result that there has been no community of counsel and purpose. East Africa and Uganda have, in apparently analogous, if not identical, circumstances, arrived at and carried into execution widely divergent conclusions on such important questions as native tenure of land, and native policy generally. Had they arrived at identical, it could only have been by accident. Such a state of affairs appears to us indefensible. The wastefulness, and where the interests of subject races are concerned, the harmfulness of it hardly call for demonstration.

"The following are among the matters in respect of which federation would lead to greatly increased efficiency of public services in all the territories affected :—

"Defence : finance : customs : policing : communications : immigration : native policy : education : and scientific and industrial research. This appears to us so obvious that we refrain from enlarging on any of these matters except the first two.

"A consolidated Middle Africa would constitute in British hands a permanent strategical barrier to any possible scheme for dominating Africa by means of a Middle Africa scheme of aggression such as Germany had in contemplation. It would be the bulwark of Africa against militarism. Few will be so optimistic as to imagine that no such bulwark can be required when the present war is ended : but it will not be afforded to the full extent possible by a number of detached protectorates.

"The strategical advantages attending unification of control and administration of the various territories of Middle Africa would be of inestimable value in the event of Great Britain again being involved in warfare there. The defensive strength of such a combination should be sufficient to render any hostile designs futile.

"The advantages of federation in the sphere of finance would be of scarcely less importance. A Dominion approximately equal in area to the sister Dominion of South Africa, and certainly not inferior to it in natural resources, would be able to command support for the financing of large scale railway and other projects necessary for development, where a number of minor states, incapable of acting in concert, would be unable to find accommodation.

"Apart from such material advantages, the union of the British territories of Middle Africa would powerfully promote the spreading of the British ideal, which we are convinced is what the best interests of the people of Africa demand.

"We therefore recommend that the countries specified should unite in forming the Dominion of Middle Africa, each however retaining intact such local autonomy as it now possesses ; and that a

Governor-General be appointed for the Dominion, who should be assisted and advised by a Federal Council, consisting of the Lieutenant-Governors and popular representatives of its component units. We have assumed the readiness of each of the units to attach themselves to this rather than to any contiguous federation.

"It will be noted that the conquered territory known as German East Africa is an integral and essential portion of the proposed Dominion. The scheme above outlined, therefore, conflicts with the scheme recently propounded in the London press for making over the conquered territory to India for colonisation. The latter scheme necessitates driving a wedge between the northern and southern and parts of the Middle Africa Dominion, and is therefore strategically objectionable in the last degree. If further argument is necessary, it may be suggested that on military and sanitary grounds alike, the occupation of any part of Africa by Indians without European support and guidance would be a dangerous experiment.

"Besides, we regard it as highly important that advantage should be taken of the opportunity offered to reunite and consolidate native peoples such as the Coast Arabs and Swahilis, and the Masni tribe, which have hitherto been divided into sections disjoined from each other, much to their mutual disadvantage, by purely artificial frontiers.

"But we have already stated in Chapter VII what we submit are final reasons against the betrayal to the Asiatic of any section of the African peoples the responsibility for whose destinies has fallen into our hands. Short of the retrocession of the territory in question to Germany, we can conceive of no transaction more immoral, or more certain ultimately to recoil in ruin upon our own heads, than to buy off Indian discontent at the expense of the native of Africa. Such generosity at the cost of others, and those our own dependants, would be neither honourable nor politic.

"If India requires an outlet, there are vast empty spaces in Asia a waiting development to which it might now be practicable for her to apply her energies without the certainty of such evil results as must attend the exploitation of the African by the Asiatic."

When we come to examine the evidence on which such drastic conclusions are based, the result is altogether disappointing. No Indian member was invited to sit on the Commission itself, although some of the largest business transactions in the country have been carried out by Indian merchants, and for a number of years the opening up of the trade with the interior was almost entirely in their hands. What is stranger still to notice is the fact, that not a single Indian Association appears to have been invited to send its representatives to give evidence. I have made enquiries about this,

and it appears that, when such an important Commission was appointed (which would affect vitally Indian interests) and the request for Indian representation was refused, there was a natural disinclination to come forward individually to offer evidence. This seems to me to have been quite reasonable and dignified. I cannot find any hint whatever that the Commission itself took any steps to remedy or alleviate this initial injustice to the Indian Community. I use the word 'injustice,' here advisedly; for the Supreme Government of the Protectorate must have clearly known that the Indian Question would be dealt with in a manner which would affect their whole future; and to refuse the perfectly reasonable request for representation, in those circumstances, appears to me fundamentally unjust.

The disappointment is scarcely less when we turn to the European evidence which was tendered on oath. The Commission itself, in its own Report, states that 'the influence of the Asiatic' is 'perhaps the factor which more directly than any other affects the welfare of the Native.' Again it is stated, 'The matter is one of high Imperial importance . . . Upon the decision of East Africa the future of the whole Continent will largely depend'. Yet on turning to the index on the very large and thick volume of evidence, we find only nine references to the subject.

(1) The first is a reference to sanitation by Mr. H. Ryle Shaw. "In Natal where the Indian population is larger than the European, and where there is constant intercourse with India, the Port possesses a large quarantine ground for Asiatics. In this Protectorate the necessity for such accommodation is much greater".

(2) The second reference is to Indian labour by the Hon. C. W. Hobley:—

"The next point upon which I would venture to lay stress is the more intelligent use of the Native population. I would like to abolish the idea that if skilled work has to be done an Asiatic must be engaged. . . . . We should as soon as possible commence to train a considerable number of native youth to do the necessary artisan work. The training should be on English lines, not Indian: the pupils should be taught to work standing at a bench, not squatting on the ground. The Indian system of two men to a hand-saw and two men to a plane should be consistently discouraged. I have no bias against the skilled Indian forman or artisan, but it is noticeable that the quality during recent years has deteriorated although the rate of wages has increased. . . . . It has also been asserted that the employment of large quantities of Asiatic labour results in a steady leakage of money from this country to India."

(3) The third reference is by the same witness :—"If the Indian immigrant were a great introducer of new capital into this country it would balance the loss (i e. on imports) to some extent, but, as far as my information goes, this is not the case. Hardly any land owned by Asiatics in East Africa is being actively developed or worked. In Uganda, I believe, there are few coffee planters engaged in wholesale or retail trade financed to a great extent by the banks."

4. The next reference is that of Mr. A K. Constine, Merchant and Motor Car Hirer :—

"The native trade is in the hands of the Indians. Europeans would not have little "dukas" in the native villages like the Indians. Wherever trade was large enough the European could beat the Indian. Natives might be trained to take the place of Indians, but these dukas must deal with the Indian wholesaler in Mombasa. The Indian wholesaler bought from the European firm on credit. Some of the biggest firms in this country trade entirely on credit. He thought this was sound business."

(5) The fifth reference is that of Mr. R. W. Playfair, Manager, National Bank of India, Nairobi :—

"Indian profits generally remained in the country. Indians were mostly working on credit. Their profits went in increased stock and purchase of land. An Indian to start with needed little money. The big Indian financed the small man."

(9) The next reference is that of H. H. Heatley Esq., Farmer, Naudi ;—

"He was not keen on natives learning to read and write, through perhaps it would be advantageous in some cases,..... He did not favour natives learning English. He thought that, wherever possible, Goan and Indian clerical labour, artisans, etc., should be replaced by white men, British taking preference, both in Government Offices and Railway."

(7) The seventh reference is that of Colonel W. K. Notely, Commissioner of Police :—

"Checks on Indian immigration were stringent. A man had to prove himself able to earn his own living, or else give a bond for the cost of his passage. A European without employment had to give deposit of £25 if required by the Immigration Office or give a bond. There was also power to deport undersetlings within twelve months of landing. There was no influx of poor Indians going on. Last year (1917) and the year before (1916) Indian emigration exceeded immigration."

(8) The eighth reference is that of E. Battiscombe Esquire, Conservator of Forests :—

"One of the great difficulties to contend with at present is the absence of literate native employees: the only medium of communication between the European and the raw native is the Asiatic clerk or skilled Indian artisan. This class demand very high wages which are in many instances out of all proportion to the duties demanded of them and of the class of work they turned out. Many of the more respected natives could be trained as Assistant Foresters and they would be far more satisfactory than the Asiatic both for acquiring an intimate knowledge of what is going on in and around the forests, for becoming acquainted with the various species of trees and as "go between" between the European and the Native."

(9) The last reference is that of the same witness :—

"Of first importance in the training of the natives in any trade or profession is the entire elimination of the Asiatic element. If the native is to be taught, the teaching should be conducted on European lines, e.g. take the case of carpentry. If a native is taught by an Indian carpenter it is highly probable that he will adopt Indian methods, never learn to finish off any piece of work properly and moreover never succeed in making himself more useful than the average Indian. It is the same with other professions: the average Indian artisan in this country cannot be said to excel in his art which appears to be more a matter of tradition than training: and it is unreasonable to expect the African to become more proficient than the Indian if he merely has these traditions instilled into him."

These are the only references to Asiatics, in the whole body of evidence, which have been regarded worthy of indexing; and I have quoted them *in extenso*. The evidence, such as it is, appears to me extraordinarily little, both in quality and quantity, for such immense conclusion to be made to depend upon it. As it stands, also, it by no means points in one direction only. The Manager of the National Bank of India, which is the oldest established in the country, and accepted as the Government Bank, declares pointedly that Indian profits generally remain in the country and go to the increase of stock and purchase of land. The Commissioner of Police reports that already checks on Indian immigration are stringent and that for two years past more Indians have gone out of the country than have entered it. Even those, like Mr. Battiscombe, Conservator of Forests, who wish to replace the Indian by the African, acknowledge at the same time that the number of Africans, who have had any training of education, is infinitesimal.

If the case against the Indians were to be decided on the evidence alone, I do not think that any learned Judge on any bench

would give a verdict such as the Commissioners have given. One is driven to the conclusion that they have made up their minds, not so much on the evidence set before them, as in accordance with their own private inclinations. I am not myself acquainted with the workings of such Commissioners, and therefore cannot say whether such action is technically in order. To me, as an amateur on the subject, it seems essentially unfair. Not only was no Indian evidence taken, not only no Indian representative allowed to sit on the Commission, but even when the very scanty European evidence was wavering and undecided and, in one case at least, contradictory, even then the Commissioners (who took oaths from the witnesses in a judicial manner) summed up against the Indian Community on practically every point and condemned them to ultimate exclusion.

It is clear, when comparing actual dates, that December 1918, and January 1919, were the two months in which the Indian Question reached a very critical stage in East Africa. The Economic Commission was at that time bringing its numerous sessions to an end and it was already looking forward to framing the main outlines of its Report. The Armistice had just been concluded with the Central Powers, and the greatest excitement had been aroused, in European minds, by Sir Theodore Morrison's ill-advised proposal, that the conquered territory of German East Africa should be made into a special reserve for Indian colonisation. I was in India at the time that this suggestion was made, and I can bear witness that the leaders of Indian public opinion, either ignored it altogether, or else discountenanced it. Mr. M. K. Gandhi, whose judgment on such a subject would naturally carry the greatest weight, both with the Indian Government and with the Indian people, condemned the proposal from the very beginning and others more or less fell into line. Even in British East Africa, I have discovered on inquiry that it was only the name and reputation of Sir Theodore Morrison and his personal influence during his visit, which induced Indian residents to take up the suggestion. How artificial it all was may be easily seen by the half-hearted way in which it was ultimately canvassed. A deputation, which was sent to India on this and other matters, soon found it best to drop this question out altogether; and the Congress meeting held in Nairobi, in November last, (*See Register 1920, p. 320, Part II.*) did little more than pass a formal resolution which had no life behind it.

European residence in East Africa is so far aloof from things Indian, that it was impossible for all that I have related to be accurately known. During the months that followed the Armis-

tice, new boundaries were being marked out on the map of the world every day with bewildering rapidity. It seemed not impossible, in December 1918, that the Home Government might decide at once, under the sanction of the great Four at Versailles, the fate of the conquered German territory, without any consultation.

This, among other matters, appears to me to account for the very great activity of the European Associations in British East Africa on the Indian Question, so soon after the termination of the War. It was a time of intense excitement, a feverish period of strain and tension and exhaustion, the very worst time for calm constructive statesmanship. I cannot help reading into the Economic Commission Report itself, where it touches the Indian Question, the same excited racial feeling. That, at least, is the genuine impression left on me as I have studied them, coming fresh from the outside. And I would add, quite frankly, that I have felt the very atmosphere of this Protectorate, while I have been living here, both among Indians and Europeans alike, to be abnormal and the outlook on life to be distorted. There was an immediate relief, when I passed from East Africa to Uganda.

I have felt that this long explanation has been necessary before quoting the Convention Resolutions because I am coming more and more to believe that they do not represent the final opinion of my own fellow countrymen, (Englishmen) but rather the inflamed opinion of a period of excitement immediately after the War.

It is important to notice that five of the Economic Commissioners took a leading part in the Convention of Associations held at Nairobi in January, 1919, about which this chapter is written. They are signatories both to the Economic Commission Report on March 21st, 1919, and also to the Draft Resolutions, circulated on December 21st, 1918, on behalf of the Convention. Thus they were actively participating in two different committees dealing with the Indian Question at the same time, the one official in character and the other non-official.

I have made careful enquiries about the Convention of Associations, as to how far it truly represents the united non-official European opinion, in accordance with its name: "The Whiteman's Parliament"; the assurance has been given me, that its representation is very wide indeed. What follows may be taken therefore as representing a very high percentage of European opinion in East Africa.

The leading members of the Convention published first of all certain draft resolutions, to which I have already referred. These draft resolutions appear to have been very fully discussed and can-



vassed at the different meetings of the numerous European Associations during the weeks that followed their circulation. Then, at last during the January Sessions of the Convention, 1919 which met at Nairobi, the Indian question came first on the agenda paper and the following revised resolutions were unanimously accepted and carried :—

*(For these Resolutions, See Register 1920, Part II p. 307-8, et Seq.)*

# The Guiana Deputation.

Shortly after the receipt of the cable mentioned on page 313, M. Gandhi enquired of the Government of India the true position of Indian affairs in East Africa, and to this Sir George Barnes, on behalf of Government, replied as follows :—

*21 January 1920.*

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

In your letter of the 13th instant you ask me to give you some information regarding the difficulties which are arising in East Africa. The information which we have so far received is far from complete, but I will tell you what we know and what we are doing.

2. In my answer to a question put by Sir Dinshaw Wacha at the meeting of the Legislative Council on the 19th September last, I told him how the position then stood. You will remember that a deputation of Indians from East Africa headed by Mr. Alibhai came to Delhi last March. I was then away on leave, but I understand that Sir Thomas Holland, who received the deputation in my absence was impressed by the fairness and moderation with which they stated their grievances. Their memorial was forwarded to the Secretary of State with a despatch in which the Government of India urged there was no justification in a Crown Colony or Protectorate for assigning to British Indians a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects. We further urged not only that the more galling disabilities of Indians in East Africa should be removed, but also that their claims to a share in the Government of the country should be sympathetically considered.

3. We have now heard from the Secretary of State that he has pressed these views on the Colonial office, and that Lord Milner on his return from Egypt will discuss the general question of the position of Indians in East Africa with the Governor, Major General Sir E. Northby, who is now in England.

4. Meanwhile a new situation has arisen from the publication of the Report of the East Africa Economic Commission and the proposed Ordinance for the removal of undesirables. We have not yet received a copy of the report, and we know no more about the proposed Ordinance than what has appeared in the press. On the 15th inst. I received a visit from the Hon'ble Mr. Phoke, one of the Indian Members of the East Africa Legislative Council who is now on a visit to this country, and he told me that he had heard

nothing about this Ordinance when he left Nairobi on the 17th December 1919.

5. As Colonel Amery said in his reply to a question put by Mr. Bennet in the House of Commons on the 22nd December last, the Economic Commission's report must not be regarded as expressing the views of the Government of East Africa or of the Imperial Government. The proposed Ordinance too, if it has been correctly reported, is not ostensibly directed against Indians and it is not possible to question the right of any Government to remove undesirables from the country over which it exercises jurisdiction. At the same time, I can assure you that the Government of India are fully alive to the general tendency of events in East Africa. His Excellency the Viceroy has already telegraphed to the Secretary of State asking for full information. He has also urged that the Indian case should be fully represented at the forthcoming discussion between Lord Milner and General Northby in London and that no action detrimental to Indian interests in East Africa should be taken meanwhile.

Yours Sincerely,  
(Sd.) G. S. Barnes.

The Deputation mentioned in this letter was the British Guiana Colonisation Deputation which was received by a Committee of the Indian Legislative Council on Feb 6th 1920. The Deputation put forward a scheme of free emigration with state assistance and asked the Govt. of India to place their British Guiana Colonisation Scheme to a Committee of the Legislative Council of India consisting of elected Indian Members.

On February 4th 1920, in the Imperial Legislative Council, Mr. S. N. Banerjee (now Sir) moved for a committee to receive the deputation and examine the proposed scheme of colonization.

The Committee thus formed commenced its sitting on Feb. 6th, when the Hon. Dr. J. J. Nunan, Attorney General of British Guiana, and Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, a barrister and an Indian resident of that Colony, were present to lay their scheme for British Guiana and give evidence in regard thereto. The Committee consisted of the Hon. Messrs. Banerjee, Sarma, Chanda, Sinha, Sastri, Crums, Sir D. Wacha and Marjoribanks. Mr. Banerjee was elected president. The credentials of the deputies were first examined and then—

Dr. Nunan, in opening the case, said that he represented the agricultural and commercial society of British Guiana. He did not come here in his official capacity. The Legislative Council of British Guiana unanimously accepted his scheme of colonisation and in fact the whole Colony had supported it. Mr. Luckhoo was

the only Indian representative in the British Guiana Legislative Council and was sent to it by 60 Labour votes. The scheme of colonisation which he wished to propose and the deputation to put forward, was both authorized by the local Legislature and the Executive and supported by public opinion. As regards the position of the Indian in the Colony there were 1,800 out of a total population of 150,000 Indians who get franchise and the rest were represented by an official member. The reason was that Indians never worried themselves about politics and were until recently only looking to their economics. Only now were they waking up to political privileges of which they were not cognisant before.

The status of Indians in Guiana was the first question enquired into and examined by Mr. Banerjee. The deputation said that there was absolutely no distinction between one race and another. Indians enjoyed the same civic rights as Portuguese, Chinese, European or any other race. They all had that equal status ever since 1838, when they began to immigrate into that Colony. Equal status was part of the unwritten law and it had been maintained ever since. There was of course no statutory guarantee now to preserve this equality but the Colonial Office would see that in effect Indians had the same franchise for elections to municipalities, Legislative Councils, and other public bodies as any other race or people. Socially also there was no distinction whatever and Europeans and Indians were pulling together. The caste system no doubt prevailed but there was great unity between Hindus and Mahomedans.

In reply to Mr. Crum, Dr. Nunan said that a declaratory act could be passed in British Guiana in half an hour guaranteeing equality of status of Indians. The indenture system had been abolished to a great extent and when he started for India there were only 600 cases of indenture. This number must have diminished by now.

Mr. Sarma referred to the voting strength of each race inhabiting the Colony and asked if it was true that the European Community can never carry anything of a racial character in Council except with the assistance of Negroes and Chinese as against Indians, and that if an Indian asserts and puts himself forward as a voter there is every chance of holding his own.

Mr. Luckhoo.—That is my view.

Continuing, witness said that 75 per cent. of cultivated lands was owned by Indians and Europeans held only two per cent. This did not include the sugarcane area, 39,000 acres of which were held by Indians. This fact showed that the non-European population had as much interest in that sugarcane industry as the European. These 39,000 acres were now being cultivated chiefly by uninden-

tured labour. The unindentured Indian kept a larger area than the indentured, even in case of sugarcane districts. Local syndicates and companies did not employ indentured labour. It was only those companies that were registered in England and that had shareholders in England that employed indenture labour in the Colony. Factories did not employ indentured labour. It was sugar planters who employed it.

Mr. Sarma.—How has the abolition of the indenture system affected the sugar planters?

Dr. Nunan.—The whole Colony has felt the pinch of the abolition of indentured labour but sugar planters have felt it most.

Q. What is the capital sunk in sugar factories and plantations?

A. Ten million sterling. Of these ten million more than half is British-owned and the rest by indigenous people. The State owns the land.

Mr. Sarma next asked about the health of the Colony and the deputation replied that the coast was perfectly healthy but not for manual labour. On the whole it was a healthy Colony and had a relaxing climate. Compulsory education was in force inland and nearly all boys who would have to go to school under statute were at school.

Q. You say in your memorandum that the object of Government is to make this an Indian Colony. It means that practically the whole of Government will pass to the Indians and that you are prepared to face that situation?

Dr. Nunan.—At the same time we look forward to the continuance of the present friendly relations.

Mr. Sarma—You don't expect that there would be any swinging of the pendulum back when once Indians go into power and have a working majority.

Dr. Nunan.—No, I don't expect it. We are prepared for it and we don't see any reason to be afraid of it.

Asked by Mr. Chanda on the Indian strength in the public services, Mr. Luckhoo said that in the very highest grade there were none and frankly told the Committee that at present there was none qualified for it but Indians had risen to almost senior positions.

Replying to Mr. Sinha, Dr. Nunan said that so far there had not been an Indian in the Executive Council. The present Legislature consisted of 22, of whom fourteen were elected and seven nominated, besides the Governor.

Mr. Sinha—Your Legislature does not control the Executive.

Dr. Nunan—No, but it can hang up the executive. (Laughter).

Mr. Sinha—I wish we could do it here. (Renewed laughter).

Dr. Nunan gave an instance in which the legislature by indirect pressure once enforced their will on the Executive. Continuing he said that in a case of dispute between the Legislature and Executive the matter would go to the Secretary of State who would generally favour the view of the Legislature and ask the Executive to follow.

Q. Do you think that for a long time to come Indians will continue to be in a position of a numerically large but rather uninfluential community?

A. It is the most influential community because they are very industrious and thrifty. They have not used political power so far because they have not bothered about it.

Q. Supposing we agree to your scheme would your Government accept an arrangement that after a year's trial or after a reasonable time the Government of India would send a deputation to investigate the matter and see how the scheme had worked.

A. O, yes, and we are also agreeable to the other safeguard, that is permanent residence in the colony on behalf of the Government of India of person or persons to watch the interests of emigrants.

Q. Is it the case that Indians there demand more wages and better state of living?

A. That is not so, although I know that people will not be satisfied with anything.

Q. There is a suspicion here in India that Indians who are already in colonies are somewhat opposed to your scheme and that you are trying to bring an abiding force against them and make their conditions hard.

A. Indians in British Guiana unanimously supported a resolution welcoming our scheme of colonization if well organised. I therefore deny that there is any ground for apprehension.

Further asked by Mr. Sastri, Dr. Nunan said if Indians emigrated the younger part of their population would not suffer for want of educational facilities. They were taught in their own vernaculars. The caste system was being rigidly kept up and there was no necessity of overstepping it in a precipitate manner. Their proposal was to import families and they did not want to take anybody unless they could provide him with a wife.

# The Colonization Scheme

The following is a summary outline of the scheme of emigration put forward by the British Guiana Deputation.

Recent changes in the Imperial policy as regards preference and urgent demand for foodstuffs all over the world made it incumbent upon them to set aside £100,000 to be offered as an inducement to the emigrants. The Colony had arranged for regular passenger and cargo line of steamers between Indian Ports and the British Guiana. For the first three years not more than 5,000 adults a year would be given free passages. On arriving in British Guiana, they could, if desirous of working land of their own, obtain land, either agricultural or pastoral, on easy terms in small or large holdings. If the settlers preferred employment, the Guiana Government guaranteed the local rates of pay which, for the piece-work on sugar estates on a seven hour day, amounted to Rs. 3 for males, and females at light work about half of that. He would also be provided with house accommodation. The cost of living was under 40 per cent of the ordinary, and the male wage-earner could have at least a rupee a day. Wages would be controlled by the official Arbitration Boards to prevent variations unfair to the wage-earner. Reward grants of five acres of the coast or river land, specially protected by an embankment from floods, prepared for irrigation, drainage and cultivation, would be given to families after three years' agricultural work in the Colony. The Indian Government has been asked to appoint its own official at the cost of the Colony to watch the interests of the settlers. The deputation welcomed Mr. Gandhi's suggestion that, after a certain period, an independent report shall be made by popular leader at the Colony's expense. The deputation also suggested the constitution of a Committee consisting of an Indian Government official, a nonfinee of the unofficial section of the Indian Legislative Council and Mr. C. F. Andrews to report on the working of the scheme. At the request of the Indian Government's supervising officer, any individual or family would be repatriated free of charge at any time, while if such a request emanated from an individual or a family, the Guianese Government would pay half the estimated cost of the repatriation at the end of 3 years residence, three fourths of the cost at the end of five years, and free of charge at the end of 7 years. The repatriation would not affect any land or other rights fully acquired. Cheap return tickets would be provided to those wishing to return on family reasons. This would secure a regular commercial intercourse between the two countries. A limited

number of professional men, such as doctors, engineers, clerks, schoolmasters, *etc.*, would be given passages either free or at very low rates. One priest or minister of religion for each religious group would be taken free on each voyage. Guarantees of continuance of the existing privileges could be furnished by the Colony and the Colonial Office, stating that their definite policy was the continuance of political and commercial equality of all races. If necessary, a declaratory ordinance could be passed in Guiana, recording the actual position but one legislature could not bind another in regard to this matter.

Before proceeding to examine the scheme, the President, Mr. Bannerji, read out the following cablegram received from the Under-Secretary to the Colonial Office to Dr. Nunan: "Your telegram, 3rd January. The message from the Government, dated 28th December, states the Indian Government has been notified that the existing indentures of last emigrants will be cancelled." The deputation said that they were perfectly certain that there had been an immediate and unconditional cancellation of the indentures for the purpose of creating a favourable atmosphere, and that this cancellation was independent of the scheme they were putting forward.

Dealing with the scheme, Mr. Bannerji asked: One of the papers commenting on our work makes the suggestion: What is the guarantee that you can give, so that the rights and privileges that now exist will not be taken away at some future time?

A:—If we are false to our work, we can dodge any guarantee. An ordinance will be passed declaring that all people are equal before law in the British Guiana, whether they come from outside or not.

Q:—That is only to a limited extent, because another legislature might set it aside. The Colonial Office should give to the Indian Government an undertaking that the policy which has been going to for years will not be departed from.

A:—That I am prepared to ask the Colonial Office to do.

Q:—Will your legislature make a declaration to that effect?

A:—Yes. On behalf of our Government I undertake now to get a declaration passed immediately.

The Committee was also informed that at present the Colony was short of medical practitioners, and that if some doctors went from this country, they could easily make £1,000 a year, at present doctors there make even more money. Clerks were also required, and an ordinary clerk in a commercial concern could earn from Rs. 60 to Rs. 120 per mensem. There were large irrigation and drainage schemes which required engineers. A first class engineer could



make £1,000 a year. There was room also for Indian Lawyers who could earn between three to five hundred pounds annually. English was the court language and there were qualified interpreters in courts. An unskilled labourer got 7 annas, whereas a skilled labourer got Rs. 2. Wages had gone up since 1917, and the indentured labourers had been getting more than the unindentured ones. The condition of the Indian population in the Colony was as good as it was in India, and as a moral safeguard, the deputation suggested that each group of emigrants should bring their priests. Temples and mosques could be built for purposes of worship, and the State was not going to interfere with their religion.

Mr. Crum asked if at any time, say, after 10 or 15 years a deputation that would go from India decide that the condition of the emigrants is not satisfactory and that you have not kept up to your present promise, are you prepared to repatriate them?

A:—We are prepared to repatriate any people if that is the recommendation from one of the three members of the Commission such as we have suggested in our scheme. In Guiana, they said, the coinage was of English silver and based on English Gold basis. They were not affected by the depreciation in English Pound to the same extent as they were in England. There was ample opening for medical men. The deputation was not sure if the Indian University medical qualification was a bar. If so, they undertook to get it removed.

Mr. Sarma referred to the decrease of population, bad, water-logged conditions of several places, and wanted explanation for a statement that the health of the Colony was better than in India.

The deputation replied that the decrease of population was due not to death rate which compared favourably with other Colonies, but to the fact that there had been a large number of emigrations from the British Guiana to the Dutch Guiana for higher wages that were obtainable in Surinam and Trinidad and at the time of the Panama Canal construction. The death rate was lower than what prevailed in India, and there was no cholera, plague or small-pox as here. If thousand families were to go now to the British Guiana, there was house accommodation ready for them, and they would not take any family if they could not provide ready-made accommodation. An average man could earn a dollar, that is, just above Rs. 2. The deputation was not in favour of fixing a minimum wage, because it was not in the interests of the wage-earners themselves. They had only seven hour labour in the British Guiana. There was nothing like that in the world, not even among the Bolsheviks. (laughter.)

Mr. Chanda elicited the information that an agricultural labourer had not to work in jungles or forests, and that the land was

already cleared for him to cultivate. The moment a minimum wage was fixed for these in the Colony, the colonisation system was doomed.

Mr. Sinha got from the deputies the promise of submitting tomorrow a written draft of the Declaratory Ordinance regarding the establishment of equality of race in the Colony, and to Mr. Marjoribanks they said the present Asiatic immigration Ordinance would be so amended as to include this and other guarantees.

Mr. Crum asked: Are you prepared to sign, on behalf of your Government, a note of the proceedings, or, at any rate, those points in regard to which you are in a position to give guarantee?

A:—Yes. Our Government will agree to any other points which we might decide.

On the Committee reassembling on 10th February, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjæ, placed a copy of the correspondence which passed between Mr. Polak, Honorary Secretary, Indian Overseas Association, London, and the Secretary of State for Colonies.

#### Correspondence Between Mr. Polak and the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. Polak stated that the East Indian Association of Georgetown (British Guiana), which body the Indian delegates of the Deputation claimed to represent, had expressed strong dissent from the objects of the proposed scheme which they characterised as being not one for colonisation but for labour. Mr. Polak hoped that nothing would be done until the East Indian Association and other similar bodies were given full opportunities of presenting their views and until educational and sanitary improvements that were officially regarded as urgently needed in the Colony had been carried out by the Colonial administration.

It appeared that the East Indian Association at a meeting resolved that the pamphlets issued by the Deputation while in England were unauthorised and misleading, and that their scheme was unworkable and detrimental to the incoming caste Indians.

The Secretary of State for Colonies, in reply, assured Mr. Polak that the interests of all sections of the community would be carefully weighed in connection with the scheme.

Dr. Numan explained that Mr. Luckhoo, who was the President of the East Indian Association, has, before leaving Guiana, addressed the Association on the scheme which they unanimously approved. A couple of members had a personal feeling and one of them was spending time and energy over this.

#### Draft of Declaratory Ordinance.

The deputation then presented the draft of the Declaratory Ordinance which they had resolved to see passed in their Legislature

establishing and making clear equal rights for all races. The draft *inter alia* states that all ordinances purporting to confer any franchise, vote, appointing or nominating power, or any right to be elected, appointed or nominated to any office or honour or emolument under Political Condition Ordinance, Local Government Board Ordinance, Education Ordinance or under any other Ordinance shall be deemed to apply equally to every British subject of every race or origin, and that any Ordinance purporting to confer upon the British subjects any right for trade, commerce, land-holding, land transfer, lease or mortgage of movable or immovable property or any right of association, or purporting to regulate the exercise thereof, shall be deemed to apply to all British subjects resident within the Colony.

#### Searching Questions by Members.

The members of the Committee subjected the deputation to severe cross-examination on the immediate prospects of those who would go to the Colony, especially as regards housing, wages, land for cultivation, repatriation, sanitation and education. It was assured that emigrants would, on landing, be given cottage and lands and advance of money for cultivation of the first crop or until they were well set up.

Sir Dinshaw wanted a detailed prospectus to be prepared by the deputationists showing the necessities that might be supplied to the emigrants.

Dr. Nunan :—Do you think that a prospectus could be prepared with the varying conditions of a thousand miles of the country.

Sir Dinshaw :—Then better not invite labourers.

Dr. Nunan.—I shall work up one.

Mr. Sarma.—Do you take any special interest to protect Indian interests?

Dr. Nunan.—We have got Arbitration Board and there is the Protector of Colonies.

Sir Dinshaw.—The Protector of Colonies or mere protector of the colony than protector of Indians?

Dr. Nunan.—That has never been the case in the British Guiana and that would never be.

Sir Dinshaw :—Have you not got indogenous population, neighbouring population, whom you could employ for labour? • Why do you come so many miles to India?

Dr. Nunan :—We have considered all these things. American Indians there are who are a timid set and fit only for boat work.

Sir Dinshaw :—Possibly their labour is too dear and therefore you can't make money.

Dr. Nunan:—We are a wealthy Colony and we offer the current wages there. We offer the same privileges to the people at home.

Sir Dinshaw:—We will wait and see.

#### Guarantees.

After further discussion, the following guarantees were put forward and signed by Dr. Nunan, on behalf of the Deputation :

(a) By a declaration by the Legislative Assembly that the present civil status involves equality of all British subjects in the Colony, politically and commercially, and an assurance by the Government of the Colony and by the Colonial Office that the maintenance of such status is a settled policy.

(b) Guarantees as regards wages, housing, sanitation, repatriation, inspection by Indian Government Officers and representatives deputed by the Indian leaders, repatriation in the event of any change in the status, and finally the number of men not to exceed the number of women.

## Report of the

### British Guiana & Fizi Colonisation Committee

This Committee of the Imperial Council (p. 328) was also authorised to meet a similar deputation from Fizi. The Report which was shortly after submitted was published for information by the Govt. of India on 7th May 1920. The following is the full text:—

We, the Committee appointed with reference to the Resolution of the Legislative Council on the 4th February 1920,

- (a) to examine the scheme of colonisation which the deputation from British Guiana desire to put forward and to report thereon and make recommendations to the Government of India,
- (b) to meet the deputation from Fiji and to examine any proposals which they may put forward and to report thereon and make recommendations to the Government of India, and
- (c) to examine the credentials of the deputations,

have the honour to submit the following report.

2. The British Guiana deputation consisted of Dr. J. J. Nunan, L. L. D., and Mr. Luckhoo, Barrister-at-Law. The members of the Fiji deputation were His Lordship the Bishop of Polynesia and Mr. R. S. D. Rankine.

We find that Dr. Nunan and Mr. Luckhoo are accredited to the Government of India by the Secretary of State for India on

behalf of a representative deputation from British Guiana headed by the Governor of that Colony, which deputation was received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and was introduced by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Secretary of State for India. The object of the deputation was to present the needs of the Colony both for the maintenance of present industries and for their extension and to show the advantages which this colony affords to immigrants from other countries. The scheme of colonisation proposed in respect of Indian immigrants is contained in Appendix A. to this Report. This paper was handed to the Committee by Dr. Nunan.

3. As regards Fiji, we find that Mr. Rankine is an officer of the Government of Fiji sent by that Government and that his Lordship the Bishop of Polynesia has been selected by the Government of Fiji, at the request of the planting community of that colony, to visit India and ascertain whether a system of immigration of Indians into Fiji cannot be devised that would satisfy both the Government and public opinion in India. The proposals put forward for Fiji as handed to the Committee are in Appendix B to this Report.

4. Before dealing with the details of these schemes, the Committee would in the first place record their opinion that no scheme of immigration of Indians to either of these colonies should be approved unless it is certain that the position of the immigrants in their new homes will in all respect be equal to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects resident there. Upon this point, therefore, the Committee questioned the deputations at some considerable length. So far as British Guiana is concerned, the deputation assured the Committee that East Indian immigrants had now equal rights with all other classes of British subjects in the colony which was under a liberal constitution giving the people large powers of self-government. The deputation went farther and undertook to declare this equality in rights by legislative ordinance and to secure its continuance by obtaining an announcement of the Colonial Office that the maintenance of such status was a settled policy. A draft of the proposed ordinance has been handed to the Committee by Dr. Nunan and is appended to this Report, Appendix C.

5. In the case of Fiji, the terms of Government appear to be less liberal than in Guiana. The guarantees, therefore, that the Fiji Government can give regarding equality of the political rights are more limited in scope. The Fiji Deputation, however, assured us

- (1) that Indians in Fiji are at present entitled to engage in professions, and trade and commerce, and to acquire property, on the same conditions as other residents, including

Europeans; and that the Government of Fiji will undertake that these rights will not be altered in any way to the detriment of Indians as compared with other residents :—

- (2) that the Government of Fiji will further undertake that the existing municipal rights enjoyed by Indians will not be altered, except in so far as municipal rights of other residents may be altered in the same direction; and that the political rights now being extended to Indians to elect two Indian representatives to the Legislative Council of Fiji will not be withdrawn.

6. While welcoming these assurances, the experience of the past in other colonies compels the Committee to recommend further investigation of this aspect of the matter. It is possible that while political and economic condition render the grant of equal political rights to Indians practicable and expedient at present, there may be (the Committee do not say there are) forces at work calculated to change this happy state of things, which forces may not be easily recognizable save by investigation and enquiries on the spot in British Guiana and Fiji respectively.

7. Coming now to the schemes themselves, the Committee consider, subject to qualification expressed below, that the terms proposed are in themselves fair and reasonable. The Committee however, feels that the effect of the scheme on the Indian immigrant will depend more on factors that can only be gauged on the spot rather than on written provisions of rules and laws. The Committee will endeavour to explain the difficulty it has in the matter by examples :—

1. The most satisfactory feature of both schemes is the provision of land for settlement. But, for this part of scheme to be real and not illusory, the land proposed to be granted must be of such quality and situation that a new Indian settler would not find beyond his power to cultivate it successfully and maintain himself and family thereon. It seems to the Committee impossible to form an opinion on this part of the scheme without local enquiry.
2. Wages are said to be much above the cost of living but as it is not practicable to enforce the payment of wages irrespective of the works done, the Committee think that local enquiries into the tasks expected of a worker, the wages paid therefor and the cost of living, by persons conversant with the capabilities and needs of Indian agriculturists could alone elucidate whether the prospects of immigrants are really so good as they appear to be

on paper. This appears to the Committee to be more particularly necessary in the case of the Fizi.

3. Health conditions in both colonies are reported to be good ; and the Committee sees no reason to doubt this in the case of Fizi. In the case of British Guiana, notwithstanding the favourable (in comparison with India) death rate, the Committee understands the East Indian population has been practically stationary. It is possible that this state of things is due to re-emigration or repatriation, or is explainable on other grounds than bad death and birth rates. But the Committee feel that it would be well to have the matter investigated on the spot.

8. For the reasons set forth in the above paragraphs the Committee resolves to submit its conclusions in the form of the two following resolutions which have been passed by the members unanimously.

#### Resolutions

##### I

"This Committee having heard Dr. Nunan and Mr Luckhoo is inclined to take a favourable view of the Scheme of Colonisation presented by them in view of guarantees and safeguards which they are prepared to provide by legislation and otherwise, but before recommending definite acceptance of it, would advise the appointment of a deputation of three competent persons to proceed to British Guiana, investigate the conditions on the spot and report to the Government of India.

##### II

This Committee recommends :—

1. (a) that the Government of Fiji be asked to give guarantees similar to those which the British Guiana deputation declared that their Government was prepared to give :
- (b) that, if the Government of Fiji do give these guarantees the Government of India should send a deputation similarly constituted to test the scheme generally and specially as to the question of the adequacy of wages, and
- II—subject to the above guarantees being given and to a satisfactory report being made by the deputation, this Committee would recommend a favourable consideration being given to the colonisation scheme by the Government of India.

[(Signed)

Members of the Committee (see p. 328)]

## Note by the Hon. Mr. Chanda

It seems to me that the British Guiana Deputation was on a somewhat better footing than the Fiji one, as regards binding their respective Governments. Political conditions in British Guiana are also more favourable than in Fiji as regards Indians, but the climate of British Guiana is not very attractive and the wages in Fiji are decidedly inadequate as the recent riots indicate. Land scheme seems to be a secondary consideration—in Fiji at any rate—real object is to obtain labour immediately.

I am not very anxious to give much encouragement to any emigration on a large scale on other grounds also.

However, I agree that definite guarantees being given, matter should be investigated by a deputation which we recommend before any definite recommendation be made.

(Sd.) KAMINI K. CHANDA.

## Note by the Hon. Mr. Sarma

1. I shall add a few lines by way of explanation. The two deputations have the moral support of the Governments concerned behind them and the British Guiana Deputation has a large body of colonial opinion in its support, but I do not think that either of them has any authority to bind its Government.

2. It was not clear to me that the wages in British Guiana were adequate and at the present rate of exchange the wages in Fiji appears to be inadequate. The wages promised to be guaranteed were not very definite. As regards housing, I believe the existing arrangement and the arrangements promised meet the requirements of those who may engage themselves to work on plantations. Free labourers may be afforded facilities, but it did not seem to be clear that any definite pledges were given.

3. Guarantees mentioned in the note should be given before any deputation is sent. The deputations were anxious about the importation of labour to work on plantations and the scheme proper appeared to be a matter of secondary importance at the present moment. There seems to be no clearly planned arrangement already made for land colonisation. I am not in favour of encouraging emigration unless it be for immediate land colonisation, but the possibilities are so great that if the necessary guarantees are given, deputations should be sent to investigate the problems on the spot.

(Sd.) B. N. SARMA.



# The Deputation to the Viceroy.

*23rd July 1920.*

A deputation of the Indian residents of British East Africa, waited upon the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, along with Sir G. Barnes, the Commerce Member, Government of India, on July 23rd at the Viceregal Lodge. The deputation consisted of the hon. Mr. Abdul Rasul, Mr. Visram, Member, Legislative Council, East Africa, Mr. Husainbhoy Abdulabbhoy Lalji, merchant and a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Mr. Beharilal Narayana, merchant, Zanzibar, Mr. Muhammed Saleh Kassim, rice merchant, Zanzibar, Mr. Karabhai Teja, rice merchant, Mombassa and Mr. Nanubai Desai, merchant, Kisumu, East Africa.

## *The Representations.*

The representations made by the deputation covered the whole ground of Indian grievances in British East Africa. The first point related to Sir Benjamin Robertson's visit to Tanganyika and British East Africa, and the deputation expressed regret that Sir Benjamin would consult only the local administrations and would have Indian residents unheard.

His Excellency explained that the deputation was under a misapprehension. It was true that Sir Benjamin Robertson's visit was informal, but this would not mean that he would not discuss the situation with Indians and take all possible measures to appreciate and understand their views. In order that there might be no misunderstanding on the point, the Viceroy undertook to send a telegram to Sir Benjamin Robertson in the sense. The deputation then asked what action would be taken on Sir Benjamin Robertson's report when received, and His Excellency reminded them of his declaration in the Indian Legislative Council on July 30th last. He had stated that the position of the Government of India was and always would be that there was no justification, in a Crown Colony or protectorate, for assigning to British Indians a status in any way inferior to that of any other class of His Majesty's subjects. His Excellency stated that he adhered to this declaration and that he would continue to press this view on His Majesty's Government. At the same time he expressed the hope that Indians would co-operate with him by putting forward this case in a manner which was likely to win general acceptance. He pointed out to the deputation that it was a matter of great importance that in presenting their case they should avoid all overt statements and exaggeration. He suggested they should concentrate on the main issues and should avoid arousing anta-

gonism and resentment by putting forward exaggerated claims. The deputation then referred to the present currency policy in British East Africa and to the harm done to Indian trade with the Colony by the present position of exchange. They stated that owing to exchange it was difficult for Indian merchants in British East Africa to place firm orders with Indian mills at rupee rates, and they also referred to the fact that Italian merchants trading in Italian sphere of influence in Abyssinia had the benefit of special preference given in that territory to goods made in Italy and they suggested that it would be beneficial if Indian merchants were placed in a similar position in British East Africa. In reply, His Excellency pointed out that currency policy in British East Africa was an internal matter of great complexity, and he doubted whether the Government of India would be justified in interfering in a domestic problem of this kind. He emphasised, moreover, that the policy affected both Indians and Europeans and that it did not imply any racial discrimination. Similarly the question of tariff preference to Indian imports into British East Africa raised a very large issue and did not not specifically affect the question which he was there to discuss, namely that of disabilities of Indians in British East Africa. The next point raised was in connection with the recent territorial division of British East Africa into Kenia Colony and Kenia Protectorate. His Excellency stated that the Government of India was still without information as to the exact meaning of this change, but he promised to make enquiries in the matter. The deputation then asked that an Indian Trade Commissioner might be appointed in British East Africa. His Excellency assured the deputation that the Government of India had already considered that proposal and were in correspondence with the Secretary of State on the subject. He added that if a Trade Commissioner were appointed it must be clearly understood that his duties would be purely of a commercial nature. The deputation then referred to the power vested in the hands of the administrator of Tanganyika Territory to deport undesirables, and they suggested that these powers might make it possible for the administrator to deport Indians without trial. His Excellency stated that the Government of India had no copy of the ordinance referred to, and he asked the deputation to send a copy to Sir George Barnes in order that it might be examined by the Government of India. At the same time he pointed out that Tanganyika Territory was still an occupied enemy country and was under quasi-military law and he saw no *prima facie* reason to suppose that the ordinance should be regarded as being directed against Indians. He read out to the deputation a portion of the draft mandate for Tanganyika Territory which, it was

proposed, Great Britain should receive from the League of Nations. If this mandate were ratified, it would entirely safeguard the rights of Indians.

#### Municipal Disabilities.

The disabilities of Indians in municipal matters were then discussed. The deputation complained that the constitution of Nairobi Municipal Council had recently been changed. Formerly, the Municipal Councils contained 5 European elected members, 4 nominated officials, 2 elected Indian members and one Goanese elected member. The deputation stated that the number of elected Europeans had now been raised from 5 to 9 and that nominated officials had been eliminated from the Council. The deputation objected to this change, because formerly they had been able to count on 4 nominated officials to safeguard the interests of Indians. They considered it unfair that Europeans should have such a disproportionate representation on the Council in comparison with Indians. The Indians paid considerably greater share of the total municipal revenue from taxation than Europeans, and moreover they outnumbered Europeans by 3 to 1. They stated that the new constitution of the Municipal Council had aroused great resentment among Indian population in Nairobi, and that in order to give concrete expression to this resentment Indians had refused either to offer themselves for election to the Council or to accept nomination. His Excellency agreed that there was great force in what the deputation said on this point, and hoped that their grievances in this matter would be redressed.

The deputation also referred to the question of political franchise, and they complained that an ordinance had already been passed in the local Legislative Council which did not adequately meet the claims of Indian residents in the matter of franchise. His Excellency agreed that this matter was vital. It was covered, however, by the declaration of January 30th last in the Imperial Legislative Council.

In conclusion, His Excellency reminded the deputation that the decision in matters of this kind lay with His Majesty's Government and on with the Government of India. The Government of India were in sympathy with many of the demands of Indians resident in British East Africa. They had already made representations to His Majesty's Government on the subject and they would continue to do so. At the same time he repeated his appeal to the deputation that Indians should not make the task of the Government of India more difficult. He again advised them to concentrate on the main issues, to state their case with studied moderation and to avoid making exaggerated claims and demands which would tend to alienate sympathy and weaken what was otherwise a strong case.

# Govt. of India

## Despatch on Indians in E. Africa

21st October 1921.

A mass meeting of East Africa Indians was held at Nairobi (British E. Africa) on the 22nd August to consider the announcement of Lord Milner's decisions. A resolution was passed, protesting against assigning an inferior status to the British Indians in the East African Territories (a) by not granting them due and effective representation on the Legislative and Municipal Councils, (b) by insisting upon the application of the principle of segregation of races, and (c) by putting restrictions on the ownership of land by them.

On these issues the Government of India write :—

We are convinced that the only reliable safeguard for Indian interests is adequate representation in the Legislative Council. At the same time, we desire to reiterate our opinion that there should be a common electoral roll and a common franchise on a reasonable property basis *plus* an educational test, without racial discrimination, for all British subjects. We believe that this is the true solution of the East African problem. We fear that separate representation for different communities will perpetuate and intensify racial antagonism. On the other hand, a common electorate, whereby a member of one community, would represent the constituents of another community, would tend to moderate and compose racial differences. In the other way we believe the diverse races in East Africa will become a united people. We recognise that practical objections will be urged against such a solution. In the first place, the Legislative Council Ordinance of 1919 conferred adult suffrage on the European population, and it may be admitted at once that the Indian community is not ripe for adult suffrage. On the other hand, the adoption of a common franchise on the basis which we have suggested, would mean a narrower franchise for the European community than that which they now enjoy. It is not within our province to question whether it was wise at once to confer adult suffrage on the shifting European population of a new country like the Kenya Colony. It is probable, at any rate, that the great majority would satisfy the property and educational qualifications which we would suggest. We recognise that it would not be possible to disfranchise any one who already has the vote, but for the future we would urge that there should be a common qualification for everyone of whatever race who is admitted to the electoral roll. The composition of the Legislative

Council is admittedly experimental, and we would submit with respect that its revision should not be prejudiced by the Ordinance of 1919, which was passed without a consideration of our views, and, indeed, without our knowledge. Secondly, it may be objected that as the Indians in East Africa are more numerous than the Europeans and are likely to increase more rapidly, a common electorate would mean that the Indian members would dominate the Legislative Council, and that this would be incompatible with the responsibilities of the British Government for the welfare of the colony as a whole and of the native population in particular. The objection is admittedly not immediate, for it is stated in paragraph (3) of the Despatch of the 21st May that there is only a very small number of the Indian community who can be regarded as qualified to exercise the franchise. Hence if the qualification for a common franchise is properly defined, it follows that the number of Indian voters will be far less than the number of of European voters. In future it is the rule that, with better educational facilities and increase of wealth, the Indian voters might outnumber the Europeans. But the Indian voters would still, it is believed, to a large extent, be concentrated in the urban constituencies. The country districts would continue to return European members. Finally, it is common cause that the interests of the native population require that the official majority should remain. The fear of Indian domination is, we submit, unfounded. In paragraph (4) of the Despatch of the 21st May, Lord Milner directs that the same arrangements should be made for the elective representation of Indians on the Municipal Council. We understand that the Nairobi Municipal Council, which is the most important in the Colony now, consists of one nominated official and twelve elected Europeans and that it is proposed to add three elected Indians. We have no exact figures to show the relative positions of the different communities, but we are informed that the population and the incidence of municipal taxation are roughly as follows: Europeans—population, 2,000—municipal taxation Rs. 70,000; Indians—population, 5,000—municipal taxation Rs. 1,20,000; Africans—population, 12,000—Rs. 10,000 Government grant—municipal taxation Rs. 50,000. Here, again, we would urge most strongly that Indian interests should be adequately represented. In the Municipal Councils there is not even the safeguard of an official majority. And it is believed that the insanitary conditions in which Indians are frequently living are due in part at any rate to the neglect of the Municipal authorities. Here again we would press for roll and common franchise. The ward system of election would secure adequate representation for each community, and an increase

in the number of official members, which, the interests of the large native population would appear to require, would be a safeguard against the predominance of any single community.

#### Segregation of Races.

In paragraph (7) of the Despatch of the 21st May Lord Milner has directed that the principal of race segregation should be adhered to in the residential areas of townships and whenever practicable in commercial areas also. We noted with satisfaction Lord Milner's assurance to Lord Islington's deputation that, in any decision which might come to, he would certainly not be actuated, either by racial prejudice, to allow the consideration of trade jealousy to prevail, and we observe that there is no intention to discriminate against Indians or to sacrifice Indian to European interests. It appears from Lord Milner's speech in the House of Lords, on the 14th July, that the policy of race segregation emanates from Professor W. J. Simpson, whose principles are enunciated in paragraph (16) of his report on sanitary matters in the East Africa Protectorate, Uganda and Zanzibar. Professor Simpson's object is sanitary. Lord Milner is also influenced by social reasons. To quote, again, his speech of the 14th July: "My own conviction is that, in the interests of social peace, the residence of different races in different areas, I am speaking now of the populous city areas, is desirable, and so far from stimulating it is calculating to mitigate hostility and ill-feeling." Nevertheless, Lord Milner's decision is bitterly resented not only by Indians in East Africa, but by educated opinion throughout India. The reason for this resentment requires careful consideration. We will first consider segregation in commercial areas. The first objection is that it is irrational. If the end in view is to prevent intermingling in the same quarters of town and trade centres of races with different customs and habits, the nationality of a business firm would appear to be less important than the nationality of its employees and customers. It seems irrational, for instance, that a European and an Indian firm, which are alike dealing mainly with European customers and are alike employing Indian clerks and assistants, should be made to trade in different quarters, or again sanitation and social convenience do not appear to require that a European firm, with a large native retail trade, should carry on its business in the European quarter. The distinction would break down altogether in the case of companies. Secondly, from the strictly commercial point of view it is inconvenient that firms, doing the same class of business, should be separated by an artificial barrier. In the Uganda Protectorate, which is less affected by racial prejudice, the recently appointed Develop-

ment Commission, in paragraph 209 of their report, stated that they would be strongly opposed to any segregation in the business areas. And we are informed that the Uganda Chamber of Commerce has expressed similar views. Again, in Mombasa, the most important commercial town in East Africa, which is free from the racial bitterness of the Uplands, we understand that European opinion generally favour a joint business area. Thirdly, it is feared that the condition of segregation, which Lord Milner postulates, namely, that Indians should be fairly dealt with in the selection of sites, will not be fulfilled, and it must be admitted that the plans of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu facing the pages 24, 45 and 59 of Professor Simpson's report, are sufficient cause for anxiety. In Nairobi, Professor Simpson proposed that the whole of the present business quarter between the Railway Station and the river should be reserved for Europeans. Indians were to be relegated to the other side of the river. In Mombasa, again, the whole of the area adjoining the harbour of Kilindini was to be the European business area. Indians were to be kept on the other side of the Island. And in Kisumu, where practically the whole of the trade is in the hands of Indians, one short street was allotted for the Indian bazar, while an extensive block was to be laid out as European business quarters. Fourthly, it is objected that segregation in commercial areas is impracticable. In Nairobi, a considerable part of the land, which Professor Simpson included in the European commercial area, is already occupied by Indians who it is recognised, cannot be expropriated. We are indebted to Sir Edward Northey for the plan attached to this Despatch showing the lay-out which is now proposed. The comparison with the map facing page 24 of Professor Simpson's report will show that his recommendations have been substantially modified. We gratefully acknowledge the liberal spirit in which Sir Edward Northey has interpreted Lord Milner's orders. At the same time, it is apparent that his proposals, which we based on practical considerations, are not consistent with Professor Simpson's theories. The European and Asiatic areas are now separated only by the width of a street and the Indian bazar, which in Professor Simpson's opinion is the centre of infection, remains where it is running out like promontory into the European area. Moreover, a large number of plots in the revised European area, and more especially in the important Government road, are still occupied by Indians, whom it is not intended to disturb. In fact, it would appear that commercial segregation in Nairobi is now practically narrowed down to the question whether Indians shall be allowed to bid for certain unoccupied plots in the best business streets in

which Indians are already established, but which it is now desired to reserve for European occupation. If then the object in view is sanitation and social convenience, we submit that the criterion should be the class of business and not nationality. We suggest that there should be a joint commercial area regulated by strict sanitary and building laws, which would ensure that only business of good class, whatever may be their nationality, should be established in the best streets, and that the business of the inferior class whatever may be their nationality, should be confined to less important streets. Further, it has frequently been noticed that the practice "of living in" leads to insanitary habits and overcrowding, and we would suggest that "living in" should be prohibited, at any rate, in the best streets. In other words, to use the phrase, which we understand, is current in Nairobi, there should be a joint "lock-up."

#### Residential Areas.

We have next to consider the question of segregation in residential areas. It is admitted that the Indians in East Africa naturally prefer to live together in their own quarter, and have no desire to live in the European residential area. They have only asked that they should be allowed to acquire suitable residential sites, which hitherto have generally been denied to them. The only exceptions are the few Indians who have been brought up to live in European style, and it is understood that the Government of the Colony would desire to enforce the policy of segregation rigidly in such cases. The Indian objection to residential segregation is primarily a question of principle. It is felt not only by Indians in East Africa, but also throughout India that compulsory segregation implies a racial stigma. In theory, it may be that there is no question of racial discrimination against Indians. It is unfortunate, however, that the policy of segregation, as advocated by Europeans in East Africa, is animated by the racial feeling, which marred the Economic Commission's Report. And it is not easy for Indians to appreciate that the reasons, for which Lord Milner has accepted this policy, are wholly different. Nor is it a matter of mere sentiment. They fear that in practice the policy of segregation will be administered in a spirit of racialism rather than of even-handed justice. In his speech of the 14th July Lord Milner said the condition, on which he was prepared to defend segregation, was that there should be fair treatment of both races, in the matter of sites. "I mean to say," he added "that you should not give all the best sites to Europeans and cram the Indians into inferior localities. This, however, they consider,



is precisely what has happened in the past, when the principle of segregation was not formally recognised. And they see no reason to expect that the formal recognition of the principle will better their condition. These fears do not appear to us to be groundless. In the projected plans of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu in Professor Simpson's report, the areas demarcated for European and Asiatic residence respectively, apart from any question of convenience are wholly disproportionate to the numbers of the two communities. And it is understood that in the case of residential areas, no substantial modification of Professor Simpson's proposals is intended. It seems to us, indeed, almost inevitable that compulsory segregation will mean that the best sites will be allotted to the race which is politically most powerful. Further, it can be taken as almost certain that the race which controls the Municipal Council will spend an unfair proportion of the revenue of the municipality on its own quarter, and will neglect the areas occupied by other races. The practical effect of compulsory segregation on the race, which is politically weaker, can be seen in the Asiatic ghettos in the Transvaal. We deeply regret that Lord Milner should now have considered it advisable to adopt the principle of race segregation. It seems to us to be a reversal of the principle, for which His Majesty's Government have always contended in the parallel case of South Africa. We may, perhaps, be permitted to quote the words, in which the late Mr. Alfred Lyttelton in his Despatch, dated the 20th July, 1904, rejected the proposals which the Governor of the Transvaal had submitted for the segregation of Indians in the Transvaal. We believe that sanitation and social convenience could be adequately secured by mutual consent, by the strict enforcement of sanitary and building laws and by a just administration of municipal revenues. In this way the end, which Lord Milner has in view to promote social comfort, a social convenience and social peace, might be attained. But legislation on racial lines, so far from mitigating, will stimulate hostility and ill-feeling. It will, we fear, gratuitously provoke a consequence in this country and throughout the Empire.

#### Restrictions on Ownership of Land

We will consider first the restriction on the ownership of land in townships. In paragraph (8) of the Despatch of the 21st May, Lord Milner says that it seems necessarily to follow from the adoption, of the principle of race segregation, that as a general rule, no transfer of land, either by way of ownership or mortgage between Europeans and Asiatics, should be allowed and similarly when township plots are put up to auction, Europeans should not be allowed to bid for plots in the Asiatic quarter, or Asiatics to

bid for plots in the European quarter. It may be added that the restriction would close a legitimate field for investment both to Indians and to Europeans, and in the case of sales of new plots would be likely to prevent the State also from obtaining the full market price for Crown lands. It is understood that Indians already own many plots in the areas now occupied by Europeans and vice versa. It would appear to us to be inequitable to restrict the right of transfer of plots already alienated and unnecessary to impose any such restriction in the sale of new plots which may be alienated hereafter. There remains the restriction on the acquisition by Indians of agricultural land in the Uplands. It is suggested in paragraph (6) of the Despatch of the 21st May that this merely reaffirms Lord Elgin's decision contained in his Despatch of the 19th March 1908, that, as a matter of administrative convenience, grants of land in the Upland area should not be made to Indians. We understand, however, that practically no land, which is now capable of development, remains to be alienated in the Uplands. In the course of his address to the Convention of Associations at Nairobi on the 9th August last, His Excellency the Governor is reported in the *East African Standard* of the 14th August to have said: "By the time this whole settlement scheme (the soldier settlement scheme) had been readjusted in the firms which had not turned out to be what it was hoped they would be, and were replaced by something better, there should not be a farm left worth having." It would thus appear that there is now practically no land left to which Lord Elgin's decision could be applied. It is understood, however, that the restriction has now been extended so as to prohibit the transfer of land to Indians. We would point out that this goes far beyond Lord Elgin's decision and it is incompatible with his own pronouncement that it is not consonant with the views of his Majesty's Government to impose legal restrictions on any particular section of the community in regard to the acquisition of land. Lord Milner has justified the exclusion of Indians from the Uplands, on the ground that Europeans were by nature physically excluded from other areas. Hence, if the limited area, which is suitable for European settlement were thrown open to the competition of Asiatic there would be, taking the Colony as a whole a virtual discrimination in favour of Asiatic as against European settlement. He cannot, therefore, regard the Indian claim to be admitted to the Uplands as just or reasonable. It has been argued with force that there are vast areas in the Empire suitable for European settlement, from which Indians are excluded, either by law or climatic conditions, and that it is, therefore, unjust that Indians should be prohibited

from acquiring agricultural land in a colony which has been, to a considerable extent, developed by Indian enterprise. Apart from this, however, it is not clear that the admission of Indians to the Uplands would be a virtual discrimination against Europeans. First, it is necessary to determine what exactly is meant by the Uplands. This term is defined in the Despatch of the 17th July, 1906, in which the Colonial Secretary approved of the principle that the land outside municipal limits, roughly lying between Kiu and Fort Ternan, should be granted only to European settlers. It might be inferred from the Despatch of the 1st May and from Lord Milner's speech of the 14th July that the European settlers were confined to a comparatively small area, while Indians enjoyed a monopoly elsewhere. But a reference to the map appended to this Despatch, for which we are again indebted to Sir Edward Northey, will show that by far the larger part of the area coloured red, which is the alienated land or land surveyed for alienation, lies between Kiu and Fort Ternan. Further, almost the whole of the alienated land outside these limits, that is in the lowlands, which *ex-hypothesi* are unsuitable for European settlement has been alienated to Europeans. The total area alienated to European or available for alienation is given as 11,859 square miles. The total area held by Indians, we are informed, is only 32 square miles, out of which 21 square miles have been purchased from Europeans, and only 11 square miles have been obtained from the Government. In addition the Indians hold a small area of agricultural land in the coastal belt, but here, again, we understand the Europeans own large plantations. The attitude of the Government, towards the acquisition by Indians of agricultural lands, even in the lowlands, can be judged from the case which has been brought to our notice. We submit that it is not easy to reconcile the land policy of the East African Government with Lord Milner's assurance that it has been the avowed principle and is the definite intention of the British authorities to mete out even-handed justice between the different races inhabiting those territories. In the circumstances which we have set forth, we are unable to agree that the Indian claim to be allowed to acquire agricultural land anywhere in the Colony is neither just nor reasonable. We do not consider that the proposal in the latter part of paragraph (6) of the Despatch of the 21st May is adequate compensation for the exclusion of Indians from the Uplands, and we hold most strongly that there is no justification for the extension of Lord Elgin's decision so as to prohibit the transfer of land to Indians which, in our view, is incompatible with his own pronouncement. We would add that it is the opinion of Sir Benjamin Robertson that climatic disabilities in the Colony, as a whole, tend to operate against the Indian race.

than against the European settler. The European, who works on the plantation system with native labour, can and does cultivate the Lowlands. The European planter is no more excluded by climatic consideration from the Lowland than he is excluded from other tropical countries. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the Indian farmer would prosper in the cold climate of the Upland. We understand that this opinion is supported by experience in Natal. The acquisition of agricultural land by Indians in Natal is not restricted. There are many wealthy Indians, and there are more than 1,000 Indians of the agricultural class. There is a keen demand for land in the coast belt, which has not been satisfied. But very few farms have been acquired by Indians in the Uplands and the evidence before the recent Commission was that where Indians have attempted to farm in the upland, they have generally failed. If, then, as Lord Milner suggests, the issue in Kenya Colony is merely a question of climate, we would urge that it be left for the climate to decide. The Despatch of the 21st May purports to deal only with the various questions affecting the Indian community in British East Africa. We are informed, however, by Sir Benjamin Robertson that under the order of the Colonial Office, Lord Milner's decisions were announced simultaneously in Nairobi and Entebbe and understood to apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Uganda Protectorate. We were not previously aware that the position of the Indians in Uganda was even under the consideration of the Colonial Office. Moreover, from the information before us, it would appear that the East African decisions are generally inapplicable to the conditions in Uganda. In the first place, we understand that in Uganda there is no Legislative Council, nor any elected Municipal Council. On the contrary, in the important Uganda province, the native Lukiko already enjoy a substantial measure of autonomy, and it is likely that a similar form of native Government will eventually be established in the other province. Secondly, as has already been stated, the Uganda Development Commission, in Paragraph (209) of their report, have rejected the principle of segregation in business area as impracticable. Thirdly, the Development Commission in the same paragraph of their report, which was signed by two Asiatic members, accepted generally the principle of separate residential areas for different races, and it would appear that if no order had been issued, this question would have been settled amicably by mutual consent. Fourthly, as already stated, the Development Commission, in paragraph 212 of their report, have rejected restriction on the acquisition of land in townships as neither justifiable nor necessary. Finally, there is no "upland" in Uganda. In short, the racial issue would seem to have been raised unnecessarily

in Uganda. We are informed by Sir Benjamin Robertson that the relations of the Indian community in Uganda with the Government and with unofficial Europeans have always been cordial, and this is borne out by the friendly spirit of the report of the Development Commission on which all classes were represented. We may be permitted to quote paragraph 3 of their report in contrast to the racial bitterness which animated the report of the East African Economic Commission :

"The country owes much to the Indian trader, and we consider that a broad policy of toleration should be adopted towards him. He has shown energy and enterprise and has assisted in the opening up of the more remote districts. He is also of value as an agriculturist, and his activities in this direction might well be encouraged."

It seems to us regrettable that Uganda should have been drawn into the East African controversy. As things now stand the Indians in Uganda fear that disabilities to which they have not hitherto been subjected will now be imposed upon them. It will relieve anxiety if they are assured as early as possible that this is not the intention of His Majesty's Government.

#### Conclusion.

To conclude, we are unable to accept Lord Milner's decision as a final settlement. It is our duty to impress on you that public opinion throughout India regards the case of the Indians in East Africa as a test of the position of India in the British Empire. At the Imperial Conference of 1918, for the sake of Imperial unity, we accepted the reciprocity resolution which practically excludes Indians from the Self-Governing Dominions. We cannot agree to iniquity of treatment in a Crown Colony, more especially in a Colony in which India has always had a peculiar interest. We have shown in this Despatch that whatever may be the intention of Lord Milner's decision, there is, in practice, an unfair discrimination against Indians in East Africa. If further proof is needed, we may point out to the fact that in Tanganyika territory, where Indians are protected by the Government of the League of Nations, Lord Milner's decisions cannot be applied. It seems to us to be an impossible position that British Indians in a British Colony should be subjected to disabilities to which they cannot be subjected in an adjoining mandated territory. It has been suggested that a Royal Commission should be appointed to consider the whole question of the administration of the East African Territories, and it appears from his reply to Lord Islington's deputation on the 19th April, that Lord Milner himself is not averse to the proposal. We would urge the appointment of such a Commission at the conclusion of the Indian

question in the terms of reference. In no other way we believe will it be possible to assemble the facts on which a just decision can be based. We would also urge that the Government of India should be represented on the Commission. We cannot admit that we are not directly concerned. To quote once more Lord Milner's reply to Lord Islington's Deputation, "we will cease to be an Empire if any portion of the Empire is entirely relieved from the responsibility for what happens in another." The Government of India cannot and will not disclaim responsibility for the welfare of the Indians who are settled in East Africa.

### The Sec. of State's Reply.

To this the Secretary of State for India replied by cable, dated India Office, the 24th December, 1920:

East Africa. Your despatch of October 21st. I need hardly say that I am fully alive to the importance of the question, and as responsible here for the protection of Indian interests, I have urged upon his Majesty's Government the strength of the case which you have so cogently presented. I have not answered your despatch, merely because matter is still before His Majesty's Government, and I wish Your Excellency's Government to be assured that your despatch has reinforced the case which I was already urging.

### (Note)

The Islington deputation of 19th April mentioned above was the deputation headed by Lord Islington and comprising Sir J. D. Rees, Sir M. Bhowmagree, Sir Krishna Gupta, Messrs Ormsby Gore, Bennett, and Col. Wedgwood, together with members of the East African Indian Delegation which waited on Mr. Montagu and Lord Milner, the Colonial Secretary, and made representations urging equality of treatment for Indians in East Africa and the removal of existing disabilities and asked for a commission of enquiry. The proceedings were, however, private. Mr. Jeevanji, head of the Indian Delegation, afterwards regretted that he consented to the deputation being received privately. He said that if he knew beforehand that such would be the case he would have refused to go. Publicity was never given to the affairs of East Africa. The result of the deputation was that the Colonial Office took the matter coldly and apathetically. The following memorandum was then published.

# Memorandum

## To the Secretary of State

### By the Indian Overseas Association

The following petition submitted to the Secretary of State for India by the Indian Overseas Association and Indian Delegates from and on behalf of Indians in British East Africa covers the whole field of the infamous wrongs that are being perpetrated there against the Indian settlers.

#### Introductory.

In the year 1920 it might seem a work of supererogation to insist upon the fact of the ancient association of India with the Eastern Territories of the African Continent. The local administration of the British East Africa Protectorate and His Majesty's Government should be fully aware of all the facts relating to that association, but that they are in danger of being forgotten is clear from Part I of the final Report of the Economic Commission issued by the Government of the East Africa Protectorate. (See 20.) That Commission was appointed by the Governor of the Protectorate and was presided over by a high officer of the Administration. The Report was signed by him in common with the other members of the Commission. In Chapter 2 a historical survey of East Africa is given. It is incredible that the signatories of this Report were ignorant of India's historic connection with these territories, yet the astonishing fact remains that this chapter contains not a single reference to India or her people, and the only conclusion that can properly be come to by a perusal of this chapter, together with Chapter 7, is that the omission of any such reference was deliberate. It will be necessary at a later stage to revert to the allegations contained in Chapter 7.

#### Historical.

Indian trade connection with Zanzibar and the East African Territories is almost pre-historic. It is, at any rate, upwards of three centuries old and it is notorious that since the middle of last century, from the time of Lord Canning, British Indians and the Government of India have taken a very active part in extending British influence in East Africa. It was admitted before the Sanderson Committee in 1910, by Sir John Kirk, with probably an unequalled knowledge

of the protectorate, that "but for the Indians we (the British) should not be there now. It was entirely through being in possession of the influence of these Indian merchants that we were enabled to build up the influence that eventually resulted in our position." One of the main grounds stated for granting the Royal Charter to the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888 by Queen Victoria was that it was calculated to be advantageous to the "commercial and other interests" of the British Indians, and that "the possession by a British Company of the East Coast line" would protect British Indian subjects from being compelled to reside and trade under the Government and protection of Alien Powers". In the early days of the conquest and pacification of the Protectorate, Indian soldiers bore a very honourable part, and the history of events in Natal at the outbreak of the Boer War was repeated when, in the beginning of the late World War, the timely help given by India in men, money, and material to East Africa saved the country from complete destruction and its occupation by the German forces. The earliest transport facilities in the protectorate were provided by Indian contractors and labour. The main factor in opening up the interior of the country was the construction of the Uganda railway, entirely by Indian labour and subordinate staff, under the most trying conditions and with considerable loss of life. Since then very large numbers of Indian traders, merchants, agriculturists, artisans and labourers have migrated to the country at the express invitation of the local Government, and relying on justice and equal treatment under British rule. This enterprising, loyal, simple-living, and law abiding Indian population has rendered invaluable service to the country in its industrial and commercial development, and has introduced into and invested in it very large sums of money in the erection of large numbers of substantial and permanent buildings, comprising several streets and Bazzars entirely owned by Indians, in the chief towns of the Protectorate and also in Uganda. In his book "My African Journey" (a journey undertaken by him as Under Secretary of State for the Colonies) the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, at present the Secretary of State for War, wrote: "It is the Indian trader, who, penetrating and maintaining himself in all sorts of places to which no white man could go, or in which no white man could earn a living, has, more than anyone else, developed the early beginnings of trade, and opened up the first slender means of communication."

#### The Present Position

By far the greater proportion of the clerical and mechanical staff on the Uganda railway and its workshops consists of Indians,



and large numbers of Indian clerks are employed in the Government offices and commercial houses. The erection of buildings throughout the country is carried on by Indian contractors and artisans, and about 80 per cent, of the trade and commerce of the Protectorate is carried on by Indians. The present European population of the Protectorate is said to be approximately six thousand, and includes a considerable proportion of officials, military, and missionaries. In 1911 slightly more than one-half of the European population was actually engaged in the development of the country. The proportion to-day so engaged is believed to be not very much greater. The present Indian population of the Protectorate is certainly not less than 25 thousand, and it is estimated that it is between 30 and 35 thousand.

It is thus clear that, apart from the pioneer character of Indian enterprise in East Africa, the Indian population of the Protectorate is considerably greater than the European. Its invested capital is far greater, its hold upon the trade and commerce of the Protectorate is four-fifths of the whole, and it pays a very much larger proportion of the taxation of the country than does the European population. No impartial observer could fail to come to the conclusion that in all essentials, including those of climate, the Protectorate is, in fact, apart from the native population, an Indian and not a European colony. Indeed, Indian law is, and was, as a matter of course, administered in East Africa. So distinguished and disinterested a traveller as Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, in a dispatch appearing in the *Times* of 16th March, 1920, says: "The retail trade is almost wholly in the hands of the Greeks as far as the Sudan, and to the South, of the Indians. Indian and Japanese products are ousting British. . . . The goods are adapted for local European and native requirements. . . . Indians are rapidly gaining control of the ivory, hides, and other markets. There are branches of Indian banks in every centre." Dr. Mitchell, being a stranger, could not have known that Indian trade existed in the protectorate generations before any British goods were introduced.

#### European and Indian Relations

In spite, however, of their prior claims to consideration at the hands of the authorities, due to their pioneer work in the carrying of the products of modern civilisation to the barbarous and semi-barbarous people of the country, and the vital and trading risks incidental thereto, and notwithstanding their numerical preponderance and the immensely superior proportion of the private Indian capital invested in the country, the Indian settlers did not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy. They did not demand preferential treat-

ment. They did not demand European exclusion, nor did they agitate for the imposition of disabilities upon such Europeans as were already settled or might be allowed to settle in the Protectorate. On the contrary, they were not afraid of competition, and welcomed and were willing to co-operate on a basis of equality with all new comers, whether Indian or European. Some prominent members of the Indian Community even went out of their ways to recommend the country for European settlement as well as Indian. In the early days of the British administration of the Protectorate, the relations between the Indian community and the Administration were of a very friendly character. The Foreign Office, which at that time controlled the Administration, fully recognised the invaluable and indispensable services rendered by India and the Indian settlers. Shortly after the Boer War, a number of discontented Dutch settlers from South Africa, dissatisfied with the conditions in the neighbouring German Territory, migrated to the Protectorate, and eventually settled in the area known as 'the Highlands'. These settlers brought with them the bitter South African racial prejudice directed against coloured people, and together with other white settlers, with experience of conditions in South Africa and other self-governing portions of His Majesty's Dominions, but entirely ignorant of Indian traditions and customs and of the earlier history of the Protectorate, commenced an agitation against the Indian settlers with the object eventually of reducing them to the same position of inferiority as has been the unhappy fate of their countrymen in South Africa. At first these efforts met with no success, to the great chagrin of the white settlers who pressed for the transfer and the control of the Administration from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. His Majesty's Indian subjects in East Africa date their principal troubles from the beginning of Colonial Office administration in East Africa. Without endeavouring to determine how far the Colonial Office was responsible for the change, they nevertheless believe that a deliberate attempt was made at that time to alter the whole character of the administration—which before them had been equitable and even-handed to all sections of the community but which thereafter under the growing influence of the South Africa immigrants or other settlers having similar experience in European controlled British Colonies, so as to give advantages and preferential treatment, to the white settlers under the pretext that the Protectorate should come more and more under European influences in the interests of the native population. In August 1907, the Land Board of the Protectorate recommended that Government land in certain specified areas should not be allotted to Indians, but should be

reserved for European settlement. In transmitting the resolution to the then Secretary of State, Lord Egin, the commissioner of Lands reminded him that but for India the railway would never have been constructed, that most of the trading wealth of the country was in the hands of the Indians were British finally, that Indians were British subjects. Unfortunately, as had happened some months earlier in the case of Indians in South Africa, His Lordship did not give to these powerful considerations the importance that they merited. In a dispatch to the Governor, dated 18th March 1908, Lord Elgin said "With regard to the granting of land to Indians, it is not consonant with the views of His Majesty's Government to impose legal restrictions on any section of the Indian community, but, as a matter of administrative convenience grants should not be made to Indians in the upland areas." It is submitted in the first place, that the rights and the well-being of His Majesty's Indian subjects ought never, in a territory such as British East Africa, to have been subordinated to mere "administrative convenience", but, that, it is common knowledge that no question of "administrative convenience" was at issue at that time. The European settlers wish to reserve the whole of the uplands area, as one of the healthiest and best parts of the Protectorate for themselves. Not that they wished themselves to develop the country. They relied and still rely entirely upon native labour for the purpose; but they wished to live a life apart from and out of contact with the Indian community, and to reserve for themselves the most favourably situated areas, access to which has been made possible only by Indian enterprise and labour. The departure from principle on the flimsy grounds advanced by His Majesty's Government was disastrous, and from that time the Indian position has gradually gone from bad to worse. And whereas, in contrast with the reservation of the upland area for exclusive White settlement, it was generally understood that the lowlands were to be reserved for Indian settlement, it is significant and characteristic of the unfairness of the White settlers that they are to-day engaged in an endeavour to secure the assent of the Colonial Office to an encroachment upon the Lowland areas.

When the War broke out, the Indian Community was specially requested and loyally consented to abstain from controversial agitation. Their consent was obtained on the understanding that such abstention was to be reciprocal. Unfortunately, neither the Government nor the European settlers abided by the agreement. Racial differentiations of an administrative and of a legislative character have followed fast, until to-day the situation is such as to agitate the people of India, who are asking with the utmost anxiety whether the tragic history of the Indian population of South

Africa, for which, to a very large extent, they hold his Majesty's Government responsible, is to be repeated in East Africa, with far less possibility of justification, and where the Administration is not, as in South Africa, that of a self-governing Dominion enjoying Responsible Government, but of a Protectorate directly controlled by His Majesty's Government, who must bear the full responsibility for all the consequences of the adoption and continuance of the present racial policy which they have initiated or permitted.

#### The Economic Commission

A reference was made above to Chapter 7 of the Report of the Economic Commission. The Commission appointed by the local Government did not include a single Indian representative, and by way of protest no Indian evidence was tendered, and practically no evidence bearing upon the Indian situation was produced before the Commission. Yet in that Chapter the Commission, without supporting testimony of any kind, delivered an attack upon the commercial methods and the private morality of the Indian Community, of such a character as it is impossible for any self-respecting and high spirited people for one moment to tolerate. These allegations of a most offensive type have been made with the very clear object of creating an atmosphere of prejudice against the Indian section of the population. European and Christian civilisation has been deliberately invoked and contrasted with Eastern and non-Christian civilisation to the detriment of the latter and in the alleged interests of the native population, and recommendations have been made that the Protectorate should be treated, together with adjacent territories, as a quasi Dominion, and that power should be handed over to the small oligarchy of white settlers, whose views need no elucidation in the light of the declaration on the Indian question of the Convention of Associations of East Africa (the most important non-official body of European in the country, which is often known as "The White Man's Parliament") that their aim was to change the whole character of the country and its population by the stoppage of Indian immigration and the gradual elimination of the Indian population. The Indian Community has felt that such a campaign, undertaken ostensibly on behalf of the native population by the white settlers, is hypocritical in the extreme. Those who are best acquainted with local conditions and who can read between the lines of the proceedings of the Convention of Associations and the Report of the Economic Commission, are under no illusion as to the altruism of the motives of the European settlers.

The present agitation is reminiscent of similar campaigns conducted at various times in different parts of South Africa proli-

minary to the introduction of anti-Asiatic legislation imposing further disabilities upon the resident Indian population. The Indian community in East Africa has bitterly resented the imputations that have been made against it, and it challenges impartial investigation. It desires at this stage to make no counter charges, but it is content to quote the opinion of the authorised representatives of the Native people themselves. Mr. C. F. Andrews, who was specially deputed by the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association of Bombay to investigate the situation in East Africa recently, made a special point of meeting the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of Uganda, two Ministers of the Native Parliament. This is what Sir Apollo Kagwa, Prime Minister, and Mr. Staisles Enganya, the Chief Justice, say in a letter to Mr. Andrews:

"With reference to our meeting with you in our Native Parliament this morning, we beg to confirm in writing our opinion we expressed on the following two points which came out—namely: (a) We do want the Indians to remain in our country, as we consider that their being here would improve our country, and would do no harm to the country. Besides, we find them a moral people. We would, of course, like better Indians. (b) We do not want our country to be united to any other Protectorate, for we consider that if this was done it would greatly interfere with our Uganda Treaty, 1900, and our customs. We have other reasons besides. Therefore, we would very much like this Protectorate to remain as it is."

Dr. Cock, the wellknown East African medical expert, has publicly corroborated the evidence of the Native leaders regarding Indian morality. In the light of this disinterested testimony, it is clear that the sole motive for the hostile activities of the European colonists lies in colour and race prejudice and trade jealousy. It is significant, too, that the Convention of Associations has deliberately sought to raise the question of religious privilege and to destroy the religious neutrality for which the British administration is supposed to stand, as the word "christian" does not appear in the original draft of the declaration that the Convention circulated to its members. It is, however, no function of His Majesty's Administration in East Africa to promote specially any form of religious belief or civilisation. The threatening attitude of European settlers towards the Indian colonists and sympathetic officials alike has filled Indians with alarm lest His Majesty's Government should mistake a clamorous and spurious agitation, based upon crude self-interest, for a reasoned demand for changes in the Administration that will, if given effect to, completely alter its character, with calamitous consequences for the old-established Indian population. Indians recognise fully the fact that there are a number of officials of all ranks in the country

who are anxious to administer it sympathetically and impartially. But they are not blind to the hostile activities of the bulk of the European population, which includes a most violent element, and which threatens them whenever they show a disposition to fair-minded and just administration. Recent episodes of this character are well-known, and it is strongly felt that His Majesty's Government ought to discourage severely the anti-Indian tendencies that are locally prevalent, and which are fraught with untold mischief to the Empire.

Having thus reduced to its true meaning and proportion the European opposition, the Indian Community desires to place the following views on record, in the knowledge that they have the support of the Indian people and the sympathy of the Government of India.

#### What Indians Want.

It is no longer possible for the people of India and the Indian settlers in British East Africa to tolerate or recognise anything in the nature of racial differentiation, whether as a matter of "administrative convenience" or by statutory enactment. If the European settlers could not content themselves with equality of treatment with their Indian fellow subjects, they need not have come to or stayed in a country already widely populated by Indians, and in which Indians had preceded them by many generations; had His Majesty's Government done their duty towards the Indian population, the disabilities today complained of would never have been imposed. The Imperial Government have never justified and cannot possibly justify to the people of India the anti-Indian policy that has been tacitly and officially adopted for the past thirteen years. The Indian communities in the neighbouring territories of Zanzibar, Uganda, and Tanganyika have watched with alarm the growth of anti-Indian feeling in the Protectorate whose effects they are already beginning to feel. The policy of racial differentiation as regards ownership of land in townships has already been put into operation in Uganda, where it has hitherto been absent. Yet the Uganda Economic Commission, which has just reported, says of the Indian settler: "The country owes much to the Indian trader, and we consider a broad policy of toleration should be adopted towards him. He has shown energy and enterprise, and has assisted in the opening up of the more remote district. He is also of value as an agriculturist, and his activities in this direction might be well encouraged." That India is far from reconciled to the evil fate that has befallen her children in South Africa is evident from the anxiety with

which the mission to the Union of Sir Benjamin Robertson, on behalf of the Government of India, is being watched. It would be disastrous, and it would be regarded as a breach of faith on the part of the British Government, if the history of the South Africa Indians were repeated in the East Africa Protectorate and the adjacent territories. India is proud of results of the efforts of her colonists settled for centuries in East Africa, and she cannot possibly look with equanimity upon a movement calculated to injure fatally a most important portion of her foreign trade. It is felt by all classes of the Indian people that when the temperate parts of the Empire, controlled by self-governing European communities, are for all practical purposes, closed to Indian immigration, it would be inequitable and unpardonable if, as is now being attempted in the East Africa Protectorate, the same policy of exclusion were adopted. Therefore, Indians deem it essential, in the interest of all the elements of the mixed population of the country, that an absolutely open door, as regards immigration, should be maintained. Immigrants of both European and Indian origin should be equally welcome and given equal opportunities for the development of individual enterprise, and no special privileges should be given to any section of the population.

The political as well as the municipal franchise, which are at present confined to Europeans, should be equally conferred upon Indians. It is absurd to hold that Indians, who, in large numbers in their own country, in British Guiana, Trinidad, Fiji, and even in the Cape Colony, have been enfranchised, should, when settled in East Africa, where the average franchise is higher, be incapable of exercising the franchise. It is not even disguised that the European community have opposed an extension of the franchise to Indian because they wish, in a Colony that owes its very existence to Indian foresight, courage, and enterprise, to enjoy a monopoly of political power in the pretended interest of the Native inhabitants.

The people of India naturally look to His Majesty's Government to remove all racial checks, bars and differentiations: such, for example, as the exclusion of Indians from the Executive Council, the practical municipal disfranchisement of Indians in Nairobi, the preferential grants of land to Europeans; the encouragement of settlement by European ex-soldiers without corresponding encouragement of settlement by Indian ex-soldiers; the sale of Crown lands by auction at which Indians are forbidden to bid to the detriment of the finances of the colony; the power granted to the Governor, under the Crown Lands Ordinance (1915), enabling him to veto (as he has invariably done in practice)

the transfer of Europeans owned land to Indian purchasers; the policy of racial segregation in townships and extra-municipal areas; and the introduction of legislation, ostensibly of a general character, but capable of special administration for political purposes against Indians by an Executive controlled by a hostile White minority.

The East African Indian community has placed its views on the various matters of complaint and disability upon record in a series of moderate and constructive resolutions passed unanimously at the recent session of the Eastern Africa Indian National Congress, (see Register, 1920) to which reference is hereby made, in the earnest hope that in so far as they fall within the competence of His Majesty's Government, full relief will be granted. And here it may be added that the local Indian community is much alarmed at the prospect of ruin resulting from the adoption by the Colonial Office of a new policy of currency and exchange without consultation with the East African Indians, or reference to the India Office and which it believes to have been adopted mainly in the interests of a small section of the European settlers. That this view is held by independent observers is evident from the opinion of the English President of Kisumu Chamber of Commerce, among others, and from the following message to "The Times" from its Mombasa correspondent:—

**The Times,' March 12, 1920**

*Mombasa, March 6 (delayed)*

"Recent legislation respecting the rate of exchange enforced on instructions from the Colonial Office, by which the value of the rupee is fixed at 2s. 4d. now, 2s. 2d. as from July 1, and 2s. as from December 1, while in India the rate remains at about 2s. 8d., resulted in a serious dislocation of the trade of the Protectorates of Zanzibar and Tanganyika (formerly German East Africa). In the first place a considerable quantity of the trade and finance of the territories is geographically dependent upon India; secondly, the position is aggravated by the already serious shortage of silver; and thirdly, the legislation is enforced during the harvesting of the Uganda crop requiring about 150 lakhs (L1,750,000 at the exchange of 2s. 4d.) to purchase the 60,000 bales of native production. The impression locally is that in the introduction of the recent measures too great consideration was given to settlers' interests, to the direct exclusion of established commercial and industrial interests, and entailing restrictive consequences upon native production. The local conditions resulting from these factors warrant the assumption



that there will be a breakdown of the country's trade, and that a financial crisis is imminent."

#### Conclusion.

India is to day entering upon a new path as a free Nation, on the road to Dominionhood, within the British Empire. The susceptibilities of her people can no longer be ignored, as have, in the matter of the welfare of her colonists, been only too often in the past. In South Africa, the existence of an independent Dominion Government has been held by the Imperial Government to excuse them for non-intervention on behalf of the unhappy and ill used Indian population. The same considerations do not apply to East Africa, where the Imperial Government are solely responsible for policy and administration, a responsibility which they cannot share and have no right to delegate. As to the Tanganyika Territory which will be governed under a mandate from the League of Nations, the British Government will be responsible to the international conscience of the world. But India, too, is an original member of the League of Nations, and is entitled to demand not only that all peoples alike should be treated equally in the mandated area, but that in the neighbouring British Territory equal treatment should be adopted, lest the evil results of the opposite policy react adversely upon the peoples on the other side of a vague and artificial boundary. In the eyes of the Indian public, the sincerity of Great Britain's attitude towards India on Imperial questions will be tested to a great extent by the policy enforced in East Africa.

Indians look upon the British East Africa Protectorate, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Tanganyika as one territory which was for centuries settled and developed by Indians residing under the jurisdiction of Asiatic sovereigns, and who brought with them large amounts of capital whose investment in the country accounts for its present prosperity. Throughout this vast area there was no European settlement whatever until the mushroom growth of the last twenty years. If the Indian population were to leave East Africa to-morrow the entire territory would immediately fall into ruin and decay, and its Native population relapse into barbarism. It is believed in India that, when reminded of all the facts, the British people and the British Government will not allow judgment to go by default, but will respond generously to India's claim to the equal treatment of her colonists in East Africa, and the reversal of the present prevalent anti Indian policy.

# The Fizi Papers

# The Fizi Despatch

The following papers on the conviction of Mr. D. M. Manilal and the Indian riots in Fizi are published by the Govt. of India

*Despatch from the Governor of Fiji to the Colonial Office No. 25,  
dated the 22nd January 1920.*

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 8th (1 December) instant, asking for a report on the circumstances in which a sentence of imprisonment was passed on Mr. D. M. Manilal.

2. The facts of the case are as follows :—Early in 1918 Mr. Manilal applied for the lease of a piece of native land in the village of Nausori, Rewa, on which he desired to erect an office. The Board which reports and advises on applications for leases recommended in this case that the application should not be approved, as the land, which is on the bank of the Rewa river, was "right in the native village, and close to the ferry approach, which at any time may require to be deviated owing to flood wash, or to give a better gradient." The Governor in Council concurred in the Board's recommendation, and Mr. Manilal was accordingly informed that his application could not be approved.

3. Early this year Mr. Manilal apparently came to some irregular agreement with the native owners of the land, and, notwithstanding a warning given him by the Acting District Commissioner, Rewa, and that there are other sites in Nausori suitable for an office, commenced to erect a building on it. The Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, with my approval, given on the advice of the Acting Attorney General, thereupon issued a notice to Mr. Manilal under the provisions of section 3 of Ordinance No. 5 of 1889, warning him to depart forthwith from the native town of Nausori and to cease to occupy any land or building within the said town or its precincts.

4. As Mr. Manilal did not comply with this notice, proceedings were instituted against him, and, on the case being heard before the District Commissioner, Rewa, he was fined 10% or in default one month's imprisonment. The fine was paid.

5. The only protest received in connection with this matter came from the "Indian Imperial Association of Fiji." of which Mr. Manilal is Chairman. As it was a case in which Mr. Manilal, who is himself a lawyer, deliberately flouted the law, in spite of official warnings, I did not consider that the protest called for any consideration.

6. I enclose copies of a paragraph which appeared in the *Fiji Times* of 25th September last on this subject and of a letter dated 3rd subsequently sent to the same newspaper by members of the Indian community not belonging to the Association.

ANNEX 1 :—*Extract from "Fiji Times," 25th September 1919*

#### MOTION OF PROTEST. FAVOUR MR. MONILAL

At a meeting of Suva Indians on the 24th, the following motion was passed :—

"This meeting of the Indian Imperial Association of Fiji views with alarm, deep sorrow and profound indignation the prosecution and conviction of Mr. D. M. Manilal, M.A., LL. B., Barrister-at-law, and the sentence of 10l. fine or month's imprisonment pronounced against him for the crime of building an office on a piece of land for which a grateful native had given him license to occupy without any tenure, simply because this convenient business site had originally been coveted by a company of which the Government has refused a proper lease to Mr. Manilal without any objection, that he was not prepared to meet, singling him out from amongst many others, withdrawing the charge against the native himself for the alleged offence. And this Association strongly protests against the conviction knowing that many of the European settlers in this Colony have already acquired large areas of freehold lands from natives by presents of match boxes, matchlocks, and illicit liquor, while our only leader in this Colony and Chairman of this Association is prosecuted to conviction in spite of irregularities in procedure and unsufficiency of evidence for putting up a place of business where the local European alike do not wish an Indian to remain without dependency on themselves, which precaution was entirely uncalled for and unnecessary after he had complied with the Government notice to leave the premises and sold the building to the native himself."

ANNEX 2 :—*From "Fiji Times," 3rd October 1919.*

#### THE INDIAN PROTEST.

SIR,

We, the undersigned members of the Indian community of Suva, feel that we cannot allow the contributed article in your issue of

Monday, 25th September, headed "Indian Meeting Motion of Protest," "Favour Mr. Manilal," to pass without a slight comment.

The so-called Indian Imperial Association is in no way an association representative of the Indian community of Fiji. It is a quasi secret society. To become a member you must be an intimate friend and approved by one or more of the few gentlemen who run the society.

Mr. Manilal, Mr. George Suchit and Mr. Ram Singh are the leaders, we believe, and the remainder of the society is comprised roughly of some dozen of their personal friends.

The Association is not open to the Indian community here in general, and unless one shares the views held by the above-named gentlemen, one is not eligible.

The law in respect of a breach of which Mr. Manilal was fined is a law to prevent Fijians exploiting Indians, and Indians in their turn from exploiting each other.

We do not infer that Mr. Manilal had any idea of committing a crime, but if he had been suddenly called to India and had sold his right and title in his building, the purchaser would have found that his right and title was on a very precarious footing, and we understand that the Ordinance was passed by the Government solely to prevent dealings of this kind, and it ill behoves us to grumble at legislation passed in our interest.

We hope that this letter will, to some extent, remove from the public any idea that the so-called Indian Imperial Association is in any way representative of the Indian community, consisting, as it does, of a few malcontents and quidnuncs.

We are, &c.,  
Non Members,

*Telegram from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of  
State for the Colonies, dated 6th March 1920.*

Your telegram dated 3rd March. Following is statement of offences, arrests, convictions and dismissals during riots:—Cutting telegraph wires, two men arrested, one committed for trial, one remanded. Bridge wrecking, 27 men arrested and remanded. Wounding with intent, eight men and three women arrested and committed for trial. Unlawful assembly, summary jurisdiction, nine men arrested and convicted. Intimidation, summary jurisdiction, one man (?) arrested, and convicted. Riot, common law, 14 men and three women arrested and committed for trial. Riotous behaviour, summary jurisdiction, 168 men 18 women arrested, 128 men 14 women convicted, 40 men and 4 women cases dismissed, all refused bail.

## THE GOVERNMENT DESPATCH

*Telegram from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of  
State for the Colonies, dated 18th March 1920.*

Following is summary of petition addressed to Government by numerous Indians of Suva and district:—

"Loyal Indians respectfully ask Government to take steps to punish agitators responsible for recent troubles among Indians. We feel that many who have been committed to gaol have been incited to do acts for which they have been punished by leaders who are still at large, and we pledge ourselves to render to Government every assistance in our power to bring agitators to justice."

*Telegram from the Governor of Fiji to the Secretary of  
State for the Colonies, dated 29th March 1920.*

In connection with recent Indian disturbances I have to inform you that by Order made under Peace and Good Order Ordinance, 1875, following persons: (1) D. M. Manilal, (2) Mrs. Manilal, (3) Harapal Maharaj, (4) Fajil Khan, have been prohibited from residing for two years within (a) Island of Vitu Levu, (b) Island of Ovalau, (c) District of Vanua Levu, known as Macuata Province. Order served 27th March and takes effect from 1st April, but reasonable latitude will be allowed for making transport arrangements, &c.

*Despatch from the Governor of Fiji to the Colonial Office,  
No. 66, dated the 12th March 1920.*

I have the honour to make the following report on the recent strike of Indian labourers in Fiji and the consequent disturbances at Suva and other centres.

2. The first indication of trouble was a strike of the Indian employees of the Public Works Department on 15th January; on 19th January the employees of the Municipal Council followed suit and the strike became fairly general in Suva. No definite demands were put forward, but there was talk of a general demand for 5s. per diem pay. On 21st January a strike began on a small scale in the Rewa district and minor cases of intimidation were reported both there and at Suva. At this stage it was thought advisable to enrol 24 European constables at Suva, in case they should be required. In the course of the next three days the strike became general in the Rewa district and was reported to be spreading to the up-river centres, Viria and Vunidawa.

3. Up to this point there was no disorder and no reason to anticipate any. There was no evidence of hostility against the Government. Meetings were held among the Indians, but the speakers generally counselled respect for law and order and the observance of constitutional methods. The initial grievances felt were

apparently against the merchants, whose high prices were regarded as being the cause of the increased cost of living.

4. On the afternoon of 27th January news was received by telephone of a threatening demonstration at Nausori on the Rewa river, where the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have one of their principal mills. The trouble began with the arrest of certain Indians for intimidating others desiring to return to work. The arrested men were rescued from the police by a crowd, which rapidly increased to the number of 1,000 or more, and attempted to rush the police station at Naduruloulou in order to attack the witnesses. Late in the afternoon Captain R. Kane, M. C. the District Commissioner, reported that there was every prospect of a riot, and in response to his request for assistance I authorised the despatch of 12 native constables from Suva, followed later by 20 Europeans and a machine gun section of the Defence Force. The arrival of these reinforcements had a tranquillising effect, and the night passed without further incident. On this occasion and in the subsequent emergencies at Rewa, the situation was resolutely and judiciously handled by Captain Kane.

5. On 28th January the elected members of the Legislative Council resident at Suva, called upon me and asked what steps the Government were taking to deal with the situation. They represented that the public were seriously alarmed, that the attitude of the Indians was believed to be largely racial, and that there were reports of a large and probably hostile demonstration at Suva being planned for 2nd February. I informed them fully of the steps already taken and of those which it was proposed to take. On the same day I received a telegram from the Mayor of Levuka reporting that all the Indian labourers employed on the municipal and harbour works there had struck, but eventually these men went back to work and there was no trouble at Levuka. There was still no evidence of any intention on the part of the strikers to formulate their demands, though it was reported about this time that they were selecting delegates to represent their grievances to me.

6. On the evening of the 29th, a mob of about 200 Indians, armed with sticks, gathered in Toorak (the Indian location at Suva) with the object of attacking the manager of one of the hotels (Patesan by name), whom they accused of having flogged an Indian servant and of having used insulting language to Indians passing his hotel. The mob was dispersed by the constabulary, but not without a baton charge. Other mobs assembled at Tamavua (a village on the outskirts of Suva) with the same object, but were met by the Inspector-General of Constabulary, who persuaded them to go home and told them that their proper course was to seek

redress in the magistrate's court instead of taking the law into their own hands.

7. Meanwhile a request had been made to me, through the Agent-General of Immigration, that I would receive a deputation of Indian workers and hear their grievances. I at once consented to receive the deputation, which waited upon me on 30th January. The deputation consisted of about 15 leading Indians and several women, and was headed by a Mrs. Manilal, the wife of D. M. Manilal, a local Indian lawyer who was already under suspicion, and is now regarded beyond all reasonable doubt as being the prime mover in the agitation. Manilal himself was not present. A long statement of grievances was read to me representing the increased price of foodstuffs and other necessities and the inadequacy of the prevailing rates of wages, and concluding with the request that the Government should pay its labourers 5s. a day, and appoint a Commission to consider the question of controlling prices after work had been resumed. I had already decided, in consultation with my advisers, that no increase should be promised until work was resumed; but, after asking the deputation, a number of questions and discussing the subject matter of their petition, I informed them that I was prepared to appoint a Commission, and that I had already obtained the consent of the Chief Justice to act as Chairman. I added that, if after considering the findings of the Commission the Government decided to give an increase of wages to its employees, the increase would have effect from the date on which they resumed work—an offer which I hoped might induce the strikers to resume work quietly.

8. I proceeded immediately with the appointment of the Commission, and on the following day I published the names of the members, and the terms of reference, which were to enquire and report as to—

- (a) the present cost of living as compared with the cost in former years;
- (b) the present rates of salaries and wages as compared with the rates prevailing in former years;
- (c) Whether at the present cost of necessities the salaries or wages earned by different classes of the community afford a reasonable means of livelihood;
- (d) if not, what measures the Government should take with a view to adjusting any disproportion between cost of necessities and the prevailing rates of salaries or wages.

In response to a request made to me by the deputation, provision was inserted enabling the Commission to include as an additional member a representative of the Indian wage-earning class in any particular district, a concession of which the Indians promptly availed themselves by nominating as their representative Mr. S. S. Chowla,



a clerk in the Law Department. News of the appointment of the Commission was quickly circulated among the Indians at Suva and Rewa, apparently with good effect, as they spent much time during the following days in discussing the means of appointing delegates and presenting evidence.

9. Meanwhile reports were being received of further cases of intimidation and of preparations for the large demonstration which was expected on the following Monday, 2nd February. There was nothing to indicate what form this demonstration was likely to take, and no actual reason to anticipate that it would be otherwise than pacific, but the possibility of a concentration of five or six thousand Indian strikers at Suva was a little disturbing in view of the small forces at the Government's disposal, and there was, not unnaturally, a certain amount of anxiety on the part of the public. In the circumstances it was thought advisable to be prepared for any contingency. Accordingly a rough scheme of defence was improvised, by which all available forces were to stand to at day light on the Monday morning. On Sunday morning I met the leading citizens of Suva at the Defence Force Club and addressed them informally on the situation. I said that, although the Government had thought it wise to make all possible preparations in case of trouble on the following day there was nothing in the reports received inconsistent with a perfectly peaceable intention on the part of the strikers; and that even if a demonstration took place, it need not necessarily be accompanied by any disturbance. At the same time I observed that in times like these men with grievances, whether white or coloured, were prone to excitement, and that Europeans might hear things said by the Indians which would try their patience severely; but I deprecated interference with any crowds so long as there was no actual violence or threat of damage to life or property.

10. Sunday, the 1st of February, passed off quietly. A large meeting of Indians was held at Rewa, but the meeting was entirely peaceable and was largely occupied with discussion as to the representation of grievances before the Commission, the appointment of which had apparently given satisfaction. On the following day, 2nd February, everything was in readiness for the expected demonstration at Suva, but nothing happened beyond a meeting of Indians in one of the suburbs. On the following day, however I received a disquieting report of the attitude of the Indians at Rewa. Gatherings of Indians at outlying points in the Rewa district were reported, the intention undoubtedly being to concentrate on Nausori. The object of the concentration was clearly hostile, and there was much talk of looting stores and damaging property. Visits paid by Rewa Indians to Suva and the evidence which they saw of the Government's pre-

paredness there no doubt had the effect of checking for the moment the plans of the strikers at Nausori. Nevertheless the time had clearly come for the Government to be in readiness for grave developments. Accordingly, I decided to mobilise the Defence Force and to send two sections to Nausori, the remainder being concentrated in barracks at Suva. At the same time I gave orders that the crossing of the Rewa river by Indians in considerable numbers in either direction was to be stopped. Trouble of a more or less serious nature seemed inevitable and preparations were hurried forward. Interference by Indians with the telephone wires between Nausori and the up-river centres was reported. Late in the evening a heavy thunder-storm burst over Suva, and the lighting, which was the most vivid I have ever seen, made telephone conversation difficult and hampered the work of preparation. At 7 P. M., a great blaze was observed on the sea front. At first it was thought that the Government workshops were on fire, but afterwards it was found that a cutter in the harbour, loaded with benzine, had been struck by lightning. The incident provided an exciting close to an eventful day.

11. At this stage considerable activity among Indian women became noticeable, the most prominent among them being Mrs. Manilal, who addressed meetings of Indians, exhorting them not to go back to work and to prevent all their countrymen from doing so. Mrs. Manilal, accompanied by a crowd of women, attempted to force an Indian employee at one of the motor garages to leave his work, but the police appeared on the scene and the women went home. Bands of women of the lowest class were organised to intimidate workers with obscene language and filthy practices.

12. On 5th February the Commission held its first sittings, and I issued a Proclamation calling upon the strikers to resume work and explaining the situation to the Indians. In the course of the week I had been verbally approached through the Agent-General of Immigration with the suggestion that, on the following Sunday, 8th February, I should go out to Nausori unofficially, accompanied only by the Agent-General of Immigration and the Inspector-General of Constabulary, and attend a meeting of the strikers at which no other European should be allowed to be present. The Agent-General very properly declined to submit any such request to me unless it were made in writing, which was not done. The request was illustrative of the dictatorial attitude now being assumed by the strike leaders. The proposal that the Governor should make a journey of 14 miles, in order to parley in a clandestine fashion with strikers, was one which, I need hardly say, I should not have been prepared to entertain for a moment, and I regret that the leaders did not put forward their request in writing and

so afford me an opportunity of telling them what I thought of the suggestion. Later on, I was shown the draft of an address which had been prepared to be presented to me at the proposed meeting. It had very little to do with the stated grievances, namely, the cost of living and the rate of wages, and consisted of a long *résumé* of political complaints and aspirations. It was in fact a clear proof that, the economic grievances, on which the leaders had induced the labourers to strike, had been relegated to the background, and that the movement had been converted into a political agitation. I may mention here that, at one of the previous meetings at Suva above referred to, a resolution was solemnly passed ordaining that, while all other Indian domestic servants were to be called out under threats of beating, those in the employ of the Governor, the Chief Justice and the Colonial Secretary might be specially exempted.

13. On 7th February there was an attempt at arson on the premises of the Public Works Department at Suva, which was fortunately discovered in time to prevent a serious conflagration.

14. I have not so far referred to Navua, an important sugar centre on the south coast where the Vancouver-Fiji Sugar Company have a large mill. The Indian labourers here also, to the number of two or three thousand, went on strike; but there was no disorder, and the situation was well handled by the District Commissioner, Mr. A. H. Roberts, with the aid of the local police and 50 Fijian special constables. There were, nevertheless, moments of anxiety for the safety of residents and property at Navua, and for several days an armed party was held in readiness to proceed there by launch from Suva at half an hour's notice.

15. Hitherto no serious developments had been reported from the up-river centres beyond Rewa, but on the afternoon of Sunday the 8th of February disturbing news was received from the District Commissioner at Vunidawa, who reported that all the Indian labourers had struck, that intimidation was rife, and that on the previous day bloodshed had been narrowly averted, one of the European planters living with his wife and two children on an isolated estate having been attacked by Indians. All the planters had been brought into the Government station, but they had no means of defence. After consultation with the District Commissioner by telephone, I authorised him to enrol local Fijians as special constables, and told him to defend the station as best he could pending the arrival of reinforcements. These, to the number of 12 half-caste and Fijian members of the Defence Force under a European officer, were dispatched at once, proceeding part of the way by motor-car and the rest by river.

16. The first serious collision occurred at Suva on the afternoon of the 11th February. Shortly after 2 P.M., a report reached the Inspector-General of Constabulary to the effect that some 60 or 70 Indians, armed with sticks, were coming into Suva from one of the suburbs. The Inspector-General immediately proceeded in his car to the outskirts of the town, accompanied by an Inspector and a small body of constables. The police were drawn across the road and held up the mob. When asked what they intended to do, the Indians said that Mrs. Manilal had been arrested, and that they intended to go to the prison (apparently with the object of attempting to release her). The Inspector-General told them that they could not be allowed to pass. This was resented, and the women persisted in passing. The Inspector-General, having insufficient men to deal with the rest of the crowd, and being unwilling to precipitate trouble, decided that it would be unwise to interfere with the women; but he took away the loaded and other sticks from the men that had them, and informed the crowd that the report of Mrs. Manilal's arrest was untrue. As they were disinclined to believe, Colonel Golding offered to take their leader into Suva in his car, in order that he might see for himself that Mrs. Manilal was in her house, provided that the crowd remained where they were. This was done, and on Colonel Golding's return the crowd were satisfied, and slowly dispersed. On his way back to Suva the Inspector-General met another crowd of Indians, armed with sticks, coming from a different direction. He stopped them, and asked them where they were going, and what they intended to do. They replied that white men were being beaten, and that they were going to see what the trouble was. Colonel Golding told them that this was not true, and turned them back. Shortly after his return to the police station the Inspector-General received information that there was likely to be trouble at Toorak, where Indians were reported to be gathering with the intention of a hostile attack upon loyal Indians returning from work. He thereupon ordered Inspector Swinbourne to take some special constables to Toorak, and patrol the neighbourhood. Inspector Swinbourne subsequently reported as follows:—

"Approaching Toorak, a riot was found to be in progress, and it appears that Special Constable Reay, whilst endeavouring to arrest an Indian woman named Rahiman, was set upon and beaten by Indian men and women, as were the Fijian constables and an elderly European gentleman named Pilkington, who had gone to his assistance. Reay and the police were forced to retire and were pursued down Toorak road by a howling mob of some 300 Indians, who hurled sticks and stones after them and generally terrorising the whole neighbourhood. With the individual arrival of 'Specials' and Sub-Inspector Lucchinelli, the Indians were driven off the Rewa road into a gully near the com-