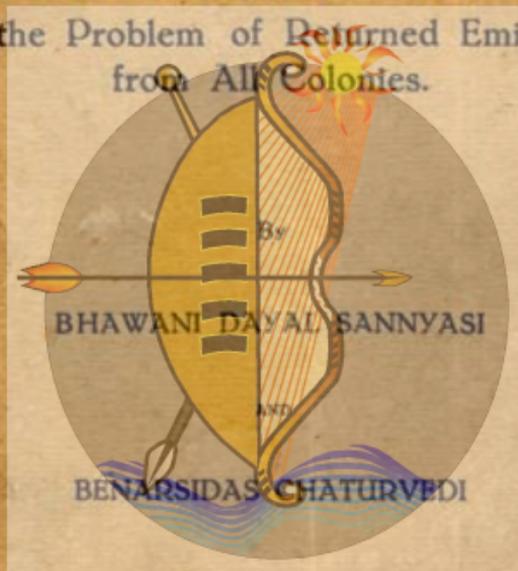


# A REPORT

On the Emigrants Repatriated to India  
under the Assisted Emigration Scheme  
from South Africa

and

On the Problem of Returned Emigrants  
from All Colonies.



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*( An Independent Enquiry )*

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15TH MAY 1931

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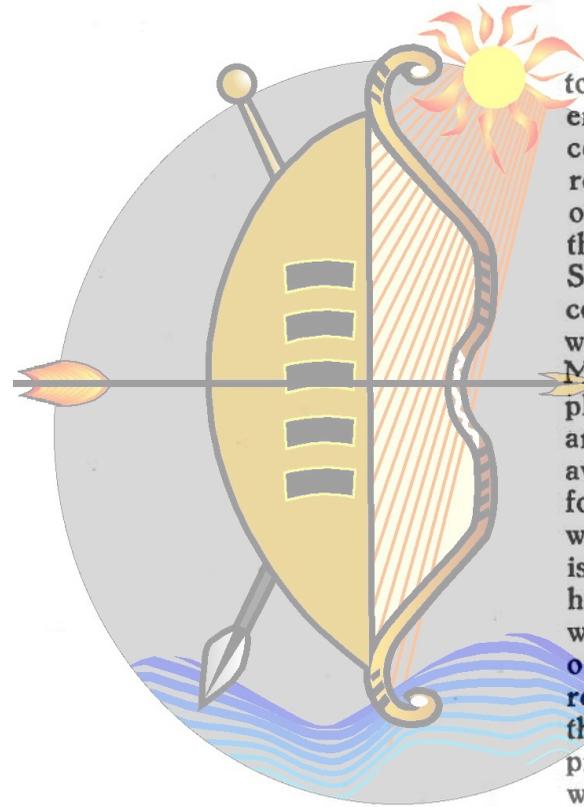
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## THE PROBLEM OF RETURNED EMIGRANTS MY EXPERIENCES



My friend, Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi, has asked me to write down my personal experiences regarding the returned emigrants, with whose problems I have been associated to a certain extent for some years past. I do so with considerable reluctance as I realise that my knowledge of this problem is only one-sided. I have never had the opportunity of seeing these returning emigrants while they were living in the colonies. So it is not possible for me to make a comparative study of their conditions abroad and at home. The only man who can deal with this problem quite authoritatively and exhaustively is Mr. C. F. Andrews, who has been to almost every places, outside India, where Indians have settled in any large number. Unfortunately, Mr. Andrews is away in England and his expert guidance is not available for us at this time. We do not know when Mr. Andrews will return. In the meanwhile, Swami Bhawani Dayal is anxious to publish his report as early as possible. It has already been delayed by a year and he cannot afford to wait any longer. Under these circumstances I have to write out these few pages which may serve as a back-ground to the report of Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi. It is to be noted that Swami Bhawani Dayal's report is practically limited to the problem of repatriated emigrants from South Africa alone, while my experience has been wider and includes emigrants from different colonies as well as those from South Africa. So, while I have studied the problem in India, Swami Bhawani Dayal, who is a colonial himself by birth, and was a prominent worker in South Africa, can speak of the conditions in that colony with authority. Our combined experiences may give to the reader a more or less complete picture of the returning emigrant as he was in his adopted land—which he had made his home—and as he finds himself in his father-land to which he has become a comparative stranger, for things have changed so much here during his absence, that he can no longer recognize

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in the land to which he is coming back the country which he left thirty or forty years ago.

Swami Bhawani Dayal and myself have discussed the problems of the returned emigrants for several days together and we have arrived at certain conclusions. But we cannot share the responsibility for each other's views and have accordingly decided to give our experiences separately. It is hardly necessary for me to add that these views are individual views open to correction in the light of greater experience and greater knowledge.

It was at the end of the year 1920 that I visited Matiaburz, a suburb of Calcutta, in the company of Mr. Andrews and saw the condition of about six hundred returned emigrants with my own eyes. Mr. F. E. James, O. B. E. Secretary of the Y. M. C. A., Calcutta, who afterwards became the Joint Secretary of the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee, described the condition of these people in the following words :

"These repatriates were scattered throughout the district crowded in *bustees*, malaria ridden, without work, nourishment or medical relief, a prey to the sharks of the neighbourhood who were exploiting their distress. Most of them were up-country people. Many of them, on their return from their colony, had been driven from their villages because they could not fit in with the social structure of the village community; some unable to find work, had drifted down to Calcutta in the hope of securing employment. All of them, disillusioned on their return to India, had come to the riverside with the vague hope that a ship might somehow and sometime take them back to the colony they had left. They were friendless, without regular wages or food, and imposed upon by all to whom they went for help."

It was at this time that nearly five thousand Indians returned from Fiji Islands within a period of six months and aggravated the whole situation. When Mahatma Gandhi heard about it he asked Mr. A. V. Thakkar of the Servants of India Society and myself to do some relief work for these people. Mahatmaji entrusted to us a sum of Rs. 500, that was presented to him by a Marwari gentleman of Calcutta for this purpose. As Mr. Thakkar has other important work to do I had to carry on this work with the help of Pandit Totaram Sanadhya, a returned emigrant from Fiji and under the guidance of Mr. C. F. Andrews.

The problems of these returned emigrants puzzled Mr. Andrews and myself, and we were at a loss to decide what we ought to do. Mr. Andrews described the state of his mind at that time in course of an article in the *Indian Review* for July 1922, from which the following extract is taken :—

In my own experience, I have been drawn in two directions, while working out the practical issues of this great problem. When I was in Natal, in the year 1920, and found a very large number of the labouring Indian population sinking below the level of the Kaffir in the scale of labourer's wages, and living under conditions that appeared to me far worse than those of labourers in India,—thus degrading the very name of 'Indian' and making it synonymous with the worst kind of sweated labour and hopeless illiteracy,—I became eager for the repatriation of those who came to me in large numbers with tears in their eyes, imploring me to give them a chance to come back. But when later I found that the South African Union Government were ready to take every advantage of this, and to use pressure to bring about what was called "Voluntary Repatriation", and when at the same time I found that those who *did* return to India were not well received in their villages and therefore drifted back into the slums of Madras in an altogether hopeless, discontented and unhappy condition,—then I began bitterly to regret that I had even by a single word given any encouragement to such repatriation.

Again, in Fiji, in the year 1917, nothing could have been more miserable than the outlook at that time of the great bulk of the Indian labourers whom I met in the different parts of the main island. Wherever I went, they fell at my feet, imploring me to get them ships to go away. They followed me about from place to place with blank looks of despair and with entreaties of every kind. I was reminded of that tragic scene described by the Latin poet, Virgil, in the Sixth Aeneid, where the spirits of the dead follow Aeneas to the brink of the river Styx,—the flood which divides the world of the dead from the world of the living,—and stretched out their hands towards him, crying out to him in their despair,—

*Tendentæ qæ manus ripæ ulterioris amore*

"And stretching forth their hands, in sick longing for the further shore."

The scene is mentally present with me still, where I left them at the wharf in Fiji to get on board the steamer. Their hands were uplifted as they cried,—"Send us ships quickly to take us back to India."

And yet, when they came back to India in their thousands, after the war was over and when ships had at last been made available, then a still more piteous cry was raised,—down in Matiaburz and Garden Reach, Calcutta, near the docks,—it was almost the same cry that I had heard in Fiji. and yet how different its purport! For, this time, the cry was raised,—"Give us ships to take us back to Fiji!"

What was the reason?

There were many reasons. First of all, they found the climate of India much more trying than that of Fiji; and there was no malaria in Fiji. In Calcutta they became malaria-stricken and died in large numbers. Then, in the second place, they found the cost of living enormously enhanced in India. They had pictured to themselves being able to buy things so cheaply in India on their return; but they found instead that materials were twice and even three times as dear as before. In the third place, they were cheated in Calcutta by those whom they had to

hire. The luggage-carriers, the booking clerks, the gariwallas, the tradesmen,—so they told me,—all cheated them; and there were thieves, and bad, immoral men and women always on the prowl to steal away the hard-earned savings which they had brought back, and to entice them to gambling and immoral living and then, last and worst of all, when in the end they reached their own native villages, they were not taken back into caste. The village *biraderi* would not welcome them. There was no one who would give in marriage a son or daughter to them for their own children. They were not allowed (such was this piteous story,) even to touch the village well for fear of pollution, or to smoke in the evening the common *huqqa*. Every act of their own companions of days gone by, every look, every glance now unmistakably said to them,—“Go away from us. We don't want you. Go back to Fiji.”

A hundred times over, I have watched the eyes of these returned emigrants flash with anger as they told me this painful story of their treatment on their return. A hundred times over I have seen them act before me over again the picture of their treatment,—the way they were received in the village, the way the villagers handled them roughly, the way they spoke harshly to them. One of the returned emigrants said to me,—“We were treated like dogs!” That word hurt me most of all: for it was the very word which I had heard, time after time, from their own lips about their treatment in Fiji.

At first, when all this was told me again and again, and yet again, my indignation would get the better of me, and I would become angry in turn, and say to myself,—“These emigrants are right. This wretched social system has no place in it for those who have crossed the sea,—even for men and women who are in distress, as these poor people are. Better indeed it is to go back to Fiji!” Then I would think over the logic of it all and consider in my own mind as follows:—“After all, it is not reasonable to maintain two policies at the same time,—on the one hand, to be *against* repatriation from Natal; and on the other hand, to be for repatriation from Fiji! We must be logical and consistent! We must stand out against repatriation all round,—*both* from Natal and from Fiji. At the same time, we must not allow any more of our villagers to be uprooted from their village life and sent abroad, with little or no hope of return. “No further emigration, therefore, and no further repatriation! *That* must be our policy!”

### THE INDIAN EMIGRANTS' FRIENDLY SERVICE COMMITTEE.

Mr. Andrews made a representation to the Government of India and also to Mr. W. R. Gourlay, Secretary of the Governor of Bengal regarding the plight of these returned emigrants. Mr. Gourlay suggested the formation of a committee to deal with this problem and obtained permission from the Calcutta Corporation to use the old Surinam Emigration depot at Garden Reach, where the distressed emigrants were immediately

housed and food was given to the destitute. The following were the members of the Committee :

Mr. W. R. Gourlay, C. S. I., C. I. E., Chairman  
 Mr. C. F. Andrews  
 Pandit Benarsi Das Chaturvedi  
 Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury  
 Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy  
 The Protector of Emigrants—*Ex-Officio*  
 The Health Officer—Calcutta Corporation.  
 Mr. F. E. James, } Jt. Secys. and  
 Mr. H. K. Mookerjee } Treasurers.  
 and the Port Health Officer.

The Government of India welcomed the formation of this Committee and further requested it to undertake the duty of deciding applications to return to colonies. This the Committee agreed to do. The duties of the Committee were as follows :

(a) To render friendly service to all destitute emigrants who were repatriates, to help them to return to their colonial homes or to settle them in India should they so desire.

(b) To render friendly service to those arriving from the colonies.

(c) The activities under this head consisted of the work at the depot and the answering of many enquiries from repatriates who were living round about Calcutta and up-country. The depot was supervised by volunteers of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the Y. M. C. A. under the direction of the Joint Secretaries of the Committee. Volunteers (students mostly) lived in the depot (generally two at a time, sometimes more) for a week, or a fortnight, or sometimes a month at a time. They supervised the housing, accommodating emigrants and their families from the various colonies in different sheds, the distributing of rations to the destitute, the keeping of a complete register containing a complete history of individuals and families; they organised games, started a night school, settled disputes, found work for those who could and would work, and performed with conspicuous devotion and ability the multifarious duties which fall to a resident supervisor of a colony of 800 or 900 souls.

Valuable assistance was also given by the volunteer workers to the Protector of Emigrants when batches of repatriates embarked on emigrant ships for the colonies.

(d) During the period under review eight ships returning with emigrants to India were met by the volunteer helpers of the Committee. In this connection the member of the Bhalia and Gujrat Volunteer Corps rendered invaluable service. They met the emigrants on disembarkation, took them to the *Dharamshala*, gave them food, helped them to cash their cheques at the Bank, changed their monies and postal orders, looked up their trains, made reservations for them, and in many other ways rendered friendly service. Work was obtained for a large number, and advice and information given to all who needed it. The number of

people helped in this way is estimated at 6,400—6,500. Of the emigrants of one ship alone 3½ lakhs worth of cheques, etc., were cashed and over Rs. 3,500 in money-orders. Several orphan children whose parents had died on the voyage were taken care of by the volunteers and were placed in the refuge.

This will give readers some idea of the important and useful work that the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee did for the returned emigrants.

#### HELP FROM GOVERNMENT

The Government helped the Committee with Rs. 15000, and Rs. 8396-12-0 were realised by public subscription.

#### REFUSAL BY RETURNED EMIGRANTS TO SETTLE IN INDIA

Mr. Andrews wrote a number of articles to different Indian periodicals on this subject and these helped a great deal in awakening the public conscience regarding its duty to these unfortunate people. Consequently many offers were received from reliable persons to settle these emigrants. But these offers were mostly refused. Mr. Andrews wrote in the *Indian Review* of July 1922 :—

"I have been down personally with a kindly Zamindar, who offered them five bighas of land, rent-free and a house to live in and labourers' daily work, while their land was becoming productive, but not a single family would go. Others have been down with other offers, equally attractive but practically speaking none of these offers was accepted."

In this connection I would invite the attention of the readers to Appendix XI, in which is given a communication from Mr. F. E. James, Secretary of the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee. I can also say from my personal experience that several offers were refused by these returned emigrants. Seth Jamnalalji Bazaz promised to give work to two hundred and fifty people at Phuleswar and Seth Shridharlal Raniwala of Firozabad was prepared to settle a number of people in a village where he had 1500 bighas of land. But all these offers were refused. Mr. Madan Mohan Barman, Banker, Export and Import Merchant of Calcutta, wrote in a letter dated 19th July 1921 to Mr. C. F. Andrews :—

"On advertising in the papers for services in families a large number of applications have been received but practically none could be induced from the Depot to go and join. Over and above an offer

was received from Messrs. Benodi Ram Balchand of Ujjain who are willing to take 200 emigrants with families to the native place at their cost. They promised to feed the emigrants at their cost till the next crop in the field which may be allotted to the emigrants. I think Mr James has written to you about this matter. I had also another offer from Mr. K. K. Dutt, solicitor, to settle all the emigrants at Rikia. It seems these offers are useless."

There were several other offers. Mr. J. B. Petit, Secretary of the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, wrote to Mr. Andrews in his letter of 2nd February, 1921 :—

"I am glad to know that you have succeeded in restoring the Fiji Indians to their Indian homes. I take a deep interest in the destiny of these poor people and will thank you to give me from time to time such information as you desire that I should have.

A gentleman from the Rajpipla State desires to engage the services of a few of the Fiji Indians, on land, to be newly broken up and cultivated at a place within ten miles of a Railway station on the Rajpipla State Railway, branching off from Anckleshwar on the B. B. and C. I. Railway main line, north of Broach. He has left a copy of his terms at the office of this Association, drawn up in the vernacular of which a Hindi translation will be supplied to any would-be applicant who desires to be acquainted with them. The gentleman wants to engage at least 25 cultivators at present and he would naturally like to choose men who can bring with them their own resources for supplying themselves with the agricultural stock and implements, etc. If that is not possible he would think of giving them agricultural loans at the market rate of interest. If there are any people within your knowledge who are likely to take advantage of this offer, I shall thank you to put this office in touch with them."

But all these offers were rejected. Mr. F. E. James wrote :

A certain number of destitute repatriates from Surinam and Trinidad had been in the depot for sometime. Representations had been made by the Government of India to the respective Colonial Governments, but they were not willing to pay the passages of the repatriates to Surinam and Trinidad.

The Committee represented the case of the repatriates to the Government of India, who while not being able to furnish the necessary amount for their passages, voted a grant of Rs. 10,000 for the purpose of settling these people in suitable areas and on suitable work in India. A few of the Trinidad emigrants were so settled but the Surinam repatriates, on hearing that there was no hope of their being sent back to Surinam voluntarily left the depot in a body.

In fact a balance of Rs 9,773-9-0 out of the Rs 10,000 given for the purpose of settling these emigrants was left in the hands of the Committee as it could not be utilised for the purpose for which it was given.

The Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee was established in the second week of April, 1921, and its last meeting

was held on 25th November, 1921. This meeting decided that as the special problem for which the Committee has been called into being, had now been dealt with, the present Committee should on the auditing of its accounts, be dissolved and that when that was done, the question of any future service which might be rendered to the emigrants, in cooperation with the Protector of Emigrants, should be considered. In its eighth month of existence the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee did very useful work for which we ought to be grateful to Messrs. F. E. James and H. K. Mukerjee, Joint Secretaries.

### INVESTIGATION BY IMPERIAL INDIAN CITIZENSHIP ASSOCIATION

In July 1926, the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association of Bombay deputed Mr. S. A. Waiz to investigate into the condition of the stranded emigrants in Calcutta. Here are some extracts from his report :—

"The Protector of Emigrants told me that only two years ago he had secured work for about two hundred of these emigrants at Tata Nagar as an experimental scheme, but all of them left their work within a month and returned to Calcutta. He also told me that work was available for hundreds of these emigrants in the Assam Valley on the tea plantations, but they would not consider it....

"I went from hut to hut, and visited about three hundred of such huts. I found aged women and frail sickly children huddled up in these dark dirty huts hardly fit for human habitation. It was a pathetic sight. They had touched the lowest depths of human misery. I found an aged woman with two young daughters clamouring for help which would enable them to leave that place and go elsewhere in Calcutta. They were insufficiently clad. They were mostly widows with children or aged couples without any support, or young girls endeavouring to earn a little money to support their aged parents. By this time, the men and working women had returned from work and I asked them to congregate on the field near their huts, where I would explain the purpose of my visit. Within half an hour's time a crowd of about one thousand consisting of men, women and children was on the field. I found that most of them were either from Fiji, British Guiana or Trinidad and some from South Africa. They were mostly Hindustani speaking low class Hindus from the United and Central Provinces. A number of young men, who were colonial born spoke tolerable English or the native language of Fiji or British Guiana. I told them that I was sent out to find out how best we could help them. I asked them over and over again if they would consider the prospects of work in India, to which they gave a most emphatic "no." Anywhere, but out of India, was their cry. They would

not discuss any other point than the prospects of being sent out to the colonies..... There were mothers who had left their children behind, wives came out without husbands, husbands without wives and all were simply clamouring to be reunited with their dear and near ones."

Mahatma Gandhi wrote a leading article on this report in *The Young India* for 9th September, 1926, under the heading "Out of the Frying-pan." Here is an extract from his article,

"The report on the condition of returned emigrants stranded in Calcutta submitted to the Council of the Imperial Citizenship Association makes painful reading. It appears that there are over 2000 returned emigrants in Calcutta living in squalid surroundings. They are from Fiji, Trinidad, Surinam and British Guiana. The desire to visit their mother land and the rumour that India had obtained self-government were the two chief reasons which led them to leave their birth-place. But they find that their own people in their villages will not have them and so they want to go back to the place where they have come from. "Anywhere out of India" is their cry. Meantime they are eking out a miserable existence in Calcutta.

"They all looked famished. Their lot is the lowest ebb of human misery." The fact that the majority of these men are Colonial born aggravates their misery. The reader will not appreciate the full meaning of being 'Colonial born'. These men are neither Indian nor Colonial. They have no Indian culture in the foreign lands they go to, save what they pick up from their uncultured half-dis-Indianised parents. They are not Colonial in that they are debarred access to the Colonial, *i. e.*, Western culture. They are therefore out of the frying pan into fire. There at least they had some money and a kind of a home. Here they are social lepers, not even knowing the language of the people.

"Therefore the report suggests that it is the clear duty of the Government to send them back to the most suitable Colony that would receive them. The tropical Colonies must be glad to have them in preference to raw recruits who have to be initiated. The duty is clearly the Government's. For they alone can carry on negotiations with the various Colonies. This duty should have been discharged long ago."

When this article of Mahatma Gandhi was published, I wrote a long letter to him which was printed in *the Young India* for Sept. 23rd 1926. I opposed the idea of Fiji people being sent to British Guiana. Here is an extract of my letter :—

"Thousands of Indians return from the Colonies every year and there is no doubt that the Matiaburz problem is not a temporary one, it will be recurring again and again for a long time to come. We must also remember that many of the Colonial Governments have been playing one mischief *i. e.*, they are sending their paupers to India. After having given the best portion of their lives to the Colonies these

unfortunate people return to their motherland, complete moral and physical wrecks, and these will never make good Colonists. We know a large number of these people were sent to Mauritius more than two years ago and most of them returned back to India at the cost of the Mauritius Government. In our anxiety to give these people immediate relief we must not neglect this aspect of the question, *i. e.* how many of them will make good Colonists. Our duty does not finish simply in despatching these people in haste to any Colony. The whole question requires a thorough discussion among those who are interested in it and who can do something for these people. When we have done so and arrived at some conclusions then will come the time to require the Government to do its duty. *The discussion suggested by me will have to be preceded by a thorough enquiry about the condition of returned emigrants in the districts from which they go to Matlabur.*"

Mahatmaji commenting on my letter wrote :—

"I appreciate the anxiety of Pandit Benarsidas to save the unfortunate people from another disappointment by those who were domiciled in Fiji being sent to British Guiana. Though the difference between the two countries is great, the experiment is worth trying if the Fiji men desire to go to British Guiana and if that Government will take them notwithstanding the knowledge that they belong to Fiji. *So far as the Colonial borns are concerned, I feel sure that though they may have a knowledge of what is known as Kitchen Hindustani, they will not be happy except in the Colonies.*"

I have italicised the last sentence of Mahatmaji's comment. After having come in closer contact with these returned emigrants in Calcutta during the last three years I am convinced of the truth contained in Mahatmaji's words. I confess that I was quite mistaken at that time when I thought that the Colonial born Indians could be happily settled in India. Now I am sure that they can never be happy except in the Colonies.

But there is one thing to which I have always attached great importance and about which I wrote to Mahatmaji also. That thing is a thorough enquiry in the different districts to which the emigrants chiefly go after their return from the Colonies. Mr. Andrews realised the necessity of this work when he wrote in the *Indian Review* for July 1922 :—

"But the greatest problem of all before us, as workers, is not this duty of caring for the returned emigrants, and looking after them and feeding them, in Calcutta, but rather the duty of getting them received in their home villages. Upto the present, this side has never been properly organised. We have simply relied on sending letters to the Press, and making requests to Congress workers and to Seva Samiti workers, and to the Servants of India Society, asking each of them to do their utmost to relieve the situation. But this has not been sufficient: and an effort will now be made, in a much more careful and detailed way, to follow up each returned emigrant to his own village; to meet these villagers

personally; to explain to them the supreme duty of caring for these their fellow-countrymen and also the disgrace that it would be, if they were left uncared for. This effort will be made by national and social workers of every kind; and I have a hope that it will in the end meet with success."

Unfortunately this effort was never made. I tried to get this work done by the Congress but I failed.

## THE CONGRESS AND RETURNED EMIGRANTS

On the 22nd January 1925 I wrote from Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, a letter in Hindi to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, Delhi. Here is a translation of that letter :

"On December 14, 1924, when Messrs. Andrews and Polak were at Sabarmati we had a talk with Mahatma Gandhi. At that time I requested Mahatmaji to get an enquiry made into the condition of returned emigrants. He replied "This can be done. Can you recommend some one to take up this enquiry work?" This morning I had a talk with Mahatmaji again, who instructed me to write to you.

Returned emigrants have settled in the following districts of U. P. :  
1 Allahabad, 2 Jaunpur, 3 Gazipur, 4 Gonda, 5 Gorakhpur,  
6 Basti, 7 Azamgarh 8 Fyzabad and 9 Benares.  
I would suggest the names of Pandit Tota Ram Sanadhya and Sjt. Sampurnanandji to be entrusted with this enquiry work."

In his letter of 2nd February 1925, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to me that the Working Committee had agreed to my proposal and had appointed Sjt. Sampurnanandji and Pandit Tota Ram to make the suggested enquiry in the districts named by me. Unfortunately, Sjt. Sampurnanand could not spare any time for this work and so Pandit Tota Ram had to carry on the investigations alone. He visited the District of Agra, Kuraon ( District Allahabad) and two villages of Thana Bikapur in the District of Fyzabad. The work was left unfinished. In his letter of 5th November 1925 Pandit Tota Ram wrote to me that he had been instructed by Mahatmaji to ask me to finish the enquiry into the condition of returned emigrants. The General Secretary of the Congress also wrote to me on March 13, 1926.

Dear Sir,

You will remember that a committee consisting of Pandit Totaram and Sjt. Sampurnanand was appointed by the Working Committee last year to enquire into the condition of the returned emigrants at various places. Unfortunately not much progress has been made by this Enquiry

Committee, and the matter therefore was placed before the Working Committee which met at Delhi on the 5th March, 1926, when the following resolution was adopted :

"Resolved that Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi be added to the Returned Emigrants Enquiry Committee and that he be requested to take all necessary steps to complete the investigation and make a report at an early date."

May I request you to take the necessary steps in this behalf and send me an early report ?"

I at once replied that I was prepared to complete the investigations. On 18th April I received the following reply :—

"I beg to say that Mr. C. F. Andrews is soon expected to be back in India. Pending his arrival here the matters referred to by you in connection with the enquiry into the condition of returned emigrants will lie over."

When Mr. Andrews arrived from South Africa I again reminded the Congress authorities on 22nd May 1926 about this enquiry. At a meeting of the Working Committee held at Calcutta on 5th July 1926 the following resolution was passed by the Working Committee

"Pandit Benarsidas's post card dated 22-5-26 and letter dated 23-6-26 were placed before the committee. It was resolved that the secretary do write to Mr. Andrews asking whether in the present situation it is necessary or desirable to take steps to carry out the resolution of the Working Committee dated 29-1-25 regarding Returned Emigrants and whether he can undertake the enquiry."

What happened after that is not known to me. I sent all this information to Mahatmaji who wrote back to me in reply on 7th September 1926 :

आपका पत्र मिला है। आज आपका कुछ करनेका नहीं रहता है।"

"Received your letter. Now nothing remains to be done by you."

Thus this effort to get an enquiry made by the Congress failed. During the last six years thousands of colonial Indians, have returned to India. If some one could carry out an investigation into their condition in the year 1925 and publish his report, some at least would have been saved all the troubles and miseries to which they have been subjected in India during these six years.

#### THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND RETURNED EMIGRANTS :

Many a time during the last six years or more the attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the urgent

necessity of getting a thorough enquiry made into the condition of returned emigrants but they have failed to do so. Not only that they have sometimes—as in the case of the *Sutlej* tragedy which I shall refer later on—shown a callousness which is only surpassed by their dilatory methods and official redtapism, but they have often failed to realise their moral responsibility in this affair. It should be borne in mind that it was they, who were responsible for the indenture slavery of hundreds of thousands of Indians. For a period of about eighty years their officers were despatching 30 women per 100 men to the different colonies in the world, where they were exposed to a life of shame and degradation. I shall quote a passage from the Indian Government's own despatch of 15th Oct. 1915 :—

"It is firmly believed also in this country, and it would appear, not without grave reason, that the women emigrants are too often living a life of immorality in which their persons are by reason of pecuniary temptation or official pressure at the free disposition of their fellow recruits and even of the subordinate managing staff."

The original sin of sending out these labourers men, women and children under these demoralising conditions was committed by the Government of India and they cannot disown their responsibility. The problem of the returned emigrants is an after-effect of the inhuman indenture system and the least that they should have done was to establish semi-official organisations like the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee to do some social service for these people and help them in getting employment.

In July 1926 the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association of Bombay made representation to the Government of India to set up without further delay Emigrant Depots in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, similar to the one which was established in Calcutta in 1921. Here is the reply of the Government of India dated 3rd Sept. 1926.

" . . . . . I am to state for the information of the Association that the Government of India had also seen accounts of distress among these returned emigrants in the Press and asked the local Governments to make enquiries. From the report received by them, it appears that there are about 800 repatriates from the various colonies who are living in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. There is said to be considerable discontent among them owing to the fact that they find conditions of work in this country harder and less remunerative than in the colonies. They also probably find the social restraints of their class in India somewhat strange and not altogether agreeable. For these reasons they appear anxious to return to the colonies. But almost all of them are said to have found employment in the docks and local mills and a few are earning rather

good wages. In the circumstances, the Government of India do not think that any real need exists to give effect to suggestion (3) (i.e., setting up of Friendly Emigrants' depots). The circumstances of 1921 were exceptional as distress among newly returned emigrants was considerable. The Government of India propose, however, to consult the local Governments regarding the need of Government initiative in the direction suggested."

I do not know the result of the Government of India's consultation with the local Governments but as one who has been in touch with these returned emigrants for the last ten years I can say that the need for a semi-official organisation like the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee has always existed in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. But emigration is not a provincial subject and the Government of India could have easily set up some organisation with the co-operation of the local Governments. But they left the matter to the local Governments which were not much interested in these problems. In 1922 they made the same mistake. On 11th September 1922 Sir Manecjee Dadabhoy moved in the Council of State.

That steps be taken immediately in consultation and co-operation with philanthropic and religious bodies for the re-admission into society of colony returned Indians where possible and for the creation of one or more settlements for the benefit of such of them as are not so admitted. The mover admitted that there were many difficulties in the solution of this question of facilities for repatriates, but he was encouraged to make the proposition because of the sympathetic attitude of Government. In this matter Lord Reading, in his opening speech had stated his earnest desire to secure for the Indians in the colonies a position of equality, but the situation of the repatriated Indians was heart rending. "We must set our house in order before we ask for a position of equality for Indians in the colonies and for other rights and privileges. The colony returned Indians have lost their castes, their homes, their friends, and further some of them are without employment. Is it not politically proper on the part of Government to intercede on behalf of these unfortunate people and secure for them some measure of relief in consultation with philanthropic and religious bodies. When the Government of India encourage the Salvation Army to reclaim and house the criminal and wandering tribes, is it too much to expect from them a similar treatment in respect of the repatriated Indians?"

The Hon. Mr. Sarma replied :—

"The Government of India cannot undertake any scheme of colonisation, because it is a provincial subject; but we would suggest to local Governments the desirability of undertaking any scheme of colonisation or any other relief measures, should the condition in the provinces necessitate such steps."

So far as I know the local Governments have not taken any initiative in this direction.

## NEED OF REORGANISATION OF THE GOVERNMENT EMIGRATION OFFICE AT CALCUTTA

Even if the Government Emigration office at Calcutta were well organised and aided by some semi-official advisory body something could have been done for these returned emigrants but as constituted at present this emigrants office is nothing more than a moribund legacy of the old indenture days. Returned emigrants get very little protection from the Protector of Emigrants who is too busy with his official duties as Civil Surgeon to devote much time to this work. Any Government with a sense of duty should at once have realised the necessity of engaging a whole-time worker as the Protector of Emigrants, but the present Government is too unimaginative and too wooden to attempt anything of the kind.

## CALLOUSNESS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

If the reader has any doubts about this statement, he should read the article on the "Sutlej-Scandal" given in the appendix at the end of this report. The "Sutlej" was responsible for more than 70 deaths among returning Indian emigrants in its two trips from the West Indies, and we do not yet know what the Government of India did in this connection. This is perhaps not to be wondered at. What can they do to mitigate the wrong done to these emigrants, when they cannot even publish the result of their own enquiries for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of the Colonial Governments! A report of the Sutlej Scandal containing serious allegations against the apathy of the Government was published in the *Leader* for 8th March 1930 and the Government neither contradicted any of its statements nor published the result of their own haphazard enquiry!

## HALF HEARTED ATTEMPT BY THE GOVERNMENT

In his interim report published on 7th February, 1930, Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi of South Africa wrote the following lines :—

"The assisted emigration scheme has been in force for more than two years and between six and seven thousand Indians have taken advantage of it. What percentage of these people have been able to

settle peacefully in India is a question that cannot be answered off hand. For that we require a Commission of enquiry to be appointed by the Government of India. It is a fact that Rao Saheb Kunhiraman Nair in spite of his undoubted ability and deep sympathy has been able to look after only a small percentage of the returned emigrants.

"I have been receiving a number of letters from my friends in South Africa to let them know the results of my enquiry. I would advise to be a little more patient. It is a delicate problem and the Government of India should be given sufficient time to consider this question.

"I earnestly hope that Sir Mohammad Habibulla will give his serious attention to this question and would appoint a Commission of enquiry.

"If unfortunately the Government does not accede to this request then it will be my duty to publish my report by the end of April. We must proceed constitutionally and should not begin any propaganda against repatriation before we have exhausted all other sources of bringing pressure on the Government of India and the Union Government to reconsider the assisted emigration scheme in the light of facts and figures that may be established by the Commission of Enquiry."

Here was an opportunity for the Government of India to make a thorough enquiry into the condition of repatriated emigrants from South Africa. But they half-heartedly attempted to get an enquiry made into the arrangements of reception etc of emigrants from South Africa at Madras port alone. Now, the emigrants from South Africa do not belong to South India alone. Quite a number of them belong to North India also. If an enquiry was to be made it ought to have taken into consideration the plight of these Northern India emigrants as well. They were altogether neglected. Even in Madras Presidency the work of enquiry was to be confined to Madras alone! The Government of India thought that investigations outside would neither be practicable nor fruitful of results commensurate with the labour and expense involved. Here was a question of life and death to 7500 emigrants who had already arrived from South Africa and to thousands of others who might arrive in future. Yet the Government did not choose to take any but very purfunctory and half-hearted measures in the matter. I need not criticise here the Natesan—Grey Commission, its method of enquiry and its report. But I shall say one thing. As soon as I heard of this committee and its terms of reference I at once wired to the Government that the scope of enquiry was too limited. Of course I had no hope that the Government of India would pay any heed to my remonstrances, for I have seen them rejecting the well considered advice of even Mahatma

Gandhi and Mr. Andrews who are the greatest authorities on the problems of the Indian overseas.

### THE PRESENT CONDITION OF RETURNED EMIGRANTS AT MATIABURZ

It was in the year 1921 that Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Andrews asked me to look after the emigrants who were returning from Fiji during that year in such large numbers. Since that time I have visited Matiaburz quite frequently. For outside readers I may add here that Matiaburz is a dirty suburb of Calcutta full of slums where more than a thousand returned emigrants from colonies are living in a wretched condition.

Though, as I have said, I have visited this place frequently specially during the last three years and a half never did I see such pitiable scenes as I witnessed this year. Formerly these people could get some employment and they were pulling on somehow but now they are mostly unemployed and this unemployment has brought them on to the verge of starvation. Some of them were turned out of their 'houses' (if those pigeonholes could be given this name) and had to pass their days and nights under the trees during the rainy season. When I was visiting some of these 'houses' a returned emigrant remarked, "Look here Panditji, are not these houses worse than pig-sties?" I could see that there was no exaggeration in this remark. The lanes through which one has to pass are full of mud and stench. There are pools with stagnant water—breeding places for mosquitoes and malaria, and, consequently a large number of these returned emigrants are often suffering from malarial fever.

Matiaburz has been a death trap for hundreds of returned emigrants during the last ten years, and it is a disgrace to the municipality and the town that such an abominable slum quarter is allowed to exist at all. How these returned emigrants got there is a long story. From the days of the indenture slavery the place has been associated with emigrants. There was a emigrant depot at Garden Reach from where thousands of Indians—men and women—were shipped to colonies every year under that hated labour system founded on fraud and carried on through falsehood. A number

of people who return from the colonies eke out their miserable living in the villages but a certain percentage—probably 20 per cent—get stranded and they come to this congested quarter of Calcutta. The problem of these returned emigrants has engaged the brains and energies of Mr. Andrews, Mr. F. E. James (formerly of the Y. M. C. A., Calcutta) and others but has not yet been tackled successfully. There are several factors that have stood in the way of a successful solution of the problem. Take the social side of it. There are a number of people among these returned emigrants, who have married outside their caste, and they have their families and surely it is almost an impossible task to get these people taken back in their respective social organizations. The question of marriage of their children raises another serious difficulty. Then the children who were born in the colonies, find it most difficult to adjust themselves to their new surroundings. Having been accustomed to live in the socially free atmosphere of the colonies where they could get a living wage, these colonial born children chafe at the caste-ridden atmosphere all around. Add to these the economic distress—the want of employment—and you can imagine the miserable lot of these people.

Here are some cases. Two sons of a Bihari Brahman returned from British Guiana more than a year ago with their parents. They looked quite healthy when they came to the *Vishal Bharat* office just after their return. The elder child could speak English fluently and there was a colonial air about them. Evidently they were reading in some school in British Guiana and I advised the father of these sons to take them to Benares to get them admitted in some school there and gave him letters of introduction. But the poor man could not succeed for none could promise and help beyond free studentship. If the parents had not made the blunder of returning to India both the boys would have been getting their education in some colonial school but now there seems no possibility of their getting any education at all. The elder child is earning three or four annas a day by working in a match factory where he is paid at the rate of three pice for filling two hundred match boxes. He looks a mere skeleton of his former self and it was difficult to recognize him in his dirty rags, so different was he from the decently dressed colonial boy who came to my office a year ago. I asked him :

“How do you like this place? Would you not like to go back to Demrara colony again”? The question moved him and I could see tears in his eyes. He realizes that gone for him are the days when he could go to school and move freely, when his father could earn enough by working as a priest in British Guiana.

There is another colonial born boy who was working as a jockey in race courses in British Guiana. He is a decent-looking boy and his father, who was a Sardar of labourers, relates with pride how his son used to win in race courses. The poor boy cannot find any employment here. It may be mentioned by the way that a system of bribery is prevalent in many offices at Calcutta and the ill-paid clerks of these offices insist on being paid five rupees or ten before they give employment to labourers.

The case of those unhappy people who have left their kith and kin behind in some colony is very tragic indeed. Here is an old lady who has lost one eye and who left her sons and grandsons in Demrara. Bitterly does she weep for those children whom she will never see again in her life, for British Guiana is fourteen thousand miles away and the passage costs not less than Rs. 375—an impossible sum to manage for a poor woman.

A Vaishya of Jhansi district, who has taken to begging, bewails his lot more than any one else. He was not taken back in his caste. His people refused to recognize him even. “No one in my family has ever been a beggar” he says and sobs aloud.

It is a pathetic sight to see the children in these wretched surroundings. There is a look on the faces of these children which betrays want of nourishment and joy and it seems that these children have never smiled. And what can be more moving than the sight of girls who have not got enough of clothing to cover their body?

I have written to the Government of India many times to do something for these starving people but unfortunately have not succeeded in getting anything done by them. On 25th September 1929 when the Hon. Mr. Rama Prasad Mukerji asked in the Council of State if the Government had made any effort to alleviate the grievances of these returned emigrants, Sir Fazl-i-Husain replied :—“Government are considering whether anything can be done to help the repatriates.”

Nineteen months have passed and we do not even now

know whether the leisurely deliberations of the Government have been concluded.

In the meantime the situation has been going from bad to worse. I appealed for help in the papers, and as a result, got some money along with rice and clothes, which gave only temporary relief to these people. I realise that without the help of the Government of India and cooperation of some powerful social organisation like the Y. M. C. A. and the Arya Samaj no permanent relief can be given to these poor people from the Colonies.

### CONCLUSIONS

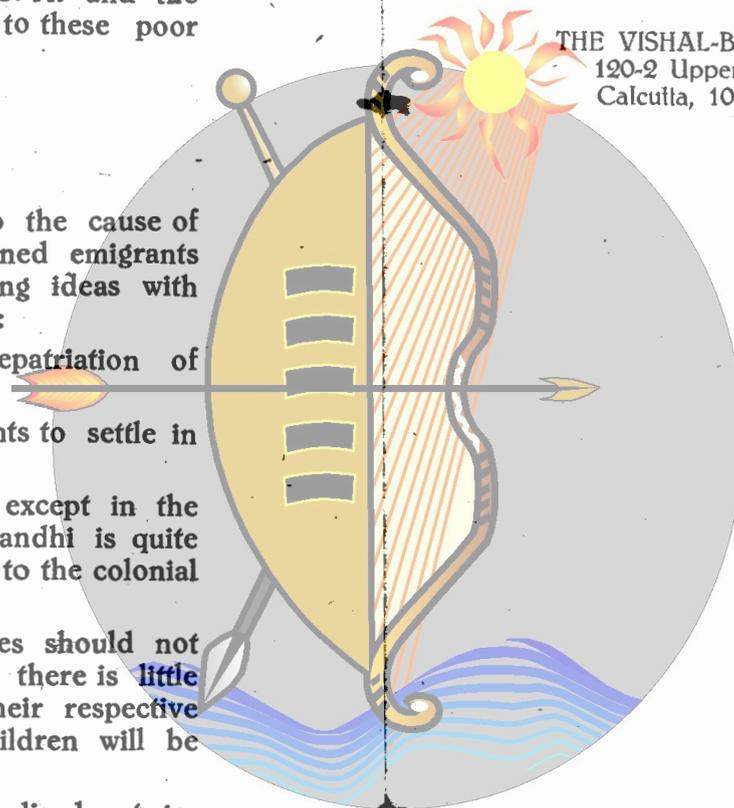
During the last seventeen years of service to the cause of Indians overseas I have met hundreds of returned emigrants and after seeing their ways of life and exchanging ideas with them, I have arrived at the following conclusions :

- I. Under no circumstances should any repatriation of colonial Indians be encouraged.
- II It is most difficult for the returned emigrants to settle in India happily.
- III 'Colonial born' Indians will not be happy except in the colonies' This statement of Mahatma Gandhi is quite true and it is a sin to offer any temptations to the colonial born to leave the colonies.
- IV Those who have married in the colonies should not think of coming to India to settle here, for there is little possibility of their being taken back in their respective social organisations. Marriage of their children will be an insoluble problem.
- V From the economic point of view it is very disadvantageous for colonial Indians to come to India. Certainly they are much better off there.
- VI So long as India is not herself free to manage her own affairs she is not in a position to give any material help to her sons overseas.
- VII Under no circumstances should our leaders, or the Government of India be a party to any compromise with the South African or any other colonial Government which has for one of its objects the repatriation of colonial Indians.

VIII I can quite realise that, inspite of all our warnings, a number of colonial Indians will still return to India entirely of their own accord. We have a duty to perform towards them. To use Mr. Andrews' words, "they must on no account be allowed to go to destruction in the slums of Calcutta and Madras."

THE VISHAL-BHARAT OFFICE  
120-2 Upper Circular Road  
Calcutta, 10th May, 1931.

BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI



## Repatriates from South Africa

At the time of my departure from South Africa in October 1929 I was asked by my friends and countrymen there to enquire into the condition of repatriated emigrants living in different parts of India. I spent nearly three months on this work, visiting Bombay, several places in the United Provinces, Bihar, Calcutta and its suburbs, and Madras. During this period I had occasion to meet hundreds of returned emigrants. I interviewed them and saw their condition with my own eyes. I also met some Government officials in this connection and had talks with them on this subject, and I am grateful to them for their ungrudging help and co-operation without which my report would have remained incomplete.

By the end of April 1930 my report was almost ready for publication and I wanted to get it published immediately as I had been constantly urged to do so by my friends in South Africa. But the Right Honourable Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, who is a great friend of Indians Overseas and for whom I have great respect, asked me to postpone the publication of this report for a few months and I had to obey him.

In April 1930 I was sentenced to imprisonment for two years and a half on account of my taking part in the Civil Disobedience movement and have come out only in the middle of March 1931. This will explain to my colonial friends the long delay in the publication of this report, and I hope they will excuse me.

On 7th February 1930 I had issued an interim statement, in which I wrote :—

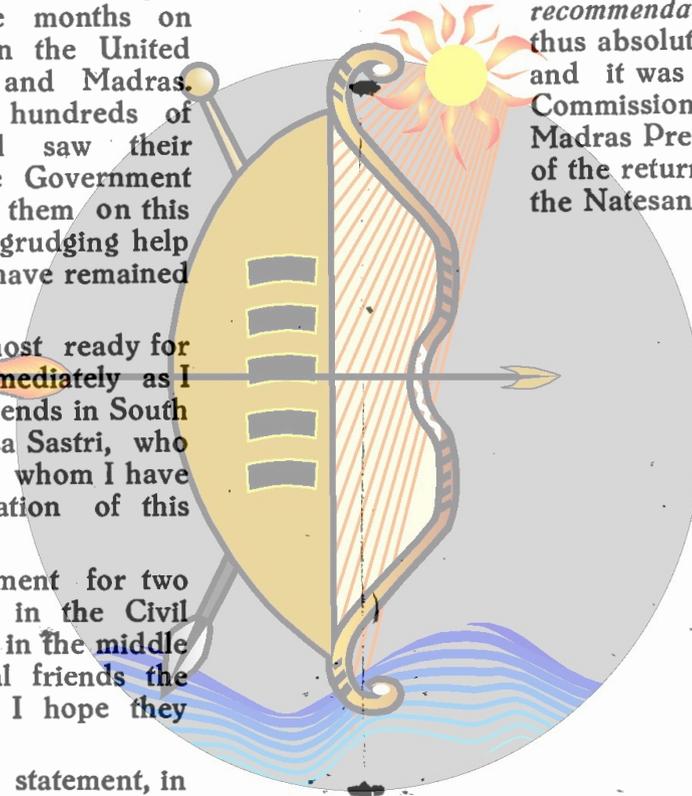
I have been receiving a number of letters from my friends in South Africa to let them know the results of my enquiry. I would advise them to be a little more patient. It is a delicate problem and the Government of India should be given sufficient time to consider this question.

I earnestly hope that Sir Muhammad Habibulla will give his serious attention to this question and would appoint a commission of enquiry.

If unfortunately the Government does not accede to this request then it will be my duty to publish my report by the end of April. We must proceed constitutionally and should not begin any propaganda against repatriation before we have exhausted all other means of bringing pressure on the Government of India and the Union Govern-

ment to reconsider the assisted emigration scheme in the light of facts and figures that may be established by the Commission of Enquiry.

In April 1930 the Government of India appointed a committee with the Honourable Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray, I. C. S., Commissioner of Labour, Madras as members, to make an enquiry into the working of the special organization in Madras for dealing with emigrants returning to the Presidency from South Africa under the scheme of assisted emigration and make recommendations. Repatriates living in Northern India were thus absolutely neglected. The scope of enquiry was limited and it was further narrowed down by the fact that the Commissioners were not asked to go to the interior of the Madras Presidency and see with their own eyes the condition of the returned emigrants. For the information of the readers the Natesan-Gray report is given in appendix III.



## CHAPTER I.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN EMIGRATION TO NATAL.

In order to understand the problem of the repatriation of Indians from South Africa it is necessary to know something of the history of Indian emigration to that country.

When Sir George Napier, Governor of the Cape Colony, annexed Natal, he issued a preliminary proclamation, dated May, 1843, containing the following declaration :—

"There shall not be in the eye of the Law any distinction of colour, origin, language, or creed, but the protection of the Law in letter and in substance shall be extended impartially to all alike."

In course of time the white planters of Natal found themselves faced with bankruptcy on account of want of labour, and frantic efforts were made by them and desperate remedies suggested to remove this difficulty. The *Natal Mercury* of 24th February 1858 contains an account of a meeting held under the presidentship of the Resident Magistrate to consider the question of labour supply. The following resolution was moved at the meeting :—

"That this meeting is credibly informed by persons well acquainted with the country, that the Amatonga tribe, from the native disposition and habits of the people, is well adapted to supply our wants; and further that many of its members are not only willing but anxious to immigrate as labourers, in order to escape from the tyranny and oppression of the Zulus."

But there were considerable difficulties in introducing these Amatongas who were natives of Portuguese East Africa. One great difficulty was that the contracts of service made beyond the colony were not valid within it. The idea was given up at that time, but later on in 1863 another attempt was made to recruit these Amatongas. This attempt also failed on account of the unwillingness of the tribesmen to engage for long periods.\*

Then attempts were made to induce refugees from the frequent tribal wars in Zululand to enter the service of the white farmers but without substantial success.†

In November 1855 the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal wrote to the Secretary of State for Colonies to allow him to introduce convicts for this purpose. But the reply that came was in the negative. These were the words of the Secretary of State for Colonies :—

"I have received your despatch No. 63 of 9th Nov. last transmitting a petition addressed to the Queen by certain inhabitants of Natal, praying for the introduction into Natal of a limited number of convicts to be employed on the works at the Harbour and I request that you will acquaint the petitioners that it is not in my power to recommend a compliance with the prayer of it."\*

It is to be noted that in 1874 the Natal Legislative Council passed a law which allowed private employment of Native convicts who with their families were to be assigned to white men. This law was disallowed by the Home Government. The Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote :—

"To take a general power of assigning convicts as private servants would open the door to many objectionable practices."†

In the beginning of 1858 Mr. Crawford, a manager of Umzinto Sugar Co. brought from Java some Chinese and Malaya labourers. Welcoming the arrival of this 'fine body of Chinese and Malayas' the *Natal Mercury* of 2nd February 1858 wrote :—

"This first introduction of Eastern labour, we hail with satisfaction as the thin end of the wedge. We are satisfied that the presence of a few thousands of such labourers in this colony will operate most beneficially, as an example to our own natives, besides affording relief and a guarantee of success to the operations of the planters."

But even this attempt did not succeed. The Colonial Secretary for Hong Kong wrote to the Colonial Secretary for Natal :—"A Chinaman does not in the proper sense of the word emigrate but simply goes to a foreign country with a view of making money and returning home." After referring to Natal rates of wages—10 shillings to 15 shillings per month with rations, the Colonial Secretary for Hong Kong proceeds :

"Now the fortune-seeking Chinese would want more than this to enable him to carry out his hope of returning to China and he would expect to earn it without too much laborious physical work and without denying himself reasonable indulgence in what he considers the luxuries life."

Attempts were made to procure Portuguese from

\* Government Notice 130 of 1863

† Government Notice 139 of 1856  
Legislative Council Paper No. 21 of 1860  
Government Notice No. 63 of 1874.

\* Despatch dated February 14th 1856 from Secretary of State for Colonies to the Acting Lieut.-Governor, Cooper.

† Natal Government Notice 181 of 1875.

Madeira and Creoles from Reunion but these also came to nothing.\*

Government Notice 59 of 1874 gives clue to a curious correspondence with Joseph Arch of National Agricultural Labourers' Union at Birmingham, dealing with the possibility of assisted emigration of English agricultural labourers to Natal. Of course the idea was ludicrous. In the meantime the situation was growing serious on account of shortage of labour. A writer wrote in the *Natal Mercury* :

"Want of reliable Labour has sent many a disgusted settler from Natal. It is our great weakness. Farmers cannot afford to pay high wages. Cheap and reliable labour is what we must have."

### WHY THE AFRICANS DID NOT WORK

Meanwhile many person both in Natal and England were impatiently asking why in a country where the black natives far out-numbered the whites, it was necessary to recruit labour from outside. A convincing reply to this question was given by Mr. Shepstone, who wrote :—

"The natives of this district are savages and therefore fickle and uncertain in their opinions and feelings. . . . It is not reasonable to expect that a nation of warriors and hunters should at once become steady labourers. There are however grounds for thinking that by prompt and regular payment and strictly just treatment a considerable supply of Native labour may be obtained but . . . it would not be prudent to engage in any work requiring a constant or uninterrupted supply of labour relying solely upon that which can be obtained from the natives."†

In 1870 Mr. Granville, Secretary of State for the Colonies, asked Mr. Keate the Lieut.-Governor why in a Colony where Europeans number 16,000 and the Natives upwards of 200,000 it is necessary to recruit from outside. Mr. Keate answered :—

"The Natives of Natal inhabiting the locations, are in fact freeholders. As such they are producers, but not to such an extent as to prevent their supplying from among them to the colonists a very large body of labourers for wages: of these labourers however, comparatively few are as yet absolutely dependent on wages for their livelihood, for they have more or less interest in the location lands. The majority of them are apt in consequence to offer their labour on conditions more suitable to themselves than to the colonists who employ them. The latter want to secure long terms of service at small wages: the former prefer short

\* Govt. Notice 101 of 1866.

Govt. Notice 1849 and 1874.

† Govt. Notice No. 11 of 1853.

terms of service terminable almost at their own discretion, with wages on a more liberal scale, though still remarkably low as compared with the rate of wages in most other countries."

Thus the Natives of Africa were not reliable as workers. Many had no need to work, while others who wanted to work were not steady. They would leave the work at moment's notice whenever they liked. Attempts to have recourse to compulsion failed on account of the Home Government being against such an idea. The planters were greatly enraged. One Mr. Milner spoke in a meeting as reported in the *Natal Mercury* :

"He would like to know whether there would ever be a plan for obtaining labour from our own Natives. Whether a tax would be imposed for forcing them to work? And, whether, if imposed, the Government would compel its payment? If not, he imagined, the sooner they left the Colony the better. There was an urgent necessity for an alteration in the Kaffir system. They must urge on the Government the necessity of obtaining an increased military force. They must impose a tax on Kaffirs, and they must force them to pay it. The Government had been grappling with the Kaffir question for twelve years and yet the position of the labour supply was such that no capitalist would invest in the Colony. Mr. King had 130 acres under cane, and only two Kaffirs. In asking for temporary relief, permanent relief must not be forgotten. The Government would shelve the meeting on this as on every other topic. At Mauritius, the planters had applied and the Government had relieved their wants. Here the Government see and admit everything and yet do nothing."

Indeed an attempt was made to use the magistrates as recruiting agents. The Legislative Council passed a bill legalizing this practice and providing that the magistrate's office should be used for registration purposes. But the Governor refused to sanction the bill for he feared that it would amount to forced labour. The planters were at a loss to understand what to do. In 1857 a Mr. Johnstone stated in the Legislative Council that while 300,000 Kaffirs were required 6,000 or 7,000 only were available.

### INTRODUCTION OF INDENTURED INDIANS

It was under these circumstances when ruin faced the planters of Natal that pressure was brought upon the Government of India to allow the emigration of "coolies" from this unfortunate country, and the Government of India was reluctantly forced to agree to this experiment.

Sir Benjamin Robertson, the late Chief Commissioner of the

Central Provinces of India, who represented the Government of India before the Asiatic Enquiry Commission of 1921 rightly observed in his statement :

"It should be emphasized that there has never been any spontaneous emigration of the labouring classes from India to South Africa. Those who came were recruited with difficulty, and not infrequently by methods which were commonly known in India as "coolie catching."

Mr. C. F. Andrews also has referred to this point in his pamphlet 'The Asiatic Question'

The first thing to which I would draw very careful attention is this: that Indians are a home-loving people. They have not got the migratory instinct strong in their blood, like the British or the Irish. It would perhaps be true to say that Indians have less of the migratory habit taken as a whole, than the people of any other country in the world.

For the last thousand years, the only migration from India of any dimensions has been that brought about to supply cheap labour to the British colonies abroad, which has been called "indentured immigration." As this form of immigration has done more than anything else to bring Indians to South Africa, and to create the Asiatic problem, I shall be obliged to refer to it very often. One of its main features was this: that it was promoted and controlled by Government, and was at no time a voluntary and spontaneous movement of the Indian population. Professional recruiters, who were paid a high price for each recruit, were licensed by the Government to go in and out among the village people in order to induce them to leave their homes and be sent abroad for the purpose of labour. This kind of immigration was all too frequently accompanied by deception on a large scale, and this would seem to be the inevitable concomitant of professional recruiting. It cannot be stated too clearly that such immigration is artificial in the extreme. It must never be mistaken for the natural flow of the Indian people to foreign lands. Had it not been for the eagerness of the British Colonies to obtain cheap labour for their sugar plantations, it would never have taken place at all. Indians would have stayed at home. It was Natal, Mauritius, Fiji, etc. which asked the Government of India to send Indian labour not *vice versa*.

I need not give here in detail the the correspondence between the Government of Natal and the Home Government and the replies of the Government of India. This correspondence, some extract from which are printed in the Appendix XII makes it abundantly clear that it was with great reluctance the Government of India agreed to this experiment of 'coolie-catching' for the benefit of the white planters of Natal. Indeed at one stage they flatly refused to allow emigration of Indian labourers to Natal. Here is an extract from a letter of the Governor-General in Council :

\* Reprinted from the *Natal Advertiser* and printed by The Commercial Printing Company 365, Pine Street, Durban.

"The Governor of Bombay reports that there is abundant demand for labour near Bombay at rates higher than those offered in Natal. As for emigration from Madras and Calcutta the superior advantages held out to emigrants by the Mauritius and West Indian colonies, the difficulties experienced in meeting the wants of these colonies, and the adequate demand for labour which exists in Madras and Bengal Presidencies would combine to prevent any emigration taking place to Natal on the terms specified . . . . . under the circumstances I am directed to state that the Governor-General in Council is of opinion that no useful purpose would be gained by authorising the emigration of labourers from any of the ports in India to Natal."

It will not be out of place to quote something from a letter written by Mr. Scott, the Lieut.-Governor of Natal to the Home Government. Mr. Scott wrote :—

"The parties engaged in the production of sugar and the cultivation of other tropical products object however to Zulu labour as being uncertain and dependent on circumstances over which no control can be exercised and state that they are consequently deterred from cultivating extensively from fear that labour might at the critical moment fail them. These parties also state that if this objection to extensive cultivations of sugar cane were removed, they were confident that other capitalists would soon settle in Natal and that the production of sugar and other tropical products would rapidly and largely increase."

The Governor then indicates his doubt whether native labour might be trained to the work, but states that he is alive to the importance of not checking the sugar estates and therefore would "advise that the Indian Government be moved to grant their sanction to a limited number of coolies being introduced." He states about the planters, "They are also ready to enter into any bond which either this Government or the Government of India may require for the due fulfilment of all conditions." He is aware "That the Indian Government is not very desirous of seeing an emigration of coolies from India to Natal, but seeing that the planters here regard this privilege as of importance" advocates compliance as an experiment.

Thus it has been proved by official documents that the Natal Government went on their knees to the Indian Government to allow the labourers to be recruited to save the sugar industry of Natal from ruin. To bring over, for purely selfish reason, a whole population, first of all, then to use this population in order to build up prosperity and wealth; and then, last of all, when wealth is established, to banish the labourers who produced the wealth—this has been in brief the policy of the South African Government and this can be proved to the hilt from official documents. Emigration from India to Natal commenced under Law 14 of

1859, in 1860; the first immigrants landing in November of that year. Up to 1866 about five thousand indentured Indians were introduced in to Natal. There was no emigration of Indian labourers to Natal from 1866 to 1874.

Now look at the result of the labour of these Indian "coolies." *Natal Mercury* of 19th January 1865 says in a leader:—

"The coolie immigration after several years' experience of it is deemed more essential to our prosperity than ever. It is the vitalizing principle. It may be tested by its results. Had it not been for coolie labour we should certainly not have had it to say that our sugar export increased from £ 26,000 in 1863 to £ 100,000 in 1864, and has prospects of a greater increase before it. Had it not been for the coolie labour, we should not hear of coffee plantations springing up on all hands and of the prosperity of older ones being sustained solely through the agency of East India men."

In its issue of the 21st January, 1865 the *Natal Mercury* advocated that coolies should be encouraged to take up land. "We see no reason why a coolie should not be encouraged in his natural wish to make money more rapidly by working for himself. In creating wealth he must benefit the community in greater degree. Hence we think that the Government might lay out small plots of land, among those to be allotted to Kaffirs, for sale to free coolies, of course, at the upset price. . . . we can conceive that private planters and land owners might find it remunerative to encourage small coolie growers to cultivate for themselves, by offering patches of leased or bought land and to crush their cane. . . at their landlord's mill."

The Mayor's Minute published in the *Natal Mercury* of 23rd August, 1866, contained the following sentence:—

"Only six Kaffirs remain in the employ of the Corporation, the bulk of them having been discharged with the view to economy and the town gang consists with this exception entirely of coolies who are found to work satisfactorily under the superintendence of the foreman and under foreman of Town Works."

In 1909 a Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of M. W. F. Clayton to enquire about the question of Indian immigration to Natal. Writing about the objection to Indian immigration, as said, "That it had a demoralizing influence on National life." The Commission recorded:—

"Evidence showed that the indentured Indians do not mix with either the white or the Native, but live their own life and while they cannot be said to be of high character, they

are industrious, frugal, law abiding and on the whole, sober in their habits and it has not been proved that their presence has an injurious effect on the morals of the whites on the one hand, or on the natives on the other." ( Page 3 )

"That the actual value of land in certain districts have been very greatly increased by the presence of the Indians as *field labourers* and that fictitious values of a few years ago were mostly confined to municipalities and adjacent areas in the course of general land speculation." ( Page 4 )

"Absolutely conclusive evidence has been put before the Commission that several industries owe their existence and present condition entirely to indentured Indian labour and that if the importation of such labour were abolished under present conditions these industries would decline, and, in some cases, be abandoned entirely. These are:—sugar, tea, and wattle growing, farming, coal mining, and certain other industries in which a considerable amount of unskilled labour is required." ( Page 4 )

### UNRELIABILITY OF NATIVE LABOUR

"Your Commission have evidence from almost every witness of the unreliability of native labour, even from those who use it as far as possible. Continuous labour is not habitual to the native, he works solely for his immediate requirements, and in this connection it was frequently stated in evidence, that the higher wage the native is paid the sooner he leaves his work, and further that the comparatively few instances where natives have been continually employed, and in consequence comfortably off, appeared to have exerted no influence on the minds of the other natives in the direction of inducing them to work." ( Page 4 )

"In regard to the want of continuity of native labour, evidence was given that, were Indian immigration abolished it would require at least two natives to perform the work done by one Indian, on account of the short time during which a native works, and also, that directly abolition took place, competition would inevitably arise, for the services of natives to replace the Indian labour, possibly sending up the wage rate to a prohibitive figure, and in any case accentuating the present insufficiency of native workers."

"These considerations apply, not only to existing industries, but your Commission have met with signs of industrial and agricultural expansion on every hand, and has been much impressed with the signs of general awakening to the value of the resources of the Colony. Such expansion must, as a matter of course, be seriously hampered if not altogether checked, by any untimely interference with the supply of labour. *Your Commission therefore are convinced that a supply of indentured Indians is absolutely essential to the industries specified in clause 4 hereof (sugar, tea, etc.).*"

Thus it was that with the labour of indentured Indians Natal was made the "Garden of South Africa."

## CHAPTER II

### SELFISHNESS OF THE WHITES OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Emigration of Indian labourers to Natal continued from 1860 till 1st July 1911. It was stopped for a period of eight years and, consequently, the planters suffered a great deal. In 1874 crops were rotting on the ground and though every attempt was made to obtain native labour from chiefs, none could be available at any price and so the Lieut-Governor Pirie exercising his powers as supreme chief, called out Natives to reap the crops! This was the culminating point of a long series of protests and complaints, and in deference to the popular cry for cheap and reliable labour, door was again opened to Indian immigration in 1874.

By early eighties the white planters had established their industries on a more or less permanent basis and had prospered wonderfully, and though they still wanted cheap Indian labour, they decided to get rid of as many Indians as possible. Their policy now became "suck the indentured Indian labourer of all the energy that he possesses, for five years and then compell him to return to India by repressive legislation."

In 1875, Lord Salisbury while writing about the system of indenture said :—

"Above all things we must confidently expect, as an indispensable condition of the proposed arrangement, that the Colonial laws and their administration will be such that Indian settlers, who have completed the terms of service to which they agreed, as the return for the expense of bringing them to the colonies, will be free men in all respects, with privileges no whit inferior to those of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects resident in the colonies."

But this "indispensable condition" laid down by a most responsible member of Her Majesty's Government has been fulfilled only in its breach in almost all the Colonies, where Indians were sent under indenture. These Colonial whites have always thought that self-preservation justifies the repudiation of any undertaking. A representative of the Natal Agricultural Union put it very bluntly before the Asiatic Enquiry Commission :

"When relations between two nations reach breaking point documents are torn up as was instanced in the last war and it appears to me that

in connection with this question relations are reaching breaking point."

As I have said, it was in the early eighties that the whites of Natal began their selfish policy of using every means to turn out Indians from Natal. The history of Indians in South Africa from 1885 to 1931 is a history of oppression and repression. The number of anti-Indian laws and the regulations, enacted in South Africa from 1885, which discriminated against Indians, is very large indeed. Here is a list of some of them :

1. Law No. 3, 1885, of Transvaal.
2. Law to provide against the influx of Asiatics (Statute Law of the Orange Free State)
3. Act 17 of 1895 (Natal)
4. Dealers Licenses' Act No. 18. 1897 of Natal
5. Immigration Restriction Act 1897 (Natal)
6. Law No. 3 of 1897 regulating the marriages of coloured persons within the South African Republic.
7. Regulations for towns in the South African Republic, 1899.
8. Act to amend the immigration Law of Natal (No. 1, 1900).
9. Immigration Restriction Act, 1903, of Natal.
10. Immigration Act of Cape Colony (No. 30, 1906).
11. Johannesburg Municipal Ordinance (2 Private—of 1906).
12. Johannesburg Municipal Tramway Bye-Laws.
13. Cemetery Bye-Law.
14. Immigration Restriction Act No. 3, 1906 of Natal.
15. Transvaal Arms and Ammunition Act (10 of 1907).
16. Transvaal Immigration Act (15 of 1907).
17. Education Act (25 of 1907).
18. Act No. 27 of 1907 (Transvaal).
19. Workmen's Compensation Act (No. 36, 1907) of Transvaal.
20. Immorality Ordinance (No. 46 of 1903, as amended by No. 16 of 1908).
21. Transvaal Townships Amendment (Act 34 of 1908).
22. Transvaal Gold Law (Act 35 of 1908).
23. Asiatic Registration Amendment Act No. 36 of 1908.
24. Public Service and Pensions Act (No. 19 of 1908).
25. South Africa Act, 1909.
26. Public Servants' Superannuation Act No. 1, 1910.
27. Education Act No. 6 of 1910.
28. Act No. 31 of 1910 (To provide pensions for teachers in Government-aided Schools).
29. Immigration Regulation Act of 1913.

Some of the above-mentioned acts or regulations were specially enacted against Asiatics or Indians, while others discriminated against them. Names of other enactments that were attempted by the Union Government against Indians after 1914, were mentioned by Lord Reading in his reply to Dr. Abdur Rahman's deputation.

After Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha movement in South Africa the Government passed the Indian Relief Bill of 1914, and it was thought that the Union Government had given up their anti-Indian policy. In the second reading of the Bill General Smuts said :

"The Commission (The Solomon Commission), it would seem, had made fourteen recommendations. Most of these required merely administrative action, and he would say that it was the intention of the Government to carry out the commission's recommendations in their entirety partly by legislation and partly by administration; and in this way to secure that peace which they were all longing for, that peace which was not merely of much importance to South Africa itself, but also to South Africa in her external relations."

Thus General Smuts wanted 'peace' in 1914 but as will be shown later on, the Indians were not to be left in peace. It is to be noted that in 1912 Mr. Gokhale along with Mahatma Gandhi had agreed to the prohibition of Indian emigration to South Africa, though their action was very much resented by Sir Pherozshah Mehta and Sir M. Bhowndree. By agreeing to this prohibition of Indian emigration they gave complete assurance to the whites of South Africa that their country would not be flooded by Indians.

General Smuts authorized in the name of the Union Government, made the following statement :

"With regard to the administration of existing laws, the minister desires me to say that it has always been and will continue to be the desire of the Government to see that they are administered *in a just manner and with due regard to vested interests.*"

At the Imperial War Conference in 1917, General Smuts said :

"Once the white community in South Africa were rid of the fear that they are going to be flooded by unlimited immigration from India all other questions would be considered subsidiary and would become easily and perfectly soluble."

It is to be noted that this fear was removed once and for all by the prohibitory Immigration Laws of 1913 and 1914 and by India's acceptance of the reciprocity resolution of 1917 at the Imperial War Conference, elaborated in 1918 and confirmed in 1921 and 1923, recognizing the right of the Dominions and India respectively to restrict immigration each from the other for the purpose of controlling the composition of their own populations.

*Thus in South Africa the problem which remained to be solved was not one of Indian immigration at all, but of the treatment of the resident Indian population.*

Indeed there was never the danger of South Africa being flooded by Indian emigrants. If Indian labourers had not been introduced by the artificial method of the indenture system (which was based on fraud and carried on by falsehood) to help the insolvent white planters, there would not have been any Asiatic question in South Africa at all. In that case there would not have been to-day more than ten thousand Indians in the whole of South Africa.

The industry and sobriety of the Indian population in South Africa has never been doubted. The Clayton Commission recognized in 1909 that Indians were "industrious, frugal, law-abiding and on the whole sober in their habits." And in the Imperial Conference of 1918, Mr. Henry Burton, the Union spokesman, on the Indian question, made the following admission :

"As far as we are concerned, it is only fair to say and it is the truth, that we have found that the Indians in our midst in South Africa, who form in some parts a very substantial portion of the population, are good, law-abiding, quiet citizens, and it is our duty to see that they are treated as human beings, with feelings like our own, and in a proper manner."

But have these 'good, law-abiding quiet' Indians ever been treated like human being by the Union of South Africa? The string of anti-Indian legislation from 1885 upwards gives a reply in the negative to the above question. As I am going to show in these pages, every attempt has been made by the Union Government to get rid of as many of these 'good, law-abiding quiet citizens' as possible.

General Smuts wanted peace in 1914 and his government assured the Indians that they would be left in peace. But was that done? Only for less than six years did the Indians get any peace, for on 3rd February 1920 the Union Government appointed an Asiatic Inquiry Commission to report on the provisions of law affecting

(a) the acquisition of land and rights affecting land in the Union by Asiatics and persons of Asiatic descent for trading and other purposes.

(b) the trading or carrying on of business by such persons generally, or in specified localities.

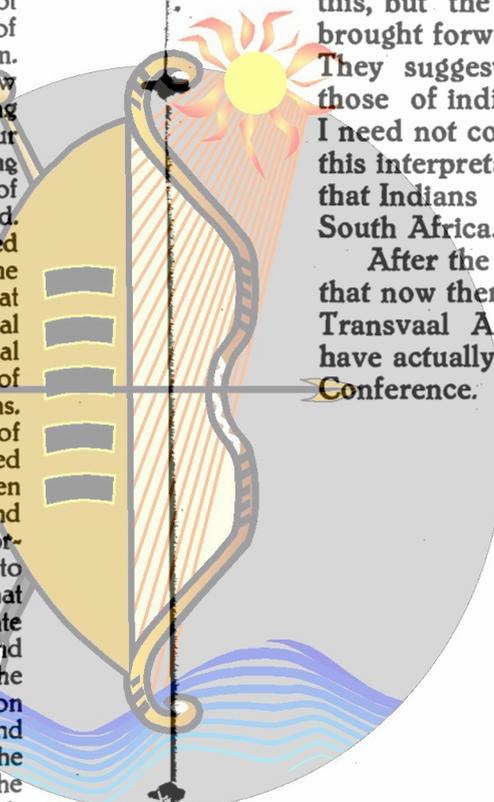
How between 1921 and 1925 the South African Government tried to legislate against Indian forgetting their promise of administering the laws "in a just manner and with due regard to vested interests" and how the Government of India

tried again and again to stop them from doing so will be clear from the following extract of the reply of Lord Reading to Dr. Abdur Rahman's deputation :—

First as regards draft ordinances to amend the Natal townships law of 1881 in such a way as to deprive Indians of the township franchise, various drafts were introduced in 1921, 1922, 1923, and 1924, and regarding each in turn the Government of India cabled representations. The Governor-General in Council withheld assent to the first, reserved the second and fourth for further consideration, and the third was not proceeded with. The fifth ordinance of 1925 received the sanction of the Governor-General in Council before our representations reached him. In 1925 also a draft ordinance to consolidate the Natal townships law was introduced which would have had the effect of disenfranchising Indians already on the electoral roll of townships. In response to our representations we have been informed that the ordinance is standing over until next year, and that when it is proceeded with the franchise of Indians at present on the voters' roll will be adequately safeguarded. Again, as regards the Natal Boroughs Ordinance of 1925 we cabled representations. The Governor-General in Council at first reserved the Bill for further consideration but ultimately assented on the ground that they were unwilling to curtail the power of a provincial council to deal with a purely domestic legislation. Another instance is the Natal Rural Dealers' Licensing Ordinance. Various drafts were introduced, all of which were likely to affect adversely the trading rights of Indians. The Governor-General in Council withheld assent to the draft of 1921, reserved for consideration the draft of 1922, and assented to the draft of 1923 after explaining how far he had been able to go in meeting our wishes. In the case of the Durban Land Alienation Ordinance of 1922 we cabled representations. The Governor-General in Council assented, but instructed the Administrator in Natal to satisfy himself before approving racial restrictions in land sales that Asiatics were given reasonable opportunity for acquiring adequate residential sites. Take finally the Areas Reservation and Immigrations and Registration (Further Provision) Bill, 1925. The position is that the Government of India have already telegraphed very full representation regarding this bill, which they consider of the utmost importance, and have received an assurance that their representations will receive the earnest consideration of the ministers. It may also be noted that the Government of India has addressed a detailed despatch containing their views on the Asiatic Enquiry Commission's Report, 1921. This despatch has given rise to a long correspondence, in the course of which the Union Government have explained their general policy towards Asiatics. We are still engaged in discussion. I freely admit that in some cases the representations of my Government have been unavailing, as, for example in the Natal Public Health Committee's Ordinance (1925). In the case of the South African Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1925 also, we made representations, and though some changes were introduced to meet Asiatic susceptibilities the principle of the Bill remained unchanged. Fortunately however, the Bill was rejected in the Senate. In the case of the Class Areas Bill of 1924 we have also made representations, but the bill lapsed owing to the dissolution of the Union Parliament.

After the Class Areas Bill the Government introduced "Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill", better known as the Asiatic Bill of 1925. This bill along with the three provincial ordinances of Natal—(1) Boroughs Ordinance of 1924 ; (2) Township Franchise Amendment Ordinance 1925 ; (3) Rural Dealers' Licensing Ordinance, and the General Dealers Control Ordinance of Transvaal—was meant to lead the Indian population to absolute ruin. Not only this, but the South African Government, through Mr. Duncan, brought forward a new interpretation of the settlement of 1914. They suggested that the vested rights mentioned in it were those of individuals and certain township rights in Transvaal. I need not comment here about the honesty or the want of it in this interpretation. I have simply quoted all these things to show that Indians have never been left in peace by the whites of South Africa.

After the Round Table Conference of 1927 it was thought that now there would be peace. But that was not to be. The Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Bill and the Immigration Bill have actually been brought forward after the Round Table Conference.



## CHAPTER III

### COMPULSORY REPATRIATION OF INDIANS

*There is one thing which ought to be understood clearly by us and that is this the Whites of South Africa have during all these past forty years constantly aimed at the reduction of Indian population at all costs and by all means, fair and foul.*

In the year 1893 the Government of Natal sent a deputation consisting of Mr. Henry Binns, M.L.A., and Mr. Mason, the Protector of Indian Immigrants, to India to confer with the India Government about an arrangement by which labourers were to return to India after the expiration of their terms of indenture. Here is a passage from the report of the Indian Enquiry Commission, presided over by Mr. W. H. Solomon.

"The main object of the deputation was to obtain the consent of the Government of India to an alteration in the terms of indenture so as to provide that the labourer at the expiration of his period of service should return to India. Interviews took place between the Natal delegates and Sir Edward Buck, Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agriculture Department, who was the officer in charge of emigration, and later with Sir Antony MacDonnel, a member of the Vice-regal Council. The proposals of the delegates were submitted in writing to the Government of India and were carefully considered by them. The report states that no written reply was received from the Government of India, but that they were verbally informed in substance that there would be no objection raised to a condition being inserted in the contract to the effect that coolies must return to India at the end of their last term of indenture, provided that failure to fulfil this condition shall not constitute a criminal offence. In view of the condition insisted upon by the Government of India, it was deemed necessary by the delegates that some provision should be made to meet the case of labourers failing to comply with the covenant requiring them to return at the expiration of their indentures and a residence tax was suggested by them. The report states that though the delegates had not received any formal communication on the subject, it was continually discussed in the course of their conversations and it was not anticipated that any difficulty would arise with regard to it."

This makes it perfectly clear that it was on account of the weak submission by the Government of India that the £ 3 tax could be imposed on the indentured labourers. In fact, they accepted the Act 17 of 1895 which was absolutely unjust. One wonders why the Government of India did not

give any written reply to the Natal Deputation of Mr. Henry Binns. Possibly they realized the injustice of the whole thing and had not the courage to do so. Whatever the reason may be, one thing is absolutely clear. The Government of India have all along weakly submitted to this disastrous theory of "the reduction of India population."

They agreed to this £ 3 tax, which was obviously imposed to reduce the Indian population. Their own representative, Sir Benjamin Rabertson, made the following observation on the subject in his statement submitted to the Asiatic Enquiry Commission:—

"The last proposal which it is desired to make, with a view to restoring a calmer atmosphere, is that the number of Indians in the Union should as far as possible be reduced by a well organized scheme of voluntary repatriation. It has been seen that for many years the Government of India have been compelled to recognize that it was necessary to restrict the number of Indians in South Africa in order to secure fair treatment for those who are permanently settled there. It must be obvious to any one visiting Natal that the condition of many of the Indians there is far from satisfactory; and it is believed that it is in the interests of every one to encourage and facilitate the repatriation of those who are willing to return to India. It will be better for those who go, it will be better for those who remain. It will moderate the agitation which has been aroused by the supposed influx of Asiatics and will prepare the way for a peaceful and reasoned settlement."

The Government of India knew very well that, in spite of the fact that thousands of Indians left South Africa under the scheme of voluntary repatriation, "the agitation aroused by the supposed influx of Asiatics" did not moderate. On the other hand, it assumed dangerous proportions, as is clear from the Areas Reservation and Immigration Bill and several other bills like that. And, still, the Government of India became a party to the assisted emigration scheme which distinctly aimed at the reduction of Indian population by offering them greater temptation to leave South Africa. It may well be imagined that in the next Round Table Conference the Government of India may easily agree to a scheme of further reduction of Indian population, if the bonus is increased from £ 20 to £ 30.

This weakness on the part of the Government of India has brought untold miseries on those who have been repatriated. And what is more unfortunate, the Government of India are not prepared to realize their responsibility and do their duty. They have all along refused to make a through enquiry into the condition of returned emigrants. Last time, the Gray and Nateson Commission confined their investigations to Madras

Port alone, for the Government of India observed that "investigations outside will neither be practicable nor fruitful of results commensurate with the labour and expense involved."

Now let us see what the result has been of this policy of "the reduction of Indian population," so persistently preached and enforced by the South African Government and so obligingly accepted and meekly submitted to by the Government of India.

Repatriation of South African Indians may take place in three forms :

- I. Compulsory repatriation from 1895 to 1913 ;
- II. Voluntary repatriation from 1914 to 1926 ;
- III. Repatriation under the assisted emigration scheme from 1927 to.....

Repatriation on account of the imposition of £ 3 tax must be called compulsory repatriation, for it was a tax on residence and its clear object was to compel the Indians to leave South Africa.

Section 2 of Act 17, 1895, reads :

From and after the date when this Act shall take effect the indentures to be signed by Indian immigrants as provided by Schedules B and C of the Indian Immigration Act 1891, referred to in Section II of the said Law shall contain a covenant by the Indian Immigrants in words as follows :

"And we further agree that, after the expiration or other determination of this contract, we shall either return to India or remain in Natal under indentures to be from time to time entered into ; provided that each term of new indentured service shall be for two years ; and provided further, that the rate of wages for each year of indentured service after that provided by this contract shall be 16s. per month for the first year, 17s per month for the second year, 18s per month for the third year, 19s per month for the fourth year, and 20s per month for the fifth and each succeeding year."

Section 3 of the Act reads :

"Every Indian desiring to return to India on the expiry of the first or any subsequent period of his service under any contract of indenture or re-indenture entered into under the Laws for the time being in force shall be provided by the Indian Immigration Trust Board with a free passage to India."

Section 6 of the Act reads :

"Every indentured Indian who shall have entered into the covenant set out in section 2 of this Act and who shall fail, neglect, or refuse to return to India or to become re-indentured in Natal shall take out year by year a pass or licence to remain in the Colony to be issued by the Magistrate of his District and shall pay for such pass or licence a yearly sum of three pounds sterling which may be recovered by summary

process by any Clerk of the Peace or other officer appointed to get in such licence money."

Commenting on this, the Solomon Commission wrote in their report :—

"The fact of the matter is that though the section speaks of a licence, the effect of it really is to impose a £ 3 tax upon residence, which is the suggestion which was made to the Government of India by the Natal delegates who visited that country."

At the same time, the word "Tax" is also somewhat out of place, for the object is not to raise revenue, but to bring pressure to bear upon indentured Indians to induce them to return to India at the expiration of their indentures ; so that the smaller the amount that is collected the more effectively is the object of the Act attained. *The charge in truth is a penalty upon residence.* It is as if the Government of Natal had said to the labourers :

"We do not wish you to settle in the country, but we cannot prevent your doing so ; if you do, however, we shall penalize you by compelling you to pay annually the sum of £ 3 which, though not actually prohibitive, is so heavy that we anticipate that it will have the effect of compelling you to return to India at the end of your first or subsequent indenture."

No better summary of the object of the Act 17 of 1895 could be made. In fact, those words of the Union Government's own commission admirably sum up the entire policy of the Union Government. General Botha, General Smuts, Dr. Malan and General Hertzog have all said the same thing quite openly. "We do not wish you to settle in the country". This sentiment has been at the root of all the anti-Indian legislation from 1885 to 1931. In the words of Messrs. W. H. Solomon, E. Esselen and Jas. S. Wylie they virtually tell the Indians :—

"We do not wish you to settle in the country, but we cannot prevent your doing so ; if you do however, we shall penalize you by imposing anti-Indian legislations and we anticipate that they will have the effect of compelling to return you to India."

The injustice of this compulsory repatriation by imposing a tax of £ 3 was realised even by the *Times* of London which referred to it as

"a state perilously near to slavery," while a radical paper called it :— "a

monstrous wrong, an insult to British subjects, a disgrace to its authors and a slight upon ourselves."

Now let us look at the result of the compulsory repatriation on account of Act 17 of 1895. This Act became operative in the year 1902. Here are the figures :

| BEFORE THE ACT BECAME OPERATIVE |                                       | AFTER THE ACT |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Year                            | Number of those who left South Africa | Year          | Number of those who left South Africa |
| 1895                            | 415                                   | 1902          | 1482                                  |
| 1896                            | 296                                   | 1903          | 2029                                  |
| 1897                            | 418                                   | 1904          | 1672                                  |
| 1898                            | 188                                   | 1905          | 2078                                  |
| 1899                            | 503                                   | 1906          | 3939                                  |
| 1900                            | 448                                   | 1907          | 3484                                  |
| 1901                            | 639                                   | 1908          | 3989                                  |
|                                 |                                       | 1909          | 4895                                  |
|                                 |                                       | 1910          | 4199                                  |
|                                 |                                       | 1911          | 2630                                  |
|                                 |                                       | 1912          | 1409                                  |
|                                 |                                       | 1913          | 1700                                  |

These figures were quoted by Mr. W. F. Clayton in the Union Parliament, in his speech.\*

Thus from 1902 to 1913 the South African Government got rid of 32,506 Indians through compulsory repatriation. In 1914 after the *Satyagraha* movement of Mahatma Gandhi the Indian Relief Bill was passed, but the idea of repatriation of Indians was never given up. General Botha, the Prime Minister said, that "he knew that in South Africa there was a great and strong feeling of prejudice against the Indians, but he also knew that the people of South Africa would believe him when he said that he always had done his utmost to keep these Indians out of the country (hear hear) nor did he rise in the House to embrace these people (cheers)." General Botha was quite right. Was it not he who said in an election address at Standerton in January 1907, that if his party were returned to power they would undertake to drive the coolies out of the country within four years. He suggested that the means to that end was the expropriation of their interests in the country by means of arbitration. Again it was *General Smuts* (the Minister of the

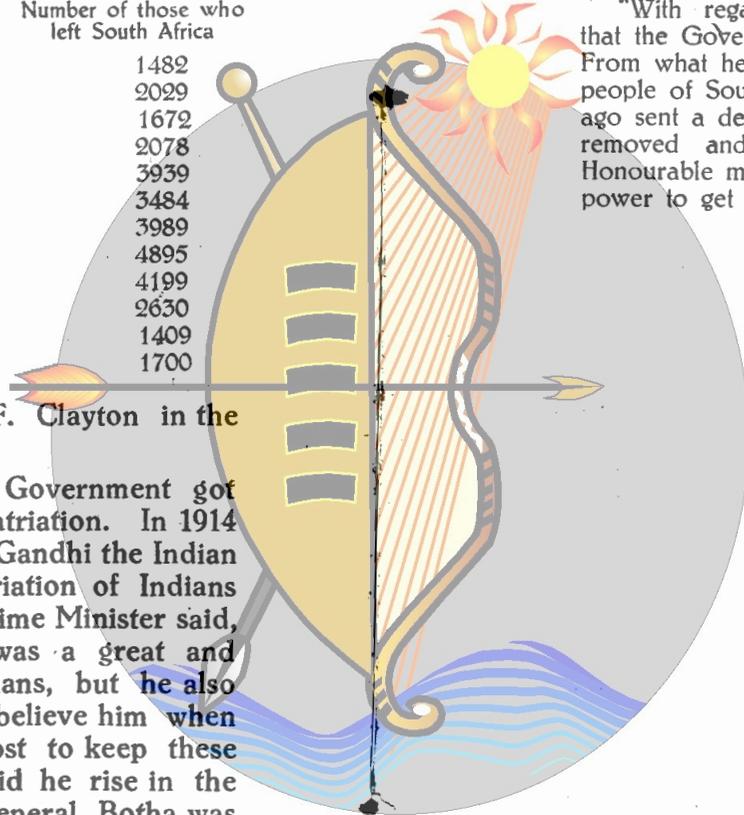
\* "He had figures to show that the tax accomplished what it was intended to do. The Act was passed in 1895 owing to the fact that certain Indians there were not indentured, and as the tax was not made retrospective it became operative in 1901. It would then be seen that the Act, as soon as it came into force, had an immediate effect. (Then Mr. Clayton gave figures). Who he asked, would say the tax was inoperative? Rather, had it not served the purpose for which it was imposed?"

Interior at the time of the Indian Relief Bill) who wrote in a letter to Mr. R. Tathan :

"The Asiatic cancer which has already eaten so deeply into the vitals of South Africa ought to be resolutely eradicated."

And General Smuts even when he was asking for peace did not forget his idea of eradicating this Asiatic cancer. In his speech about the Indians Relief Bill he said :

"With regard to the other point, to secure repatriation he might say that the Government would go a long way to secure that point of view. From what he had heard, it was the universal opinion, not only of the people of South Africa but also of the people of Natal, who three years ago sent a deputation to beg on its knees that the embargo should be removed and more Indians brought into Natal. He could assure Honourable members from Natal that the Government would do all in its power to get Natal out of the mire."



## CHAPTER IV

### VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

And General Smuts fulfilled his promise. Through the scheme of the Voluntary Repatriation he got rid of 20,384 Indians in South Africa. Here are the figures :

#### INDIANS VOLUNTARILY REPATRIATED UNDER THE INDIAN RELIEF Act, 1914

STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

| Year              | Men           | Women        | Children     | Total         |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1914              | 160           | 53           | 77           | 290           |
| 1915              | 513           | 212          | 268          | 992           |
| 1916              | 901           | 440          | 524          | 1,865         |
| 1917              | 665           | 310          | 380          | 1,364         |
| 1918              | 692           | 354          | 486          | 1,582         |
| 1919              | 640           | 267          | 412          | 1,819         |
| 1920              | 856           | 380          | 520          | 1,816         |
| 1921              | 1,408         | 674          | 845          | 2,927         |
| 1922              | 1,247         | 510          | 567          | 2,327         |
| 1923              | 1,397         | 600          | 719          | 2,716         |
| 1924              | 569           | 220          | 274          | 1,063         |
| 1925              | 709           | 292          | 399          | 1,400         |
| 1926 (to 30 June) | 378           | 164          | 233          | 775           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>10,135</b> | <b>4,476</b> | <b>5,773</b> | <b>20,384</b> |

#### EXPENDITURE IN CONNECTION WITH THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

| Expenditure on Bonuses and in India | Year                 | £              |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
|                                     | 1922-23              | 6,915          |
|                                     | 1923-24              | 10,101         |
|                                     | 1924-25              | 3,831          |
|                                     | 1925-26              | 18,342*        |
|                                     | 1926-27 (to 30.6.26) | 345            |
|                                     | <b>Total</b>         | <b>£39,534</b> |

\* Includes £4,847 in respect of 1924-1925.

According to this Voluntary Repatriation scheme those wishing to return to India had to give up their right of domicile in exchange for the free passage and they could never return to South Africa again. From 1914 upto 1919, 6,912 Indians had left South Africa, but the Government of South Africa were not satisfied with this. They appointed an Asiatic Enquiry Commission on 3rd February, 1920, whose report was published on 3rd March, 1920. But the Commission published their Interim Report on 12th May, 1920 in which they recommended that Indians should be given every facility to return to India.\* An officer should be appointed to give them these facilities and they should be allowed to take their gold or golden ornaments. It was at this time that the Government of India obliged the Union Government again by agreeing to this sort of repatriation. Their representatives, Sir Benjamin Rebertson and Mr. G. L. Corbett, wrote in their statement presented to the Asiatic Enquiry Commission :—

"It has been seen that for many years the Government of India have been compelled to recognize that it was necessary to restrict the number of Indians in South Africa in order to secure fair treatment for those who are permanently settled there. It must be obvious to any one visiting Natal that the condition of many of the Indians there is far from satisfactory ; and it is believed that it is in the interests of every one to encourage and facilitate the repatriation of those who are willing to return to India. It will be better for those who go, it will be better for those who remain. It will moderate the agitation which has been aroused by the supposed influx of Asiatics, and will prepare the way for a peaceful and reasoned settlement."

But was it really better for those who returned from South Africa ? Let Mr. C. R. Reddy (who afterwards became the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University) answer this question. In his letter of 1st September, 1922, he wrote from Chittoor (North Arcot) in answer to a questionnaire of Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi :—

"Much of the Repatriation carried through in South Africa is based on fraud—on false accounts and lying propaganda regarding the prospects of the repatriated in India. The returned emigrant does not find himself at home here : he can hardly make a living : his sufferings are terrible ; and he is as embittered against Hindu society which in spite of its boastful patriotism will not take him back into its fold, as against Government which has callously countenanced and agreed to repatriation on a so called voluntary basis. If our Consulates had been in existence in South Africa, this process of cheating could not have gone on

\* It seems that the Commissioners were in a hurry to get rid of as many Indians and as early as possible and therefore issued their interim report nine months earlier simply for the purpose of repatriation.

unchecked, nay even undetected for over six months. What does repatriation mean? Sucking the lemon first and throwing it off afterwards. Our people contributed in large numbers to the making of Natal, etc., they went there at the request of these Governments in which our Government helped the migration, and after the country has been made paying to the Whites our people are discarded, thrown out like sucked lemons. Such a thing should not be allowed to recur."

It is to be noted that Mr. C. R. Reddy belongs to South India to which most of the emigrants return and his district contains a large percentage of the returned emigrants out of the total.

### MR. ANDREWS' REPENTENCE

At that time Mr. C. F. Andrews, than whom there is no greater friend of Indians overseas, made the mistake of supporting the idea of voluntary repatriation. But he soon realized his mistake and repented for it. He wrote:—

"I deeply regret that at such a critical time I should have personally added one pang to Indian humiliation by weakly countenancing repatriation from South Africa."

But the mistake was made and the Union Government took the fullest advantage of it. They opened a separate department for the purpose of repatriation of Indians. Agents were also appointed to persuade Indians to leave South Africa. A bonus of £5 which was afterwards raised to £10 was offered to those who did so. This bonus proved a temptation and hundreds of Indians began to leave South Africa. At that time I warned my countrymen there against the trap that was being laid for them and held meetings with this view. In this agitation we received a great help from the *Natal Advertiser* of Durban and we shall always remain grateful to Mr. Harold Wodson, the editor of that paper. It is to be noted that not even one of those 20,384 men, women and children who left South Africa under this Voluntary Repatriation Scheme could return to South Africa again!

Out of these 20,384 Indians, 5,773 were children born in South Africa—South Africa was their motherland—and most of these are still cursing their parents who brought them away to India which to them is, to use Mahatma Gandhi's words, like a foreign land and where their lot has been quite unenviable.

### THE CASE OF MUNI GADU

Muni Gadu left South Africa with his three colonial born children—two sons and one daughter—under the voluntary repatriation scheme.\* Muni Gadu had left India when he was only a child and he could not trace his house or his family in South India. The climate of India did not suit these people because they were acclimatized to South Africa. He, therefore, left India with his sons Narayansamy and Amasha Gadu and the daughter. They managed to reach Dar-es Salaam and from there they wrote to the Union minister for leave to enter Natal. This was refused. They therefore decided to tramp and eventually reached Mkuzi in Zululand. Tramping a distance of 2,500 miles is not an easy thing. But they took all these terrible risks of walking on foot on sands and through forests to enter their land of birth, for Narayansamy, Amasha and their sister did not know of any country but South Africa. As soon as they reached the border of Natal they were arrested, prosecuted, declared prohibited immigrants and ordered to be deported to India. They knocked from pillar to post but no one heard their tale of woe. The courts declared that they had no right to open the case. Hundreds of such Narayansamies are found all over India who weep bitterly and lament their lot in strange surroundings and they curse the day when they left the shore of South Africa. With tears in their eyes they have often asked me during these travels, "Is there any possibility, Swamiji, of our ever returning to our motherland?" and I have to reply in the negative. Being myself a colonial born I can very well realize the troubles and miseries of their lives.

### ANOTHER CASE

About four years ago, one man named Ramnath came to my house, Pravasi-Bhawan, in Bihar and told me that he was in great trouble and would commit suicide if he could not return to Natal where he had left his wife and children. Ramnath had left India for Natal with his mother when he was only an infant and he was practically like a colonial born Indian. I tried to console him. But what consolation could be offered. He had sold away his right of domicile in Natal

\* They were given free passage and the bribe of £ 5 per head to forfeit their rights in South Africa.

and there was absolutely no possibility of his ever being permitted to reside there. I gave him a letter of introduction to Raja Saheb of Suryapura and asked him to give up all hope of returning to South Africa. But Ramnath was not to be deterred from his purpose. He reached Beira in Portuguese East Africa and walked all the distance of three to four thousand miles to see his wife and children in New Castle! The police got the news. Ramnath was arrested and deported to India!

As I have said, you can meet these Narayansamies and Ramnaths all over India—scores of them are to be found in Mattiaburz and Howrah. Has the Government of India done anything for them? Absolutely nothing. It was so easy for Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. G. L. Corbett to say in their statement 1921 :—

“Repatriation will be better for those who go, it will be better for those who remain.”

The whole history of the repressive legislations by the Union Government from 1921 to 1931 shows clearly that repatriation has not, at all moderated the agitation against Indians who have remained in South Africa. And as regards those who have returned, well, the Government of India has never taken the trouble of finding out their condition. Sir Benjamin Robertson has retired to England, but Mr. (Now Sir) G. L. Corbett is still in India. He is a member of the Government of India. I would request him to see the condition of these returned emigrants with his own eyes. The Government of India may say that they were not bound to look after these returned emigrants. Legally they may put forward this excuse, but morally they were bound. The least that they ought to have done was to get a thorough enquiry made into the condition of these returned emigrants but in spite of all the agitation in the press the Government have always turned a deaf ear to this proposal. Here is an extract from a leading article in the *Leader*—one of the most responsible journals of India :

The Government of this country went out of their way to oblige the planters and other settlers of foreign countries and undertook to supply them with labour from this country. Here are these men and women returned after completing their contract, utterly helpless, without a home and without means. Do the Government who are the cause of the returning emigrants' present plight, not owe it to them to provide them with a home and relieve their distress? And what about the responsibility of those countries from which emigrants are returning? South African statesmen and newspapers have expressed themselves greatly pleased with the fact that the assisted emigration

scheme is working successfully, that Indians are leaving that country in large numbers. Dr. Malan, Minister of the Interior, said in a speech, ‘The assisted emigration scheme has fulfilled all the expectations which we could reasonably have had with regard to its working in such a short time.’ Now, the Union Government will realize that a good number of these Indians who, tempted by the offer of money, are returning to this country have known no country besides South Africa. They do not know the language and customs of this country, and they find the climate and other conditions of life unsuitable for them. Mr. Andrews who met a number of emigrants who had returned from South Africa, expressed his anxiety about their future and said that, if possible, some further arrangement should be reached with the Union Government by which those who were advanced in age and incapacitated from some cause or other should not be in any way encouraged to take advantage of the repatriation scheme. After the harmony reached between the two countries, he said, the whole of the repatriation clauses needed reconsideration and, if possible, revision. Meanwhile, what do the Government of India propose to do to help these people?

No other Government in the world could have shown the callousness that has been shown by our Government. In fact, they were to a certain extent responsible for a trap, which, if it had been successful, would have despatched thousand of South African Indians to the unhealthy marshes of British Guiana!

### A TRAP

Here is a passage from Sir Benjamin Robertson's statement before the Asiatic Enquiry Commission :—

“It is also suggested that it would be wise to look beyond the possibilities of re-emigration to India alone. There are other parts of the Empire which welcome the Indian immigrant, and it is suggested that it would be well to enter into communication with the Governments of those countries, which might offer the Indian who is accustomed to colonial life wider and more attractive field for self-development.”

The South African Government took up the suggestion and asked the Indian community to send an Indian delegation to British Guiana to investigate and report to them whether it could absorb some of the Indian population of the Union. Fortunately our people in South Africa were wise enough not to be entrapped. A well attended public meeting was held at Durban and it passed an unanimous resolution against this idea.\*

\* *The New India* of Dr. Annie Besant wrote the following about this resolution : “The Government of the Union of South Africa are well nigh tired of the Indian

It is to be noted that the climate of British Guiana compares very unfavourably with that of Natal. Mr. Clementi, Secretary of the British Guiana Government, confessed :

"The mass of our population is an immigrant population, and the history of immigration into British Guiana is a calamitous history."

Out of every thousand Indians that went to British Guiana only 572 have remained there. Here are some figures.

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Population of British Guiana in 1901 | 300,748 |
| "    "    "    "    in 1921          | 297,691 |

We may add here that between 1st January 1901 and 18th April 1921, 33,000 Indians were sent from India to British Guiana.

Some Natal returned Indians living at Mattiaburz went to British Guiana with the help of the Indian Emigrants' Friendly Service Committee of Calcutta and they found the climate and work in British Guiana quite unsuitable for them and they wrote a pathetic letter to Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi.\*

community among the European settlers and are vigilantly looking around for ways to get rid of them. Could they be despatched back to India, or British Guiana or any of the Poles, is their perpetual question. Voluntary repatriation is nothing but a scheme to give effect to this desire. Government therefore asked the Indian community to consider the advisability of sending an Indian delegation to British Guiana to investigate and report to them as to whether it could absorb some of the Indian population of the Union. The community have considered the question at a Durban meeting and have arrived at the only possible conclusion. They strongly disapproved not only the idea of a deputation to Guiana, but of the very scheme of repatriation and unanimously passed a resolution to this effect. It was significant that a section of the community which till recently was working against the general opinion confessed its folly at the meeting and presented a united front to the Government. The President of the meeting, Mr. Bhawani Dayal, did well to warn the audience of the painful experiences of the already repatriated Indians."

\* This letter was reproduced by me in the *Hindl* of Natal in its special Diwali number of Oct. 1922.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SCHEME OF ASSISTED EMIGRATION

The foregoing pages make it abundantly clear that, from 1893 upto now, the Whites of South Africa have never given up the idea of getting rid of as many Indians as possible. This was their principal motive in their compromise known as the Cape Town agreement. Indeed the South African politicians have never minced matters so far as this aim is concerned. Dr. Malan, the Minister of Interior of the Nationalist-Labour Government, spoke the following memorable words in July 1925 at the time of the first reading of the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill :

"I must say that the Bill frankly starts from the general supposition that the Indian, as a race, is an alien element in the population, and that no solution of this question will be acceptable to the country unless it results in a very considerable reduction of the Indian population in this country. The method of dealing with this question will not be the employment of any forcible means. The method which this Bill will propose will be the application of pressure to supplement, on the other hand, the inducement which is held out to Indians to leave the country."

Yes. "Very considerable reduction of the Indian population" has all along been the aim of the South African whites. But Dr. Malan and his friends have been clever enough not to make it clear what is actually meant in figures by the words "Very considerable reduction."

Here are figures about the population of the Union of South Africa.

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Europeans                      | 1,676,660 |
| Bantus (South African Natives) | 4,697,813 |
| Mixed and other races.         | 545,548   |
| Asiatics                       | 166,731   |

Now let us see how many Indians have already left South Africa. I have already quoted these figures but they ought to be repeated here.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Under compulsory repatriation<br>from 1902 to 1913 | 32,506       |
| Voluntary repatriation from 1914 to 1926           | 20,384       |
| Assisted emigration scheme                         | 7,500        |
|  | Total 60,390 |

When Indians began to leave South Africa in large numbers on account of the temptation of £20 bonus Dr. Malan said in a speech :—

“The assisted emigration scheme has fulfilled all the expectations which we could reasonably have had with regard to its working in such a short time.”

But as soon as the number of returning Indians fell down Dr. Malan began to be uneasy about it. He said in a speech :—

“The best course is to get the Indians out of the country. With this view an agreement had been entered into with the Indian Government subject to review in five years.”

But again Dr. Malan did not make it clear exactly how many Indians he wants to get out of the Union. On 22nd September 1927 I wrote in a letter to Right Honourable Mr. Srinivas Sastri :

“In your speech at Ladysmith you have said that after the population is reduced the balance will be merged with the others here, with, I hope, equal opportunities to them all. Is there a limit to the figure? That is, how many Indians should leave South Africa before the others are considered as citizens. You have, Sir, qualified this by stating, that if the population is not reduced, other remedies would be sought to solve the problem. May I know what they would be? I hope it does not mean the Class Areas Bill or similar legislation. I hope you will assist me by advising me on the above and believe me, I am writing this letter so as to clear the doubts of many who are to-day seeing the picture painted as black as possible by those who are not with us.”

I am sorry Mr. Sastri could not give me a satisfactory or convincing reply. It has been argued by our leaders :

“If by voluntary repatriation under inducements the Union Government can get rid of a part of the Indian population, we may acquiesce in it as the price to be paid for the toleration and the upliftment of the rest of us.”

**Unfortunately the price is too high. Besides, it is immoral**

to depress some people so that others may be uplifted. Sir K. V. Reddy, the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa, has written in his report for the year ending 31st December 1929 :

“The decrease in the number of persons availing themselves of the Assisted Emigration scheme has caused the greatest anxiety both to the Agent and to the Union Government. For, there can be no doubt, that Europeans in South Africa judge the success or failure of the Cape Town Agreement by the working of this scheme.”

Do we require any more conclusive proof of the principal motive of the South African whites in the Cape Town Agreement?

In Appendix XIV I have given the Assisted Emigration Scheme in full and the reader can get an idea of it from that account.

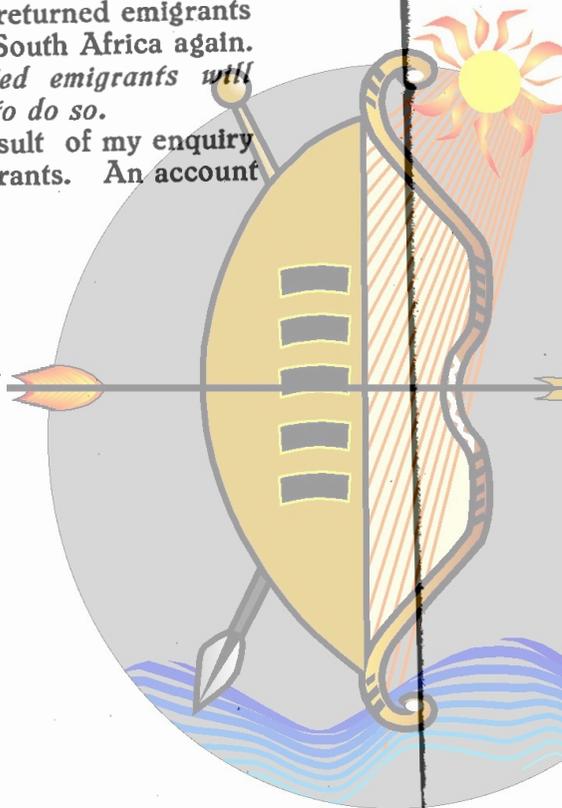
There is no doubt that this scheme was a considerable improvement on the former scheme of voluntary repatriation. Mr. Bhore, I. C. S., commenting on the Cape Town Agreement in the Assembly said on behalf of the Government of India :—

“The second point is now the new scheme of assisted emigration which the Union Government proposes to organize for those Indians who may desire to avail themselves of it. Honourable members are doubtless aware that Section 6 of the Union Act No. 22 of 1914 known as the Indians Relief Act provides for the grant of a free passage from any port in the Union to any port in India to any Indian who makes a written request for such passage and signs, as a condition of the grant of such request a statement that he abandons, on behalf of himself and his wife and all minor children (if any), all rights possessed by him or them to enter and reside in any part of the union, together with all rights incidental to his or their domicile therein. This is an essential feature of the existing scheme of voluntary repatriation. Under the new scheme, the Union Domicile will not be lost except by three years continuous absence from the Union in conformity with a proposed revision of the law which will be of general application, and an assisted emigrant wishing to return to the Union, within a period of three years, will be allowed to do so on repayment of the bonus and the cost of passage, including railway fares which he may have received on his own behalf and, if he has a family, on behalf of his family. Any objection that there might be to the existing scheme of voluntary repatriation on the ground that it requires of Indians wishing to avail themselves of it, an irrevocable surrender of their Union domicile, is thus removed. Another feature of the new agreement is that each person of 16 years or over will be free to choose for himself, whether he will or will not avail himself of the scheme of assisted emigration. At present for the purpose of voluntary repatriation from South Africa, 21 years is treated as the age of majority and the Union domicile of a person under that age has to be signed away by the father, if the latter wishes to avail himself of a free passage to India. It will be observed that the agreement provides for schemes of assisted emigration to be organized

to India and other countries. This phrase is intended to cover emigration of Indians who may return to India from South Africa to the Federated Malay States, and to Ceylon, under the schemes of emigration from India to those countries, which are now operative.

Though according to this scheme the assisted emigrant has a right to return to South Africa within a period of three years on repayment of the bonus and the cost of passage, this right can be utilized practically by only one per cent of the returned emigrants. Out of a total of 7,500 returned emigrants only 73 or 74 have been able to return to South Africa again. *It is certain that most of these repatriated emigrants will return to South Africa if they had the means to do so.*

I make this definite statement as a result of my enquiry into the condition of these returned emigrants. An account of this enquiry is given in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER VI

### ENQUIRY INTO THE CONDITION OF REPATRIATED EMIGRANTS

*At Bombay* :—I began my work of enquiry in Bombay where I landed from R. M. S. *Karagolla* on the 26th October, 1927. The first thing that I did was to see the Police Commissioner, Mr. P. A. Kelly, who is in charge of the work of looking after the repatriated emigrants of Bombay Presidency. Mr. Kelly gave me every help that I required and I am grateful to him for his kind co-operation. The number of those who have returned to Bombay under the Assisted Emigration Scheme is very small indeed. The fact is that people from Bombay side have seldom gone to the colonies under indenture or as labourers. They have usually emigrated of their own free will for trade purposes and have kept up their connection with the motherland. They have, therefore, experienced little difficulty on their return to India. Mr. P. A. Kelly has kept the records carefully and he allowed me to see them. Of those who have returned from South Africa under the assisted emigration scheme three were written as blind and one lame. Even these did not require any help from the Government for they had their relatives at home in the Bombay Presidency to look after them. Practically there does not exist any problem of repatriated emigrants in the Bombay Presidency.

*In Bihar* :—From Bombay I came to Bihar and stayed at the *Pravasi-Bhawan* at *Bahuara* in the district of *Arrah*. The place is well known to the returned emigrants and I had an occasion to meet a number of them. I did not find a single South African Indian whose life in this province had been happy after his return from the colony. Most of them have had very unhappy experiences with their relatives, and I could easily find that the rigours and restrictions of the caste system made the life of these colonial Indians very miserable indeed. The standard of living to which the colonial Indians are accustomed is different from the dull monotonous life of the villagers in Bihar and they soon get disgusted with it. A number of them have therefore shifted to the cities and are living in slums. Most of these returned emigrants are repenting now for the great blunder they made in leaving South Africa. They asked

me if there was any possibility of their return to Natal again and I had to reply in the negative. It was a pathetic sight to see the signs of disappointment and despair in their faces. Absolutely nothing has been done for these returned emigrants in Bihar by the Government of India or by any private organization.

*Calcutta and its suburbs* :—I had some misgivings about the wisdom of repatriation after my experiences in Bihar, but I had never imagined that things could be so bad as I found them in Calcutta. The one thing that struck me more than any other was this—that the Government of India have absolutely failed in their duty towards the repatriated emigrants in North India. In fact, they are guilty of a breach of promise. According to the Cape Town Agreement they had agreed to find work for those who wanted to work. When these people were returned from South Africa they were given a printed form on behalf of the Union Government which contained the following sentence :—

“हिन्दुस्थानकी सरकार हिन्दुस्थान जानेवाले हिन्दीओंका स्वागत करनेकी व्यवस्था करेंगी और जो लोक काम करना चाहता होगा उनको काम दूँदेंगी”

But have the Indian Government fulfilled this promise in Northern India? Certainly not. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Young India* for 2nd May, 1929 :

“There is no doubt that if these repatriates are to be received, they must be specially cared for. India to most of them is like foreign land.”

I met a number of these repatriated emigrants in Calcutta and its suburbs and asked them if the Government had helped them at all by finding out jobs for them. They replied that they had received absolutely no help in that direction from the Government. I have heard the stories of these people and have taken down their statements. For want of space I cannot reproduce all of them here. But I intend to publish them separately in my supplementary report. I shall relate the experiences of one man only and he is Gopal, No. 37767, and his family.

More than forty years ago, Gopal Chamar of Dhaurhari Dt. Basti, left his village with his wife for Natal as an indentured labourer. They had a child of six months named Guljar. Gopal worked for five years under indenture and afterwards as a free labourer in Natal. By his thrift and industry he was able to save some money and took fourteen *bighas* of land on lease. He grew maize and tobacco and was able to support his family which had by this time become fairly large. In 1927

Gopal was tempted by the bonus of £ 20 per adult and £ 10 per child to leave South Africa for India. Let Guljar, the eldest son of Gopal, tell the remaining story :

“I told my father to go alone and leave me along with my five brothers and the children in Natal, but he insisted with the result that all of us had to leave Natal. We knew Mr. Sorabji son of Kaka Rustomji personally and he told us not to leave Natal, but my father paid no heed to his warning. None of us knew anything about the state of affairs in India with the exception of my father, who, however, imagined that things would be as cheap in India as they were when he left India forty years ago. Of course I had no idea of my motherland, for I was only six months old when I accompanied my parents to Natal. My brothers, their wives and children and my own family are all colonial born. We arrived at Madras and from there we were sent along with a guide to Calcutta. This guide took two rupees from each one of us. Neither at Madras nor at Calcutta did any one ask us if we wanted any work. From Calcutta we went to Cawnpore. Our father left us there and went to his village to see his relatives. He returned from there after fifteen days a broken-hearted man and died shortly afterwards. When he was on his death-bed he called us together and said, “Now there is no hope of my recovery. What will happen to you is my only anxiety. What a great blunder I made in bringing you all here,” and he began to weep. We consoled him and told him that it was our *Karma* that had brought us here and he need not be anxious about us ; he must depart peacefully. After our father’s death we stayed for some time in Cawnpore and then left for Calcutta. Since then we have been living at Ghusri near Howrah. We have spent all the money that we had brought and are penniless now.

It is very difficult to get any work here. In Natal I used to get Rs 22 and a half with rations and my wife used to stay at home comfortably and look after the children. Now she, too, who had never worked as a labourer in Natal, has to labour hard in a jute mill. We get Rs 2 and annas eight per week, but the mills do not work more than two weeks per month. The result is that we do not get even sufficient food. Once, or sometimes, even twice a week we get no food at all. Two of my brothers are dead and the unfortunate widows have to work hard in the mill to keep themselves alive. I have lost a nephew who was ten years of age. We have got considerably indebted and I have to pay interest at the rate of one anna per

ruppee per month (*i.e.* 75 per cent per annum). We had never imagined that we shall have to lead such miserable lives in India. Had we only known about the real conditions in India we would have never dreamt of leaving Natal."

"Had we only known about the real conditions in India:" this lamentation is on the lips of most of the returned emigrants. But, alas, it is too late! It is beyond the means of more than one per cent to be able to return to Natal. Guljar wrote to his friends in South Africa to find out how much he would have to pay if he returned with his family. Here is the reply that he got.

Office of the Protector of  
Indian Immigrants  
P. O. Box 474  
Durban, 4th June 1929

Re. Gopal No. 37,767 and family

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 3rd instant the amount to be refunded by this Indian to the Union Government before he can return to Natal is £457. 14. 1.

Statement enclosed herewith.

Yours obediently  
(Sd) R. Robinson  
Protector

To save £ 457 within a period of a year or two is absolutely impossible for these people.

I saw Guljar and his family crowded in two rooms. They were more than sixteen or seventeen—men, women and children. One was suffering from some skin disease, another was down with malaria, while the third had another disease. It was so difficult to realize that they once belonged to Natal, for they were now so different from the healthy colonial born children of South Africa. They had the same old tattered clothes on their bodies which they had brought from Natal. With their very much limited means they could not get new clothes made for themselves here. These children recognized me and there was a gleam of joy in their eyes. They met one from their motherland, for Natal was really their motherland, their parents and themselves having been born there. They laid their bodies bare and pointing out their skin diseases told me "Look here, that's what we have got in India." They look forward to the day when they will be able to return to Natal.

That day will never come. Let those who favoured the

policy of repatriation come to Howrah and meet these Natal born children and then they will realize how absolutely immoral it is to send these unsuspecting children away from their motherland so that others who remain may be "uplifted." Being a colonial born myself I can very well appreciate the trouble of these colonial born children. I must express my gratefulness to the police superintendent of Howrah and also to the sub-inspector at Ghusri for their help in my investigations in their area.

*At Matiaburz* :—In company with Pandit Padma Singh Sharma, the well-known Hindi author, Pandit Rishi Ram, B. A., an Arya Samaj preacher, and Pandit Benarsidass Chaturvedi, Editor of the *Vishal Bharat*, I visited Matiaburz one evening. I had heard of Matiaburz long before this and had read an account of its unhealthy surroundings written by Mr. C. F. Andrews. But the place proved to be much worse than what I had imagined. Its dirty lanes and filthy pools, combined with its smoky atmosphere, make it an area absolutely unfit for human habitation. The Corporation or the municipality which is responsible for its sanitary arrangements stands self-condemned. It is to be noted that Matiaburz has proved a death trap to hundreds of returned emigrants and it is really disgraceful that such terrible slum areas should be allowed to exist and breed diseases on account of the carelessness of the Corporation. I need not say much about Matiaburz and its people as my friend Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi has already dealt with their problems separately. I met a number of Natal returned emigrants here. Their tale of woe was similar to that of the Howrah people.

A Natal returned emigrant who had left his wife and children in the colony, was robbed of all his money on his way from the steamer to the station by adventurers, a large number of whom are to be found in big cities like Calcutta. Being thus left penniless, this man was ashamed to go to his village and drifted to Matiaburz. Here he has kept a Fiji returned woman and has two children by her. Being without any employment he is on the verge of starvation. There are women deserted by their husbands and husbands whose wives have run away with other people. Some cases are really pathetic. For example, there is a man who had built a Hindu temple at Sydenham. His wife died after her arrival in India. He is living here with his young children and grown up daughter. I found him very ill and too weak to move about.

He laments his lot and curses his fate or *karma* that brought him here.

I interviewed these people and asked them if they would like to settle in Bihar, but not one of them agreed to do so. All of them were clamouring to be sent to some colony outside India. I would strongly advise for that step. But there does not seem to be any possibility of their being sent to any colony in the near future. Individual efforts have been made during the last ten years to ameliorate the lot of these unfortunate people but without much success. Of course we cannot forget the admirable work done by the Indian Emigrants Friendly Service Committee, but that lasted only ten months. I would recommend the following steps to be taken to help the returned emigrants at Matlaburz :

1. A special officer like the one at Madras should be appointed in Calcutta to look after the returned and returning emigrants. The gentleman known as the Protector of Emigrants is too busy with his professional duties of a medical officer to give any serious attention to the problem of returned emigrants. Lt.-Col. Denham White I. M. S. is working as a Civil Surgeon in some important hospital in Calcutta and he should be glad to be relieved of the work of returned emigrants which he obviously cannot do satisfactorily. A sympathetic Indian like Rao Saheb M. Kunhiraman Nair who worked as special officer at Madras and who has now been sent to Malaya as the Agent of the Government of India, should be appointed in Calcutta to look after the returned emigrants.

In this connection I must not forget to thank Mr J. Picachy of the Emigration Office who is always ready and willing to help these people.

2. The Indian Emigrants Friendly Service Committee should be revived under the presidentship of Mr J. Tyson, Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal. It is to be noted that Mr. Goulay, the former Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal, was the president of the committee when it worked for about a year in 1921. Mr Tyson has been to South Africa as secretary to Mr Sastri and his colonial experience will prove very valuable for him in this work.

3. Authorities of the Municipal Corporation in Calcutta should be approached and their sympathies enlisted in this cause. They can give work to a large number of these returned emigrants if they wish to do so.

4. Government Departments like the P. W. D. should be instructed to help the returned emigrants as far as possible. They can easily employ a number of these people as labourers.

*At Madras*.—After finishing my work in Calcutta and its suburbs I went to Madras where I saw Rao Saheb M. Kunhiraman Nair, Special Officer for Assisted Emigrants from South Africa and found him a very sympathetic officer—just the type of man required for this humanitarian work. I requested Rao Saheb Nair to advise the repatriates to see me at the Anand Bhawan Hotel in Madras where I was staying, for I thought that they might not have the freedom to speak out their minds at the Government office. So Rao Saheb made the desired arrangement and these repatriates were thus able to talk freely to me. I need not give here any account of the work that is being done for these repatriates by the Special Officer, for this account has already been given in detail by Messrs Gray and Natesan in their report. With the exception of a very few people, I found most of the returned emigrants very much dissatisfied with their lot and they were repenting for their mistake in leaving Natal. The lot of the colonial born Tamils was really miserable. No Government can do much for these people, for they were born and brought up in a different atmosphere and cannot easily be acclimatized. Some pathetic cases came to my notice while I was interviewing these people.

There is a widow named *M.* . . who has eight children and who arrived from South Africa in May 1929. The eldest child is only eighteen years of age. *M.* . . sold away the right of these unsuspecting children for the petty sum of £10 each. She deposited Rs 700 with the Special Officer, keeping a certain sum for expenses. In July, she withdrew Rs 100, in August Rs 150, in October Rs 250 and in November Rs 100. In December when I reached Madras she had only Rs 100 in her account with the Special Officer and she had already insisted for the payment of that sum many a time. The children must be starving now. Of course, their return to Natal is almost impossible.

*Saubhagyam*, a young girl who was born in Natal, came away from South Coast Junction with her husband and a child of one year. The child died soon after their arrival in Madras in 1928. The husband also died shortly afterwards. Now she was all alone. The bonus money had been almost

spent, only Rs thirteen remaining out of it. Her relations in Natal were trying to get her back there. Whether they succeeded or not is not known to me.

K. M. of May street, Durban was tempted by the assisted emigration scheme and came away with his wife, one son and six daughters. He had Rs 2,000 at the time of his arrival, all of which has now been spent. He has not been able to get any employment. He has taken to the profession of begging and there too he has not been a success. He wrote a letter to his friends in Natal on behalf of his wife informing them of his own death! His object was to excite the pity of his friends and get their help. It is said that his friends in Natal issued an appeal for his widowed wife!

G. . . sent a letter to his father-in-law in Natal telling him of his own death and of the miserable condition of his widow! But the father-in-law was a clever man and he asked his friend, Mr. D. S. Chetty of Durban to write to the Special Officer at Madras to make enquiries about the man. He was found out and the trick failed.

On December 8th, I opened a home for the decrepit repatriates at the request of Rai Saheb Kunhiraman Nair; the special officer.\* This home, which is known as the Natal House, can accommodate only fifteen people at the utmost.

I am sorry I could not visit the districts of the Madras Presidency, but what I had seen of these repatriated people in the City of Madras and what I heard from them was sufficient to convince me of the folly of repatriation. The facts and figures that I collected during my tour were more than enough to form the basis of my conclusions which will be given in the next chapter.

\* For a fuller account of this Natal House see Appendix V

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapter will prove it conclusively to any fair-minded reader that since 1893 upto the present year the principle aim of the whites of South Africa has been to get rid of the Indian population as much as possible. As we have seen, the Government of Natal sent a deputation to India to confer with the Indian Government for making an arrangement by which labourers must return to India after the expiration of their terms of indenture. After that the Natal Government passed the Act 17 of 1895 which imposed a tax of £ 3 on Indians and which really meant '*Compulsory Repatriation*.' The Solomon Commission appointed by the Union Government in 1914 wrote the following words about this tax :

"The word 'Tax' is also some what out of place, for the object is not to raise revenue, but to bring pressure to bear upon the indentured Indians to induce them to return to India at the expiration of their indentures, so that the smaller the amount that is collected the more effectively is the object of the Act attained. The charge in truth is a penalty upon residence. It is as if the Government of Natal had said to the labourers :

"We do not wish you to settle in the country, but we cannot prevent your doing so ; if you do however, we shall penalize you by compelling you to pay annually the sum of £ 3, which though not actually prohibitive is so heavy that we anticipate that it will have the effect of compelling you to return to India at the end of your first or subsequent indenture."

This has been the spirit of all the Anti-Indian legislation in the Union of South Africa, and responsible politicians have always bluntly and quite unashamedly said this in so many words in their speeches. General Botha said in an election address in 1907 that if his party were returned to power they would undertake to drive the coolies out of the country within four years and General Smuts referred to the Indian population as the "Asiatic cancer, which has already eaten so deeply into the vitals of South Africa and which ought to be resolutely eradicated." Dr. Malan, the Minister of Interior, spoke the

following memorable words in July 1925 at the time of the first reading of the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill :

"I must say that the Bill frankly starts from the general supposition that the Indian, as a race, is an alien element in the population, and that no solution of this question, will be acceptable to the country unless it results in a very considerable reduction of the Indian population in this country."

Dr. Malan has always kept this idea of "very considerable reduction of the Indian population" before his mind.

It was chiefly with this object that the Union Government made with the Indian Government a compromise known as the 'Cape Town Agreement'. Dr. Malan said in a speech in November 1930 : "The best course is to get the Indians out of the country. With this view an agreement has been entered into with the Indian Government subject to review in five years." General Hertzog, the Prime Minister of South Africa, also views the Agreement in that light. Newspaper readers will not have forgotten the dastardly incident of the attempted assault on the person of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, the Agent General of the Government of India, at Klersdorp (Transvaal). This attack was led by Mr. Evans, the Deputy Mayor of the town. Mr. Evans made a lecture tour in Transvaal and delivered some anti-Indian speeches. In his lecture at Poochefstroom (Transvaal) he read the following letter from General Hertzog which gives a very clear idea of the policy of the South African Government. Here is the letter to Mr. Evans :

"You are, perhaps, needlessly perturbed and view the situation too pessimistically, while your remark to Dr. Malan, that the agreement entered into by the Government has proved a complete failure is very far from the truth. The agreement thus far has had most beneficial results. After all is said and done, we want to get rid of the Indians as far as possible. Repatriation should therefore be our first endeavour and with regard to this, the results have been very satisfactory. During the five years preceding the agreement, that is from 1922 to 1926 on the average of 161 Indians were repatriated per month. In 1927 an agreement was come to with the Indian representatives which took effect on August 5, 1927. By this agreement the Indian authorities were to assist in the repatriation etc. From that date upto March 1928 (the date of the latest available figures) repatriation has taken place at the average of 342

Indians per month, more than double the number before the agreement.\*

Mark General Hertzog's words:

"After all is said and done, we want to get rid of the Indians as far as possible. Repatriation, should, therefore, be our first endeavour." The refreshing candour of these words is so different from the hypocritical sentiments uttered on ceremonial occasions.

This game of "getting rid of Indians as far as possible" has been going on merrily since 1902 to the evident satisfaction of the whites of South Africa. As soon as there is a fall in the number of these repatriates "gravest anxiety" is caused to the Union Government. For has not Sir K. V. Reddy, the Agent General of the Government of India in South Africa, frankly observed in his last report ?

"This decrease in the number of persons availing themselves of the Assisted Emigration scheme has caused the gravest anxiety both to the Agent and to the Union Government. For there can be no doubt that Europeans in South Africa judge the success or failure of the Cape Town Agreement by the working of this scheme"

We have reason to suspect that this 'decrease in the number of repatriates'† is at the root of the recent anti-Indian legislation. The fact is that 17 lakhs of whites in South Africa cannot under any circumstance tolerate the presence of one lakh and 70 thousand Indians, who are only one tenth in number. The Clayton Commission recognized in their report that Indian were "industrious, frugal, law-abiding and on the whole sober in their habits." And in the Imperial Conference

\* *The African Chronicle*, Sept. 28, 1928.

† A correspondent of the *Natal Mercury* writes :—

Despite the very careful and elaborate arrangements made by the Government of India to receive emigrants returning to that country under the Union Government's voluntary Indian repatriation scheme, the latest figures to hand disclose that repatriation is at its lowest ebb. During 1930 only three shiploads of repatriates left the shores of Port Natal.

During the months of January and February of last year, there were no sailings at all for either Madras, Bombay or Calcutta, Madras usually being the chief port of call. In March 115 male adults, 61 female adults and 111 children left South Africa. In June of the same year 95 male adults, 36 female adults and 72 children sailed by the SS. Umzumbi, the vessel chartered by the Union Government. The September list of emigrants numbered 51 male adults, 23 female adults and 55 children, and December, 1930 recorded the departure of 78 male adults, 44 female adults and 52 children. Towards the end of February last the repatriation vessel left Port Natal with 96 men, 29 women and 61 children. Thus, the last departure of Indians who forfeited their birth rights in this country numbered 186. Statistics, therefore, must reveal a steady decline in Indian repatriation.

of 1918 Mr. Henry Burton, the spokesman of the Union of South Africa, referred to Indians as "good, law-abiding and quiet citizens." In spite of all these qualities—perhaps on account of all them—Indians must be got rid of! There is a good passage in Sir Benjamin Robertson's statement that was placed before the Asiatic Enquiry Commission:

"It is unnecessary to traverse in detail the indictment which has been framed against the Asiatics. Some of the charges are trivial or refer to matters which can be dealt with under the ordinary laws. Others again are mutually destructive. It is alleged, for instance, that Asiatics are dishonest as traders and are specialists in offences against the insolvent laws: but it is also complained that the wholesale merchants give better terms to Asiatic than to white retail dealers. Again, it is objected in the Transvaal that the high proportion of males in the Asiatic population is unhealthy, and yet there is an outcry that they are allowed to bring their wives from India. It is complained that their trading promotes an undesirable intimacy which may even lead to "miscegenation": and simultaneously it is objected that they are a foreign community which will not assimilate with the South African people. The Asiatic is condemned as a bad citizen who has no interest in the public affairs of South Africa: but his aspirations for civic and political rights are regarded as a threat to the white community, and his success in trade is dreaded as a channel through which his influence grows and expands. He is blamed as a poor spender: but any attempt to find an outlet for expenditure is either resented or prohibited. He is told that he ought to invest more money in the country but he is prevented from acquiring fixed property by special legislation in Transvaal, while in Natal his investments are a menace for which the only remedy is expropriation. In the Transvaal he is abused as an unproductive parasite, who does not add to the wealth of the country by farming or starting factories: but at the same time the public are warned that if his progress as a trader is maintained, he will inevitably claim the right to manufacture what he sells: and the one Indian farm in the Province is regarded as a portent. He is condemned by the Natal Agricultural Union as an inefficient agriculturist, who allows farms which in European hands are fine properties, to lie waste and unproductive: but he is dreaded by the Richmond Agricultural Society because he produces too much and can beat the European at farming as he beats him at trading. And so on."

Any stick is considered good to beat the Indian with, but we do not think there is any need for the whites to use any arguments. General Hertzog has stated it very plainly: "After all is said and done, we want to get rid of the Indians as far as possible."

It is no concern of General Hertzog and his friends to find out how the people who are thus 'got rid of' fare in their new surroundings. The Union Government has not yet published the report of Mr. Venn, Commissioner of Asiatic

Affairs in South Africa, who was deputed by them to study on the spot and report how far the Government of India were discharging their obligations in terms of the Cape Town Agreement. It was strongly rumoured that Mr. Venn had recommended that the repatriation scheme has failed because India was not in a position to assimilate repatriates from abroad. But why blame the Union Government when our Indian Government has all along refused to make a thorough enquiry into the condition of these repatriated emigrants!

Enquiries of individuals though made with considerable pains suffer from necessary limitations and this enquiry of mine is no exception. Still I claim one advantage over others and that is,—I was born in South Africa, have seen these people living in their adopted land—I should say, motherland in the case of those who were born in South Africa—and I can well appreciate the difficulties of these repatriates. Here are my conclusions about them and the scheme of assisted emigration.

1. The scheme of repatriation has failed because it has brought untold miseries on the repatriates—specially on those who are colonial born, and they number more than 33 per cent of the total. They are accustomed to a different standard of living and find it most difficult to adopt the old methods of the land of their father or grandfather. They cannot be happy except in the colonies.

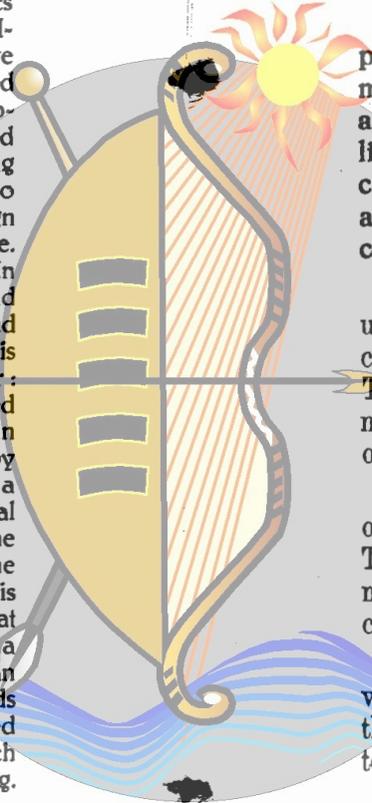
2. With the exception of those who belong to very low castes others cannot be assimilated by their respective communities. The caste system still holds its sway in India and the question of marriage of the colonial children, who are often born of inter-caste marriage raises insoluble difficulties.

3. The Government of India has been able to help only a very small number of the returned emigrants in South India, while they have done practically nothing to those who have returned to North India.

4. Foodstuffs in India cost much more to-day than what they used to do thirty or forty years ago and colonial Indians are financially much better off there than their compatriots here at home. In his speech before the South African Indian Congress Mr. Sastri said:—

"Conditions in India are far worse than they are out here, as far as poverty goes." In fact that is our strongest argument against repatriation.

5. It has been most difficult for returned emigrants specially for skilled workers to settle happily in India. A good many offers



have been refused by them some on account of bad climate, other on account of the lower wages that are offered. I have not met a single repatriated emigrant who will not like to return to South Africa if he had only the means to do so.

6. Even from the point of view of the Union Government the scheme has failed. In this connection I would invite the attention of the readers to an admirably written article in the *Servant of India*, given in Appendix IV. Assisted emigration scheme will grow more and more unpopular as true facts about the condition of returned emigrants are known to the South African Indians.

7. It is morally quite indefensible to try to reduce the Indian population in this artificial manner. To encourage unsuspecting and ignorant Indians from the colonies to return to India to lead a miserable life in the hope that others, more fortunate who are left behind, will be *uplifted* is at once selfish and immoral—selfish on the part of the leaders of the remaining colonial Indians and immoral on our part, when we have not got the moral courage to take these returned emigrants back into our society and into our castes.

8. Repatriation has produced in the minds of educated people in India considerable bitterness against South Africa.\* People in India have lost all faith in the words of the South African authorities. They had thought after the Smuts-Gandhi settlement that things will improve for they implicitly believed in the statement authorized by General Smuts :

“With regard to the administration of existing laws, the Minister desires me to say that it has always been and will continue to be the desire of the Government to see that they are administered in a just manner and with due regards to vested interests.”

Acts or regulations that have been brought forward or passed in the union since 1914 and that are a clear breach of the promise so solemnly given have destroyed all faith in the words of the South African people.

\* There can be little doubt that as long as repatriation continues the agreement will remain unpopular. I must frankly confess that I share Indian public opinion on that point. While I was speaking in Madras all opposition came over this one question of repatriation. My only answer was that things had not been made worse by the agreement. But that did not carry conviction or satisfy public opinion in India. Indeed, if a national India, friendly to a national South Africa, is a desirable object, then the sooner this repatriation comes to an end the better.—C. F. Andrews in the *Star* of Johannesburg.

9. Pangs of humiliation to which Indians in South Africa have been subjected have grown more intense in view of the fact that other people who do not belong to the Empire get much better treatment at the hands of the Union Government. The Liquor Act No. 30 of 1928 imposed special restrictions upon Asiatics depriving them of equal opportunities of labour. The Indians had to submit, but the Japanese, who are an independent nation, protested against it. And what was the result? The Union Government had to issue the following proclamation :

“Under and by virtue of the powers vested in me by section 175 of Liquor Act No. 30 of 1928 I do hereby proclaim, declare and make known that Japanese race is excluded from the definition of ‘Asiatics’ contained in the same section.” This proclamation is of great significance to us but much more significant is the gentleman’s agreement with Japan. The *Indian Opinion* of South Africa writes about it in its issue of March 13, 1931 :—

“The ways of diplomacy are hard for the plain man to follow. We, Indians, are no sooner confronted with an Immigration Bill the obvious purpose of which is to undermine our foot-hold by cutting from under us the security conferred by our Registration Certificates than an astonished public learns of another Gentlemen’s Agreement, this time with the gentlemen of Japan. Comparisons are admittedly odious and we have no desire to make them, but we may surely be excused speculating upon the ‘why’ of such very differential treatment between the Indian goose and the Japanese gander. To the Asiatic from British India the gates of entry into the Union are to remain closed, bolted and barred; the bar-sinister of “undesirability” to remain. Within the gates, Indians who cannot be cajoled to depart or be expelled are to continue to be confronted with ingeniously devised obstacles to ensure their segregation and to obstruct them in the legitimate pursuit of their established business. For us the Union’s gates are for egress only, bear but one inscription “The Way Out.” Our Gentlemen’s Agreement, it has long since been evident, was contracted with the official tongue in the ministerial cheek, “uplift” being a euphemism for “lifted up” in the sense of “lifted off” the Union soil altogether.\*

The Gentlemen’s Agreement concluded with Japan is, in respect of its incidence, in such marked contrast with ours as to open the door to quite a number of conjectures. For instance, is it intended as a

\* During the debate that took place in the Union Parliament one member said with admirable frankness :—

“It was amazing that the Government should have entered into a Gentlemen’s Agreement with India with the object of getting Indians out of South Africa and should now enter into a similar Gentlemen’s Agreement with another Asiatic country with the object of admitting Japanese citizens into the Union.”

hint suggestive of the disadvantage of being British subjects? We, Indians, have been regarded as merely a "subject people," people from a British "dependency." Japan on the other hand is a first-class power and as such commands respect. The moral is no harder to point than is the lesson to learn."

We do not grudge Japan the conclusion of this happy agreement, but what we are anxious to impress on the Union Government is that it is neither fair nor even profitable to be unjust to fellow citizens of the Empire itself. We are glad to notice that there is a section of opinion in South Africa which realizes the importance of maintaining cordial relations between the two communities.

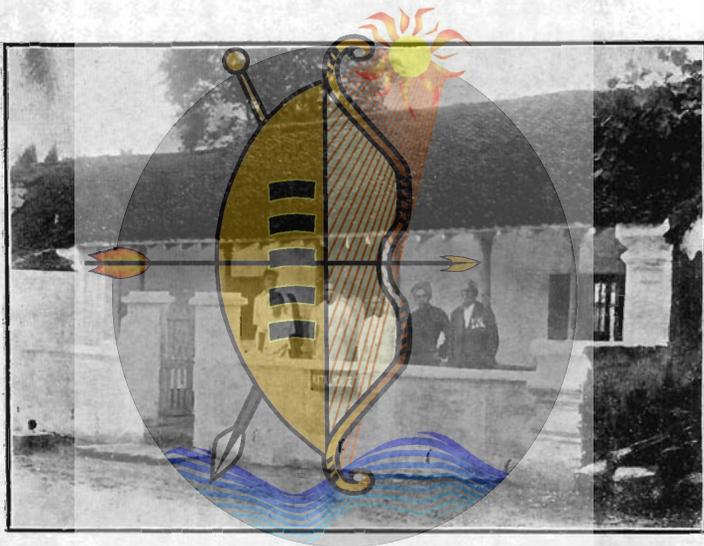
The *Rand Daily Mail* of Transvaal writes in its issue of March 7, while commenting upon the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement :

"South Africa will be wise to read the writing on the wall. India is now taking over South Africa's own motto. Union in her case must mean strength. Unjust legislation against Indians will one day have to be scrapped. Meanwhile it may do infinite harm."

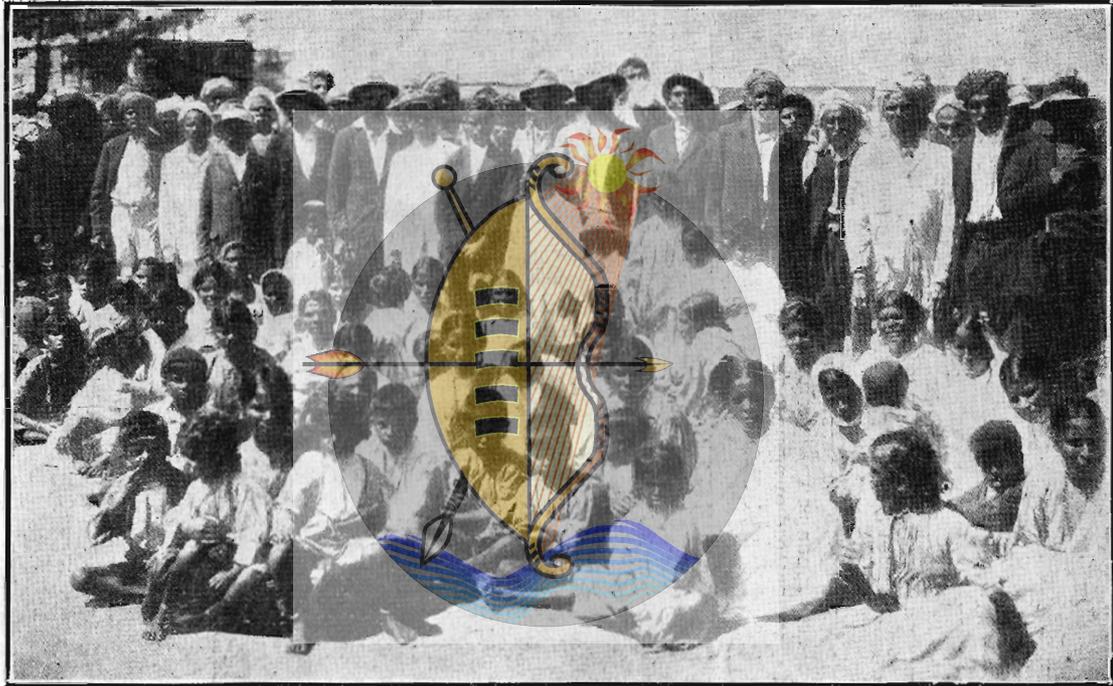
This unjust legislation of the South African Government have already done "infinite harm" and more harm has been done by the policy of General Hertzog and Dr. Malan—policy that definitely aims at getting rid of as many Indians as possible—than by anything else.

Pravasi-Bhawan,  
P. O. Kharagarh  
Via Sasaram, E. I. R.  
Bihar, India.  
15th May, 1931.

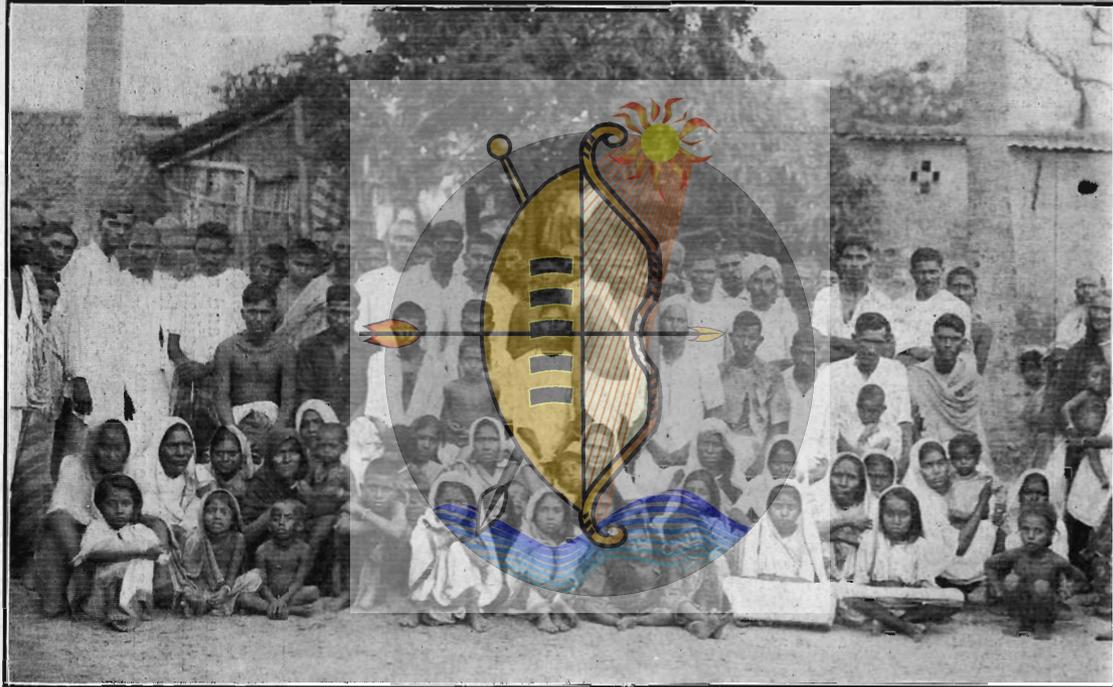
Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi



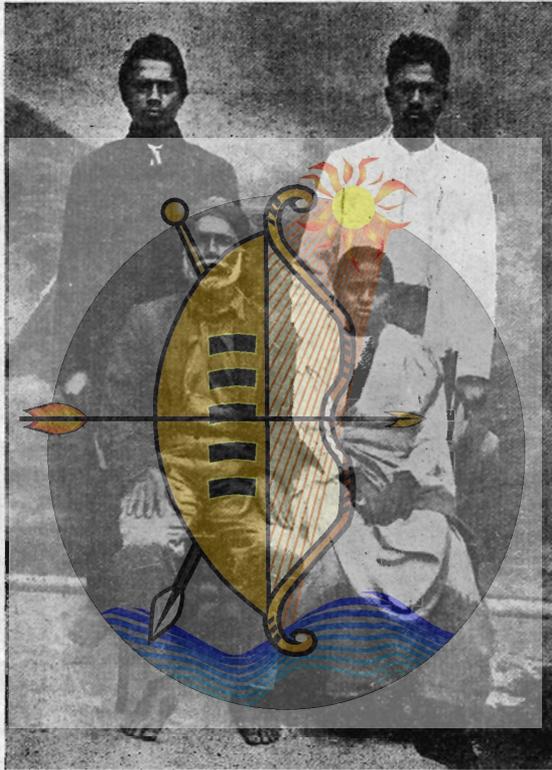
**NATAL-HOUSE, MADRAS**  
Opened by the Government of India to provide shelter to  
decrepit repatriates from South Africa under assisted  
emigration scheme



Some repatriates in Madras returned from South Africa under assisted emigration scheme



Vicims of assisted emigration scheme under Capetown Agreement in Calcutta



Colonial-born children with their father who walked a distance of 2500 miles and reached at their birth-place Natal but were immediately arrested and deported to India. They had left Natal under voluntary repatriation scheme

# Appendix No. I

*The following interim statement concerning Returned Emigrants from South Africa was issued by Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi on the 7th February, 1930 :—*

At the time of my departure from South Africa I was asked by the Indian public there to enquire into the condition of the repatriated emigrants and to communicate to them the result of my enquiry as early as possible. I arrived in Bombay on the 26th October, 1929, and have since that time been busy making these enquires. During these three months I have travelled more than four thousands of miles and have interviewed a large number of these returned emigrants individually and in meetings. Not only had I to travel in Northern India for this purpose but had to go to South India as well. I am grateful to the Government officials—the Commissioner of Police at Bombay, the Protector of Emigrants at Calcutta and Special officer for South African repatriates at Madras for their valuable help, without which my enquiries would have remained incomplete. I have already drafted out my report but I am withholding it from publications for the following reasons :—

I. The problem of returned emigrants from South Africa is of vast significance and any hasty conclusions may adversely effect the Cape-town Agreement.

II. By way of courtesy I must submit my own ideas on this subject to people like Right Honourable V. S. Srinivas Sastri, Sir K. V. Reddy and others and get their suggestions.

III. I have still an open mind on this subject and though the facts and figures that I have been able to gather are sufficient to convince any reasonable person that this repatriation business has proved harmful to the returned emigrants and has brought untold miseries to the colonial-born children, still I have not made up my mind regarding the line of action to be taken to remedy this state of affairs.

IV. Though I have intimate knowledge about the condition of returned emigrants in Northern India, my knowledge about the returned emigrants in South India is confined to Madras and its suburbs only.

Thus the present statement is only a tentative one and is subject to revision in the light of new facts and figures that may be brought to bear upon it.

It is most difficult for the returned emigrants to settle in India peacefully. During the last three months of my travel in several parts of India I did not meet a single returned emigrant who is happy with his new environments and who would not like to return to the colony if he could only get a chance; while the number of people who are simply pining away in the hope of getting a free passage to South Africa or any other colony can be counted by hundreds, if not thousands. I have been actually approached by a large number of people to make an arrangement for their emigration to some colony.

It has been a pathetic sight to see some of those healthy labourers of Natal reduced to a mere skeleton by living in the slums of Calcutta

and Madras in most unhealthy surroundings. They have cried before me and their cry has made me think furiously about the wisdom of repatriating these people from South Africa and other colonies.

I myself am a colonial-born and can therefore easily enter into the spirit of those who are born in the colonies and who are suffering great hardship on account of the indiscretion of their parents who brought them over here without realising its consequences.

Those who are returning from South Africa are mostly either illiterate or half-educated and they cannot realise the difficulties that await them in the Motherland. To say that they are coming voluntarily is only a half-truth. No doubt there is no compulsion on them but the temptation of £20 per adult does persuade most of these returned emigrants to leave South Africa along with their children. Things have considerably changed since the time when these people went to South Africa and they can never visualise the sort of life that they will have to lead in India. Mahatma Gandhi rightly observed in the *Young India* of 2nd May, 1929.

"There is no doubt that if these repatriates are to be received they must be specially cared for. India to most of them, is like foreign land."

I have been told that a considerable number of the returned emigrants from South Africa emigrate to Malaya and Ceylon after having exhausted all their resources in India. Now this is a serious development which neither the makers of the assisted emigration scheme nor the returning emigrants themselves, could ever have imagined as likely. Wages in Malaya and Ceylon are much lower than those in South Africa. If on their return these returned emigrants are to be compelled by their circumstances to emigrate to Malaya and Ceylon than they ought to be told of this fact before their departure to India.

The assisted emigration scheme has been in force for more than two years and between six and seven thousand Indians have taken advantage of it. What percentage of these people have been able to settle peacefully in India is a question that cannot be answered off-hand. For that we require a Commission of enquiry to be appointed by the Government of India. It is a fact that Rao Saheb Kunhiraman Nair in spite of his undoubted ability and deep sympathy has been able to look after only a small percentage of the returned emigrants.

I have been receiving a number of letters from my friends in South Africa to let them know the results of my enquiry. I would advise them to be a little more patient. It is a delicate problem and the Government of India should be given sufficient time to consider this questions.

I earnestly hope that Sir Mohammad Habilbulla will give his serious attention to this question and would appoint a Commission of enquiry.

If unfortunately the Government does not accede to this request then it will be my duty to publish my report by the end of April. We must proceed constitutionally and should not begin any propaganda against repatriation before we have exhausted all other sources of bringing pressure on the Government of India and the Union Government to reconsider the assisted emigration scheme in the light of facts and figures that may be established by the Commission of Enquiry.

I may add here in the end that I alone am responsible for this statement that is the result of an absolutely independent enquiry.

## Appendix No. II

### Press Comments

#### THE LEADER, ALLAHABAD

Mr. G. S. BAJPAI replying to a question in the Assembly on Sept. 6, 1928, stated that the Government of India had received no reports to the effect that the majority of repatriated Indians from South Africa were dissatisfied with conditions of life in India, and that they were anxious to return to South Africa. We were never quite sure as to the accuracy of Mr. Bajpai's information and now we have before us a statement issued by Mr. Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi who conducted an independent inquiry into the condition of these assisted emigrants. Mr. Bhawani Dayal himself is a colonial-born Indian and by his unselfish and invaluable work on behalf of his countrymen settled overseas, has won their confidence and affection to a remarkable degree. He states :

During the last three months of my travel in several parts of India I did not meet a single returned emigrant who is happy with his new environments and who would not like to return to the colony if he could only get a chance. . . . They have cried before me and their cry has made me think furiously about the wisdom of repatriating these people from South Africa and other Colonies.

We would like to know how the Government gained the impression that the returned emigrants were quite happy in their new surroundings—without work, without friends and without money. The Government of India may or may not be free to warn South African Indians against the consequences of taking advantage of the assisted emigration scheme, but it will be a heartless government which can see with any degree of equanimity its nationals being stranded in the way in which the returned emigrants from South Africa are.

#### THE INDIAN VIEWS, DURBAN

We were wondering why our friend Pundit Bhawani Dayal, after having resounded the Motherland with his hosannas over the Capetown Agreement, was keeping so un-naturally quiet, but trust to his enterprising ardour not to leave us wondering over long. He has once more distinguished himself, this time by the somewhat superfluous process of painting the lily :

"The facts and figures I have been able to gather are sufficient to convince any reasonable person, that this repatriation business has proved harmful to the returned emigrants and brought untold misery to their Colonial-born children. . . ."

Was Punditji under the impression that "this repatriation business" would prove a boon and a blessing to its deluded victims ? Is it only now he realizes the heinous sin and shame of it all ? When he and his friends helped consign these poor, ignorant people to the guillotine called repatriation, did they expect to see their throats gush-forth rose water instead of blood ? When everyone with an atom of common sense and a grain even of feeling was shouting himself hoarse against the inequity of

luring repatriates to their ruin, Messrs. Bhawani Dayal and friends felt no compunction in singing lusty hallelujahs to the Repatriation Agreement. They then pretended not to see what everyone not wilfully blind had no earthly excuse not to see. It wasn't sufficient for them to know that fire is fire. They need must first thrust repatriates into it to be satisfied that it burnt them. They needed making journeys to India and gleaning "facts and figures to prove that this repatriation business has proved harmful and brought untold misery." It is a blessing they have not yet felt the necessity of booking a passage to the sun in order to prove by "facts and figures" gleaned on the spot that it is devilish hot.

"It is difficult" we are informed by Mr. Dayal, "for the returned emigrants to settle in India peacefully. I did not meet a single one who is happy with his new environments and who would not like to return to the colony, if he could only get a chance, while the number of people who are simply pining away, hoping to get a free passage to South Africa, or any other colony can be counted by hundreds, if not by thousands.

"I have been actually approached by a large number of people to make an arrangement for their emigration to some colony. It has been a pathetic sight to see some of those healthy labourers of Natal reduced to mere skeletons by living in slums of Calcutta and Madras in most unhealthy surroundings. They had cried to me, and their cry has made me think furiously about the wisdom of repatriating these people from South Africa and other colonies. . . ."

Let us hope that in addition to making him think furiously the crying of these unfortunate skeletons succeeded in filling Mr. Dayal's eyes with a few tears—tears, not of sympathy at their plight, but of remorse at his own share in shaping the said plight.

#### THE HINDU, MADRAS

The demand made by Mr. Bhawani Dayal, a well-known Indian worker in South Africa, in his interim report, a summary of which is published elsewhere, on the condition of Indian repatriates in this country, for a commission of inquiry into the whole matter, is one which is irresistible and ought to be complied with by the authorities without any avoidable delay. Mr. Dayal came to India especially in order to study the problem and spent a considerable time in Madras, Calcutta and other places to acquaint himself with the facts concerning the repatriates. It has been known for some time that for various reasons, this class of Indians find considerable difficulties in settling in India and in finding suitable occupations, so that the lot of the vast majority of these people is one of suffering and misery. Mr. Dayal says that, after discovering for themselves the real nature of the situation, they desire to migrate to Malaya and Ceylon in search of employment, the door to South Africa being closed because they have not the wherewithal to refund the amount they had taken from the Union Government which apparently operates as the price of permanent banishment. Most of the repatriates are not sufficiently educated to benefit by the Government order requiring educated people to be taken as clerks. Emigrants accustomed to perform domestic service or agricultural work are absorbed, but skilled men in

factory, mining and railway work do not find employment. It is not surprising in the circumstances, to be told that the repatriates regret having left South Africa, where the wages are very much higher than in India, and "pine" as Mr. Dayal affirms, to go back, which, of course they are unable to do. It would appear that they lose their health having to live in slums in Indian cities without any means of employing themselves usefully. "It was", Mr. Dayal says, "a pathetic sight to see some of those healthy labourers of Natal reduced to mere skeletons by living in the slums of Calcutta and Madras in most unhealthy surroundings."

The real object of the scheme of what is euphemistically called "assisted" emigration is to get rid of the Indian population in South Africa by offering them money to go back to India. So far during the time the scheme has been in force, five to six thousand persons have arrived in India, and it cannot be said that, whatever the Union Government may feel, the victims have benefited by the change. It is also not likely that the complexion of the Indian problem in South Africa has undergone any marked change from the point of view of whites, because those that remain there and are likely to stay even after the working of the scheme for a series of years, must, in the nature of things, be very considerable, and according to the Capetown Agreement, the Union Government are under a solemn obligation to raise the status of these people in order that may be elevated after extending to them facilities for education and social uplift. Mr. Dayal is careful to point out that no compulsion is practised in regard to repatriation, but it is none the less not voluntary. The inducement of money is there, but emigrants are quite ignorant of the kind of life which is awaiting them in India and there is no organisation to apprise them of this all important fact. There may be a few to whom the prospect of spending the evening of their lives in their mother country is alluring, but this cannot be said of the vast majority who migrate to India. A new factor in the situation is the necessity felt by them to go to Malaya or Ceylon for livelihood. These facts are serious enough to require a thorough inquiry into the working of the whole scheme in South Africa and India. Over a year ago, the Union Government sent a special officer to India to look into the arrangements made by the Government of India for receiving the Indians repatriated, and though no official report of his inquiry has been published, it is understood that he gave his Government a rosy view of the situation. We believe that the Special Officer appointed to look after the repatriated Indians in Madras has sent up reports on the working of the scheme, but so far they have not been allowed to see the light of day. In view of the facts which have come out as regards the privation and suffering of these helpless people, it is incumbent on the part of the Government of India to institute a searching inquiry through an impartial committee into the working of the scheme, both in South Africa and in India. The matter is important and urgent and the Legislative Assembly would do well to take it up with a view to urge on the authorities the need for prompt action.

#### INQUIRY ORDERED

The Indian Government has decided to review the arrangements for the reception and care of emigrants returning from the Union under the Capetown Agreement. The Government has appointed Mr. Gray, the

Madras Labour Commissioner and Mr. Nateson, Member, Council of State to hold an inquiry to see if the present arrangements are adequate, and if not, what improvements are required.

THE LEADBR, ALLAHABAD

There are few men in the public life of the country who have been showing such keen interest in the condition of overseas Indians as Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi. In his latest contribution on the subject published in today's *Leader* he draws attention among other things to the question of the future of returned emigrants from South Africa. He writes that the time has come when a thorough inquiry should be made into the condition of these 7,000 returned emigrants and that if we find that most of them have been leaving in a wretched condition here in India they should be repatriated back to South Africa at the cost of the Government of 'India'. We have stated in these columns more than once that the assisted emigration scheme was the least satisfactory feature of the Cape Town Agreement and that we accorded our approval to the Agreement only because we knew that under the circumstances no better conditions were obtainable from the Union Government and because we felt that if the Union Government worked the Agreement in the spirit in which it was meant to be, the prospects of the Indian community would very considerably improve. Also there was the assurance of the Government of India as regards the future prospects of the returned emigrants that on arrival in India not only would these men and women be protected from falling into the clutches of swindlers and other land sharks, but would be helped to settle in occupations for which they were best qualified by their aptitude, training and resources. Frankly, we are not quite satisfied that the Government of India have been able to give the necessary protection and help to the returned emigrants promised by them. There are persistent reports that these people are most unhappy in their new surroundings, that they are unable to find suitable occupation and to maintain the standard of living to which they were accustomed in South Africa and that if they had the means they would go back to that country. We do not forget that the Government of India did appoint Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray, Labour Commissioner, Madras to make an inquiry into the condition of emigrants returning from South Africa to the Madras presidency. We have not been furnished with a copy of their report. Doubtless it must have received the attention of the Government. But we feel that with the best intentions in the world that committee of inquiry with its limited terms of reference could not throw much light on the condition of the returned emigrants. Whereas the operations of the inquiry committee were confined to the Madras harbour, the 7,000 emigrants who have returned from South Africa are to be found in so many other parts of the country. We believe that Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi's demand for a thorough inquiry into the condition of these returned emigrants is very reasonable.

## Appendix No. III

*Report submitted to the Government of India by the Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan, Editor, Indian Review, and Member, Council of State, and Mr. J. Gray, O. B. E., I. C. S., Labour Commissioner, Madras, on the working of the special organization in Madras for dealing with emigrants returning from South Africa under the scheme of assisted emigration.*

1. We have been requested by the Government of India to make an enquiry into the working of the special organization in Madras for dealing with emigrants returning to the Presidency from South Africa under the scheme of assisted emigration and to make recommendations. We were instructed to start the enquiry on the 8th April when the S. S. *Umzumbi* arrived in Madras with 257 repatriates for Madras and 38 for Calcutta. The object of the enquiry is to ascertain how far the existing arrangements are adequate for the discharge of the obligations towards the returned emigrants accepted by the Government of India under the Cape Town Agreement and to recommend what improvements if any are required, especially to ensure that those able and willing to work are given all possible help to secure employment suited to their aptitude and resources.

2. Under the Cape Town Agreement, the Government of India undertook to see that on arrival in India, assisted emigrants from South Africa are (1) advised and, as far as possible, protected against squandering their cash or losing it to adventurers, and (2) helped, as far as possible, to settle in occupations for which they are best suited by their aptitude and resources. In fulfilment of the obligations of the Government of India under this agreement, a Special Officer was appointed in August 1927 with headquarters at Madras. The duties with which he has been charged are (1) to receive the assisted emigrants when they land, (2) to make arrangements for their despatch to their destinations up-country, (3) to protect any cash they may have with them when they land from the attention of adventurers at the port of disembarkation and on their journeys, (4) to provide facilities for banking their savings and bonus until such time as they may require the money for purposes connected with their maintenance or occupation after arrival in India, and (5) to settle them in some occupation for which they may have expressed a preference and for which they may be suited by their aptitude and resources.

3. In accordance with our instructions we met the S. S. *Umzumbi* on its arrival in the Madras Harbour on the afternoon of the 8th of April. The ship brought 257 repatriates for Madras and 38 for Calcutta. We inspected the accommodation allotted to the repatriates and found that it was airy, clean and satisfactory. We also inspected the latrine accommodation, the arrangements for bathing and the hospital arrangements and found them also satisfactory. We saw samples of the food supplied to the repatriates during the voyage. These samples appeared to be of good quality. We questioned a number of the repatriates on

board and then went on to the disinfection shed where they are fed and kept until they are despatched to their destinations up-country. There too we questioned a very large number of the repatriates. Not one of them had any complaint to make regarding their treatment on board or about their accommodation, food, or anything else during the voyage. Most of them told us that they had come to India because they wished to get back to their mother-country or to see their relatives. With the exception of a sick man for whom special arrangements were made and a decrepit old man who has no friends or relatives in India to look after him, all the repatriates appeared to be in good condition and good health. The sick man referred to was sent under the care of an escort to his native village, Mayavaram. The decrepit old man was taken to the special home for such cases opened at the instance of the Special Officer in December last. As the ship did not arrive in the harbour until about 2 P. M. it was impossible to complete the arrangements for the despatch of the emigrants to their destinations that evening. They were accordingly kept over night in the disinfection sheds where they were comfortably housed and properly fed.

4. On the following day, *i. e.*, the 9th, we again visited the harbour and examined in detail the procedure followed in the disbursement to the repatriates of their bonus money, etc., the receipt by the Special Officer of the sums they deposited with him for safe custody, the transport of the repatriates under escort by motor bus, at the cost of the Union Government, to the Railway Stations for despatch to their destinations up-country. We examined also the arrangements made by the Special Officer for explaining to the repatriates how to keep in touch with him for the purpose of drawing their money after they reach their destinations and for the purpose of seeking his assistance in obtaining employment. In a number of cases we checked the money and the receipts given by the Special Officer, in the hands of the repatriates, and found them all correct. We also spoke to many of the repatriates, and ascertained that there were no complaints regarding accommodation or treatment, etc., on board the ship. In fact the only complaint of any kind that we heard at the Harbour was from an old man who, when asked what savings he had brought with him, said that he had got nothing but his bonus and in explanation gave a long, rambling and irrelevant complaint about his treatment in South Africa.

5. The routine followed by the Special Officer in regard to the receipt and despatch of returned emigrants is as follows:—Along with the Medical Inspector he goes on board the steamer as soon as it arrives and makes enquiries as to the convenience, comfort, and general treatment of the repatriates on board. The repatriates are then landed and taken to the disinfection sheds where they are housed until they are despatched to their destinations up-country. Suitable latrines and bathing accommodation are available at these sheds. During their detention in the sheds, the repatriates are adequately fed. Railway tickets are obtained for them and these are handed out to them along with an allowance to cover any road journey and any halts on the way home. The returned emigrants are taken from the harbour to the Railway Station in motor-buses at the cost of the Union Government and escorts are sent to see that they get into the proper trains. Decrepits who are unable to proceed without help and who are not

accompanied by relatives or friends who will look after them are sent to their villages in charge of special escorts. All this is done under the immediate supervision of the Special Officer.

6. As regards the protection of the repatriates' cash from the attention of adventurers, the Special Officer is invariably present at the time of the disbursement of bonus, etc., and explains carefully to them the possibility of their being duped by adventurers. When he started work in August 1927, he found it difficult to convince the returned emigrants of the good intentions of Government in the matter, with the result that very few people then deposited their bonus or other cash with him for safe custody. That attitude on the part of the newly returned emigrants has now to a very large extent disappeared, and many of them realise that it is to their advantage to leave their money with the Special Officer until they can find a suitable investment in land or otherwise. Now-a-days about 50 per cent. of the bonus and savings of newly returned emigrants is immediately deposited with the Special Officer for safe custody. Decrepits who have no relations to look after them are still in many cases unwilling to deposit their money with the Special Officer. That attitude is generally the result of the evil influence of people with sinister motives who haunt the Harbour when a repatriates ship comes in and pose as their friends. Some of these deluded decrepits, even when they have, with great difficulty, been persuaded by the Special Officer to deposit their surplus money with him, are foolish enough to press soon afterwards for repayment in full. In all such cases, he does his very utmost to prevent them from being duped. Before repaying their money in full, he makes a point of satisfying himself either by personal enquiry or through the local officers in the districts that the returned emigrants concerned are not likely to be defrauded. If, in any case, he is not satisfied that it is safe to repay in a lump sum, he makes monthly remittances sufficient for the maintenance of the people concerned.

7. As regards the provision of facilities to returned emigrants for banking their savings, etc., the Special Officer immediately remits all the amounts they deposit with him to the Imperial Bank of India where it is kept for a short time on current account. If within two months no applications are received for repayment, or investment, the depositors are given notice by the Special Officer that their money is earning no interest and that, if they so desire, some safe investment will be arranged for them. Many of the emigrants eventually draw their money to invest it in the purchase of land. Others invest it in Prudential Deposit accounts in the Madras Central Urban Bank (*i. e.*, the Provincial Co-operative Bank). Other invest their money in the purchase of Post Office Cash Certificates. When returned emigrants require the Special Officer's assistance in arranging for the investment of their money in purchasing land, he scrutinises the title deeds, the draft sale deeds, and very often sees the land itself. In this way, he has saved several unwary emigrants from being defrauded completely or from being saddled with doubtful investments.

8. We are satisfied with the arrangements made by the Special Officer for the reception of returned emigrants, their despatch to their destinations up-country, the protection of their cash and the provision of facilities for the banking of their savings. The procedure adopted has

been systematized as the result of over 2½ years experience and we have no suggestions to make for its improvement.

9. We come now to what is perhaps the most difficult task of the Special officer, *viz.*, assisting the returned emigrants to settle in some occupation for which they may have expressed a preference and for which they may be suited by their aptitude and resources. As soon as they land, they are questioned by the Special Officer as to their plans and as to the nature of the help which they require in settling down in their villages. At that stage, however, very few of the returned emigrants can or will state what they intend to do in India. On landing their only thought as a rule is to go straight to their villages, and the usual reply which the Special Officer gets is that they will think over their plans for the future after they have reached their destinations up-country. To each newly landed repatriate the Special Officer hands a slip with brief instructions clearly printed in large type asking them to write to him at the address specified, if they require any help in settling down or in finding employment. As a result of this printed invitation, the Special Officer receives applications from some of the returned emigrants after they have reached their destinations. These applications he deals with promptly and where it is necessary to visit the repatriate in his village in this connections, he does so as soon as possible. It may be explained here that between shipments the Special Officer spends a considerable amount of time touring in the mofussil, keeping in touch with the repatriates in their villages, and seeing whether they have settled down properly or whether they are experiencing any difficulties which he can help them to overcome. By touring systematically throughout the districts where these people settle, he maintains constant touch with every returned emigrant who desires his assistance. Decrepit repatriates who are unable to look after themselves and who have no relatives to take charge of them are now housed in a special Home in Madras which was opened at the instance of the Special Officer in December last with the sanction of the Government of India. The Government pay the rent of the building which is Rs. 40 a month. The Home is clean and well kept and the arrangements made by the Special Officer for running it are satisfactory.

10. The Special Officer has furnished us with a statement showing the total number of returned emigrants who have arrived in Madras under the assisted emigration scheme, from August 1927 up to the end of March last. The total number is 5,326 of whom 2,329 are men, 1,216 are women and 1,781 are children. Of the 2,329 men, only 1,898 are shown as fit for employment, the rest being decrepits. Of these 1,898 fit men, only 203 have sought the Special Officer's assistance in securing employment. The Special Officer has furnished us with complete details in respect of each of these 203 men, showing the date of his arrival, the date of his first application for assistance in finding employment and the steps taken to secure employment for him. Before stating the results of our detailed scrutiny of this list of 203 applicants, it may be mentioned here that during the period, August 1927 to March 1930, 90 returned emigrants from South Africa emigrated to the Malay States, 73 returned to South Africa and 77 found employment on Tea Estates in Southern India. Of the 77 who have found employment on tea estates, 26 appear in the Special Officer's list of applicants.

11. We have not merely examined the list of these 203 applicants for employment with a view to seeing whether all possible steps have been taken by the Special Officer to assist them in their search for work, but we have also personally interviewed a certain number of them. Singly or together we have interviewed 46 of the repatriates who had arrived in Madras before the end of March last under the assisted emigration scheme. Almost all of these 46 people are at present living in or near Madras. Thirty-four of them appear in the Special Officer's list of applicants for assistance in obtaining employment. In the case of those 34 applicants, we were able to verify the Special Officer's account of the steps taken to get them employment and of their present condition and occupation. As a result of our scrutiny of the list and of our interviews with these 46 people we are satisfied that every possible step is being taken by the Special Officer to find suitable employment for assisted emigrants who want his help. It is true that he is not always able to find employment immediately for every applicant and that in the case of several applicants he has been able to do little or nothing, but this is due not to any defect in the arrangements in force for looking after and assisting these people, but to factors over which neither the Government nor the Special Officer can possibly have any control. In some cases, the delay in obtaining employment is a hardship, but for any such hardship the returned emigrants have generally themselves to blame. The more prudent or thoughtful of those emigrants who desire employment apply to the Special Officer very soon after they reach their destinations. The imprudent and thoughtless amongst them wait until their bonus and savings are exhausted and until destitution drives them to seek for work. Whenever a repatriate is really keen on obtaining work and is content to accept employment suited to his capacity, the Special Officer has very little difficulty in obtaining a job for him, although it may take some time. But some at least of the able-bodied repatriates apparently have no wish to get down to work, and when their bonus is exhausted, are content to live rather precariously on charity.

12. So far as returned emigrants of the class of petty farmers and agricultural labourers are concerned (and they form about 45 per cent. of the adult male emigrants who are fit to work) those who really wish to settle down in this country find very little difficulty in doing so. In certain districts, *e.g.*, North Arcot, suitable lands are available at the disposal of Government for assignment to these people. The Special Officer makes a point of assisting returned emigrants who want such land and sees that they are made aware of the special concessions granted to them by Government and of how to take advantage of such concessions. Returned emigrants of the petty-farmer class sometimes buy lands by private negotiation and, as already explained, the Special Officer renders them valuable assistance in negotiating the purchase. Amongst returned emigrants of the non-agricultural labouring class, who form about 23 per cent. of those fit for work, domestic servants and unskilled workers such as sweepers, porters, etc., have little difficulty in settling down and obtaining employment. The Special Officer is always able to obtain employment for people willing to work as waiters, cooks, peons, attenders, ward-boys, etc. The chief difficulty is in regard to finding employment for skilled workers, *e.g.*, men who have worked on

Railways, in Mines, Sugar Mills, etc. These men form about 32 per cent, of the returned male emigrants fit for work. Vacancies of the kind to which such men aspire do occur but competition is keen. A further difficulty in the case of such people arises from the fact that the scale of wages for skilled work prevailing in India is undoubtedly low compared with the scale of pay and the standard of living to which these men were accustomed in South Africa. Another difficulty arises from the fact that most emigrants of the skilled labourer class come to India without any testimonials from their previous employers as to character, conduct and fitness for skilled work. Still another difficulty, and a very serious one, arises from the fact that many of the emigrants of this class aspire to posts for which they are not really qualified and for which qualified local candidates are available in large numbers. They decline posts obtained for them by the Special Officer as beneath their dignity. Employment can be and is obtained by the Special Officer for such men if only they will adapt themselves to the standards and mode of life which prevail amongst men of corresponding qualifications and status in this country.

13. We consider that the Special Officer has been successful in obtaining the sympathetic assistance of most of the large employers of labour such as Railway Administrations, the Port Trust, Government Departments like the P. W. D., the Madras Corporation, the larger Government Hospitals as well as large private organizations like the United Planters Association of Southern India, in his task of finding suitable employment for returned emigrants. The only suggestion we have to make is that such sympathy might be more effective if the heads of the larger department and organizations, or their representatives could be formed into a Committee to assist the Special Officer in placing returned emigrants in suitable employment. Such a Committee, with the Special Officer as Secretary, might help to overcome the difficulties inherent, even when departmental heads are sympathetic, in finding places for a class of men who do not come in through the ordinary channels of recruitment. Apart from this we have no recommendations to make regarding the arrangements now in force for assisting returned emigrants to find occupations suited to their aptitude and resources.

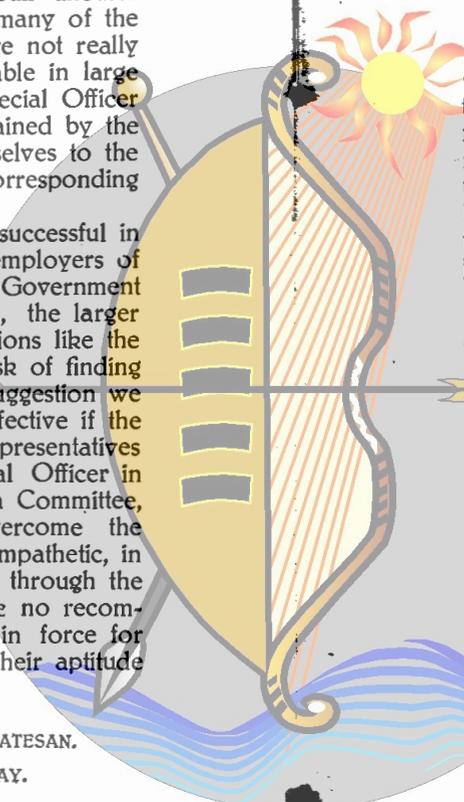
G. A. NATESAN.  
J. GRAY.

*The 3rd May, 1930.*

## Appendix No. IV

### Press Opinion on Government Reports.

(THE SERVANT OF INDIA, POONA)



We are obliged to the Director of Public Information with the Government of India for a copy of the interesting Report submitted by the Hon. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray on the working of the special organization set up in Madras to assist the Indian emigrants who arrived in India from South Africa under the assisted emigration scheme. It will be recalled that under the Cape Town Agreement the Government of India undertook to look after the assisted emigrants from South Africa. They had accordingly set up a special organization in Madras charged with the duties of receiving such immigrants at the ports, arranging for their journey to their destinations in India, taking charge of their monies and protecting them from adventurers, and helping them to settle down in occupations suited to them. Messrs. Natesan and Gray have recorded their opinion that the travelling facilities on board the ships in the matter of accommodation, lavatories, bathing, food and medical aid, were satisfactory, as also the arrangements made by the Special Officer in Madras for the reception of the emigrants, their despatch to their destinations upcountry, the protection of their cash and the provision of banking facilities. The decrepits among the emigrants were given asylum in a special Home under the supervision of the Special Officer. The most difficult task was, however, that of assisting the emigrants to settle down to suitable work. Here also Messrs. Natesan and Gray were satisfied that every possible step was being taken by the Special Officer to this end. If the results were not better than they were, it was not the fault of the Special Officer but it was due to factors over which neither he nor the Government had control. It may be freely granted, therefore, that the Government of India have done their part under the Cape Town Agreement.

They make passing reference to the cause which led to the emigration from South Africa. It has often been alleged in South Africa, specially by those who have consistently opposed the system of assisted emigration and the Cape Town Agreement, that improper pressure was being put on Indians to emigrate; that they were being deliberately thrown out of employment and "squeezed" out of South Africa. Messrs. Natesan and Gray give the quietus to this allegation; they found no evidence to support it. On the other hand, it is clear that the bonus and the natural desire of those, who were born in India, to return to their native land in their old age, were the chief inducements to emigration. The rapid fall in the emigration figures during the last two years goes a long way to discount the theory of deliberate squeezing by the South African authorities. As far as the assisted emigration at the South African end is concerned, it must be freely and candidly admitted that the South African Government have played the game, and the voluntary character of the scheme has, on the whole, been maintained.

Gratifying as is this conclusion, public interest in India is mostly concerned with the welfare of the immigrants in India, and their reaction to the local economic and social conditions. Messrs. Natesan and Gray interviewed some 46 emigrants employed in and around Madras, but their enquiries seem to have been confined to the assistance they received from the Special Officer. A mere thorough-going enquiry into the economic and social conditions of the immigrants would have been more valuable, particularly in view of the allegations made both in India and South Africa that they were most unhappy in India though it must be admitted that such an enquiry is more difficult to make.

It appears from the figures given in the Report that of the 5,326 immigrants who landed in Madras between August, 1927 and April, 1930, males numbered 2,329 or 43 per cent. and females 23 per cent. and children 33 per cent. Of the men 1,898, or 80 per cent. were able-bodied and fit to work, the rest being unfit to work. Of the fit only 203, or 11 per cent. applied to the Special Officer for employment but the Report does not say how many of the applications were successful. Of the able-bodied men 90 had emigrated to the Malay States and 77 found employment in some tea estates in South India, and 73 returned to South Africa.

The Report goes on to say that petty farmers and agricultural labourers, (who formed 40 per cent. of the able-bodied adult males) and non-agricultural labourers and unskilled workers (who formed 23 per cent.) find little difficulty in finding suitable work, if they really wish it, and that the Special Officer makes it a point to help them to get land and jobs. It is not clear from the Report, however, how many of the immigrants really wished it and settled down on land or in other kinds of work, with or without the assistance of the Special Officer. In any event, since only 203 applications were received by him, it follows that, notwithstanding the best efforts of the Government of India, some 90 per cent. of the adult, able-bodied immigrants went without the facilities and assistance offered to them, and shifted for themselves. And therein lay the tragedy.

From all accounts we are led to believe that the lot of the Indian immigrants is not a happy one in India. The social and economic environment in India is far below the standard which they were used to in South Africa. It is significant that 73 of the immigrants returned to South Africa, though the number is insignificant compared to the total number of immigrants. More would return if they could. The position of the skilled emigrants is even more difficult than that of the unskilled, who, according to the Report, form 32 per cent. of the adult males fit to work. But the hardest lot of all is that of the South African-born Indians. It may safely be assumed that the old and unfit, who numbered 531, were mostly Indian-born, who wished to return to India in their old age and to whom the scheme of assisted emigration was a welcome windfall. The children, who numbered 1,781, or 33 per cent. of the immigrants, were almost all of them born in South Africa, and were brought to India as part of the families of the older immigrants. Of the men and women adults, other than the old unfits, the bulk must have been South African-born to whom India was a strange country and migration to which was a leap in the dark. They were mainly attracted by the bonus of £ 20 per head *plus* free passage, and they did not know or understand the conditions into which they were unwittingly moving. There can

be no question that the migration of Indians from South Africa to India is emphatically not to their advantage.

But it was never pretended that the scheme of assisted emigration was invented in the interests of the Indian emigrants. South African authorities believe it is to the advantage of the whites in that country to get rid of the Indians who, as a class, were "undesirable." But is it such an advantage that it will compensate the sufferings of the emigrants and the insult to and humiliation of Indians, as a race?

In the nature of the case, assisted emigration of Indians from South Africa to India must be a temporary and diminishing phenomenon. As years roll on, those Indians who migrated from India will gradually become fewer and the incentive of *returning* to their motherland, which is a potent cause now, will cease to operate. (By the way, it may be marked that Messrs. Natesan and Gray were not quite accurate in referring generally to the assisted emigrants as "repatriates" who were "returning" to India. A closer analysis would have shown them that repatriates were but a small fraction of the immigrants and the great bulk were real immigrants to India.) Then the only remaining incentive will be the attraction of the bonus. With every increase in it, there will be a jump in the volume of emigration, which will however soon taper off. While it continues it means ever increasing expenditure to the South African Government, and ever increasing suffering to the emigrants, for, with the passing of time, the South African-born Indians will be more and in tune with the South African standards and less and less with Indian standards, and a change will be more and more trying to them. A clearer realisation of this will tend to discourage emigration, and no doubt the recent fall in emigration is partly due to the growing knowledge of Indian conditions.

Granting that the bonus will be continuously raised in order to maintain a maximum of emigration, it still seems that it will never be so large as to reduce the Indian population in South Africa to any material extent and effectively reduce the "Indian menace." The total Indian population in the Union was 150,000 in 1911 and rose to 161,000 in 1921 and to 174,000 in 1926. Repatriation, which was in continuous operation since 1911, has not even succeeded in keeping down the Indian population at a stationary level. Repatriation has not off-set the natural growth of population. And in view of the fact that during the last ten years an increasing number of domiciled Indians have been fetching their wives to South Africa, and making their homes there, the total Indian population in the Union is bound to go up. During the period 1914 to 1926, the total number of repatriates amounted to just over 20,000 or 1,700 per year. From July, 1927, when the new assisted emigration scheme was introduced, up to the end of the year 1928, the number of assisted emigrants was 5,125, but since then the number has again dwindled almost to the vanishing point. Even if an average of 2,000 emigrants per year were maintained, it amounts to about 1 per cent. of the population per year, which will be more than off-set by the natural increase. Assisted emigration can check the increase of the Indian population in some slight measure, but it cannot keep it stationary, much reduce it.

Considering that the Bantu population amounts to some 5 millions, which it is not proposed to reduce by promoting emigration, it cannot

be a grave menace to European civilisation if some 180,000 Indians remained in South Africa.

During the four years, 1922-23 to 1925-26, the Union Government spent on repatriation a sum of £39,000, or £10,000 per year. Since then the bonus has been raised to £20 per adult and £10 per child, and the recent cost must have been greater.

It requires no great argument to show that assisted emigration is no solution of the Indian problem in South Africa. It does not materially reduce the Indian population, and the percentage of the drop is insignificant. It is bound to dwindle down and almost cease at no distant date. To the extent it is in operation, it entails increasing hardship on the emigrants whose lot in India is none too enviable, an ever increasing expenditure to the South African Government, and yet not rid South Africa of its Indian population. If the Union Government will consent to divert the money which they are now spending on Indian emigration on their "uplift," the Indian "problem" will be effectively and permanently solved and entail no hardship on Indians, no humiliation to the Indian peoples, no embarrassment to the Government of India and no threat to the integrity of the Commonwealth, and more than all, no harm to the civilisation and interests of South African whites.

India having been a party to the Cape Town Agreement, we have no wish to denounce the assisted emigration scheme which was an integral part of it particularly as it is voluntary. But it is open to the South African Government to reconsider their attitude towards this problem, and cease to lay stress on it, to measure the success of the Cape Town Agreement on its volume, and look to it for a solution of their "Indian problem."

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(THE LEADER, ALLAHABAD)

THE other day Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi suggested through the columns of the LEADER, and we supported his suggestion, that the Government of India should make a thorough inquiry into the condition of returned emigrants from South Africa. Neither Mr. Chaturvedi nor we ourselves when making this suggestion were unaware of the fact that the Government had appointed the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray, labour commissioner, Madras, to make 'an inquiry into the working of the special organization in Madras for dealing with emigrants returning to the presidency from South Africa'. But our objection was that while the operations of this committee were confined to the Madras harbour, the 7,000 emigrants who had returned from South Africa were to be found in so many other parts of India. We have now before us the report of the Madras inquiry which the Government have after all decided to publish, and a perusal of its contents confirms us in our opinion formerly expressed in these columns that with the best intentions in the world Mr. Natesan and his colleague with their limited terms of reference could not throw much light on the condition of the returned emigrants. What has been causing the greatest anxiety in the public mind is the persistent report that the returned emigrants are unable to find suitable employment and to maintain the standard of living to which they were accustomed in South Africa and that they are consequently most unhappy in their new surroundings. What does

the Madras inquiry committee's report tell us? We learn that the total number of emigrants who arrived in Madras under the assisted emigration scheme up to March 1930 was 5,326 of whom 1,898 men were fit for employment. But of these latter only 203 sought the special officer's assistance in securing employment. Could this last named gentleman render the help sought? We learn that so far as returned emigrants of the class of petty farmers and agricultural labourers are concerned, those who really wish to settle down in this country find very little difficulty in doing so. The chief difficulty, the report says, is in regard to finding employment for skilled workers, e. g., men who have worked on railways, in mines, sugar mills, etc. These men form about 32 per cent. of the returned emigrants fit for work. Competition for employment in this kind of work is keen; besides the scale of wages and the standard of living are low as compared with conditions in South Africa. 'Employment can be and is obtained,' the report says, 'by the special officer for such men if only they will adapt themselves to the standards and mode of life which prevail amongst men of corresponding qualifications and status in this country.' The Government will therefore note that whereas more than 7,000 emigrants have returned from South Africa, only a little more than 5,000 landed in Madras, and that of these only some 200 men sought the assistance of the special officer, for at least 32 per cent. of whom this official found it difficult to find suitable employment. The report pays a tribute to the labour and care which the special officer brings to bear on his task. But the fact remains that he deals with the cases of a very small portion of the returned emigrants and that even in that limited circle too he is unable to render the help sought by the emigrants. What happens then to those who do not seek his help, to those who seek his help but whom he is unable to help for reasons probably beyond his control and to that larger number of returned emigrants who do not belong to Madras? Only a more thorough inquiry than that conducted at Madras could reveal the exact state of affairs.

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(THE HINDU, MADRAS)

It will be remembered that the Government of India appointed a committee to inquire into and report upon the organisation existing in Madras for the reception of Indian emigrants returning from South Africa under the assisted emigration scheme and for looking after them. Serious allegations had been made regarding the difficulties, experienced by the emigrants in securing suitable employment and in otherwise settling in the country. The report of the Hon. Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray, Labour Commissioner, who constituted the committee is, as will be found from the text published elsewhere one in which general satisfaction is expressed at the work of the special officer who has been functioning since August 1927 to whom deserved tribute is paid. The committee finds that satisfactory arrangements are made for receiving the emigrants, for despatching them to up-country places, for the protection of their cash and for the safe deposit of the savings brought by them, and that the special officer keeps himself in constant

touch with these emigrants by touring in the districts, by encouraging them to keep themselves in communication with him and by asking them to send application for employments. It would appear that of 5,326 emigrants who arrived in India between August 1927 and March, 1930, 2,329 were men, 1,216 were women and 1,781 were children. Of the men, however, 431 were decrepits. The report describes the arrangements made in regard to these decrepits for whom a home has been established. But the public in India would like to know why these men are at all sent out to India. They cannot work, and it is a duty which the Union Government owe to themselves to help these people who, either owing to old age or incapacity, find themselves unable to earn their livelihood. The report does not suggest any inquiry upon this aspect of the question; but the Government of India would do well to ask their Agent in South Africa to investigate the matter. Of the 1,898 men only 203, it would appear, sought the help of the special officer to secure jobs for them. It is admitted, and this is a point well worthy of note by the Government of India, that the special officer owing to various reasons which are set out in the report is unable to find employment for many of these persons. Part of the blame may be with the emigrants themselves, but it is the clear duty of the Government to bring succour to these people for most of whom India is a strange country, they having been born and bred in South Africa. The number of emigrants who re-emigrated to Malaya and South Africa was 90 and 73 respectively. Of the emigrants it seems that 45 per cent come from classes experienced in agricultural pursuits and 23 from the classes of domestic servants, including porters, etc. We are told that no particular difficulty is found in securing work for them. But 32 per cent are skilled workers who do not easily secure employment because the wages are low as compared with those in South Africa and the workers always aspire for places which are above their capacity. From the report one is unable to know how many of the emigrants who are capable of doing some work or other are without employment. Of course, it is somewhat difficult for the special officer to follow the emigrant to the places which they go after landing in the country, but so long as it is not ascertained even approximately how many of the emigrants are able to look after themselves, it cannot be said that the scheme of assisted emigration is working satisfactorily so far as the emigrants are concerned. The only constructive suggestion made by the committee is that the heads of various departments and organisations, such as the Port Trust, the Public Works Department and Municipal Corporation, the United Planters' Association of Southern India etc. must form themselves into a committee to assist this special officer in finding work for the returned emigrants. This suggestion, if carried out, may enable a larger percentage of the emigrants to find employment, but we think that two important measures should be undertaken in the interests of the emigrants. The first is that steps should be taken to find out more accurately the plight of these men after coming to India. The second is that strict watch should be kept on the other side, that is, in South Africa to see that no questionable tactics are employed to induce Indians to migrate to India.

(THE AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, CALCUTTA)

How are the returned emigrants from South Africa faring? The question is not simply of academic interest. On its answer depends to a large extent the attitude to be taken by the Indian public towards the question of future repatriation of the Indian settlers of that colony. The contention of the Anglo-Indian Press and certain influential members of the Government is that the lot of the repatriates who have come back under the assisted emigration scheme is satisfactory. And the report recently submitted by Messrs Natesan and Gray on this subject is taken by them to uphold it. Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi who has made comprehensive enquiry into the condition of these people however tells a completely different tale.

"I did not meet a single returned emigrant" says Swami Bhawani Dayal "who is happy in his new environments and who would not like to return to the colony if he could only get a chance." Messrs. Natesan and Gray's report no doubt gives a different impression but the reason is that the enquiry which formed the basis of their report was conducted by them simply at one harbour viz, Madras. If therefore the Government want to find out the real state of things they ought to order an enquiry with wider terms of reference than were issued to Mr. Natesan and his colleague.

(THE LEADER, ALLAHABAD)

OUR local Anglo-Indian contemporary writes with reference to Messrs. Natesan and Gray's report that it 'furnishes a complete refutation of the vague but vehement complaints that have been made' that 'the lot of repatriates from South Africa who have returned to this country under the assisted emigration scheme... has been anything but satisfactory'. We wonder whether the authors of the report themselves would be prepared to make such a bold claim on the basis of an inquiry conducted at one harbour. For the information of *Pioneer* we may mention that the Natesan report deals with the cases of those repatriates who landed at Madras, but that a much larger number of them are to be found in other parts of India. Besides, while the Natesan report does not show that the repatriates are happy in their new surroundings there is other evidence that they are most unhappy. Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi, who being himself a colonial-born Indian can better enter into the feelings of the repatriates, was asked by the Indian community of South Africa to make an inquiry into the condition of these people. During a period of three months he travelled all over India and interviewed a large number of the returned emigrants. This is what he wrote in his tentative report:—

"I did not meet a single returned emigrant who is happy in his new environments and who would not like to return to the colony if he could only get a chance; while the number of people who are simply pining away in the hope of getting a free passage to South Africa or any other colony can be counted by hundreds if not thousands. I have been actually approached by a large number of people to make some arrangement for their emigration to some colony."

We are not just now concerned with the question whether it is not the improvident ways or some other shortcomings of the repatriates themselves which are responsible for their present condition. The question at present is, how are the repatriates faring? To find out this the appointment of an inquiry committee with wider terms of reference, than were issued to Mr. Natesan and his colleague is essential.

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(THE INDIAN SOCIAL REFORMER, BOMBAY)

*The following article has been contributed by Mr. S. A. Waiz, B.A., Secretary, The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, Bombay:—*

The Government of India appointed a Committee of Enquiry to report on the working of special organisation in Madras for the reception of repatriates from South Africa under the scheme of assisted emigration of the Cape Town Agreement. The Committee consisted of the Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan and Mr. J. Gray, Labour Commissioner, Madras, submitted their report in May last and was published by the Government of India last week.

Under the Cape Town Agreement, the Government of India undertook to see that on arrival in India repatriates from South Africa are protected against squandering their cash and helped as far as possible in settling in some sort of occupation for which they are suited. The Special Officer was appointed in August 1927, with his headquarters in Madras, to fulfil that obligation. The Committee finds that satisfactory facilities are afforded on board the ship regarding accommodation, lavatories, bathrooms, food and medical aid. They interviewed a number of these men and none of them complained in this matter. They also find that satisfactory arrangements have been made for their reception on arrival in Madras. The Special Officer is constantly in touch with the repatriates; he tours about the country and encourages them to apply for employments. It would appear that out of 5,326 emigrants who arrived in India between August 1927 and March 1930, 2329 were men, 1216 were women and 1781 were children. 431 men were decrepits. For the decrepits, the report says, special home has been established. Arrangements are also made for the protection of their cash by safe deposits in the Bank. During the half year ending 31st December 1928, the Special Officer received Rs. 3,52,861 in cash from repatriates and assisted them to deposit Rs. 1,86,139 in the Bank. During the same period he paid out Rs. 3,41,755 in cash and authorised withdrawal by those who had deposited money with the Bank of a sum of Rs. 1,47,484. Of the repatriates, 45 per cent belong to the class of petty farmers; 23 per cent. domestic servants. The Special Officer is always able to find employment for domestic servants and land is available for those who wish to settle down as agricultural labourers. But the other 32 per cent. are skilled workers. It is very difficult to find work for them because the wages are low in India as compared with those in South Africa and even if employment is obtained for such men, they refuse to accept it because they consider it to be below their dignity. In the case of several applicants, the report says, the Special Officer has been able to do little or nothing.

It has often been alleged in India and South Africa that the Government of India have failed to carry out their obligations of safeguarding the interests of repatriates in India. The report, however, fully refutes this allegation. If the lot of the repatriates in India is not a happy one, it is due to circumstances over which neither the Government of India nor their agencies have any control. It must be admitted, therefore, that the Government of India have fulfilled their obligation admirably. In Bombay, the Commissioner of Police is made responsible for arrangements connected with the repatriates from South Africa. In Bengal the duty is entrusted to the Protector of Emigrants. In the United Provinces the Registrar of Co-operative Societies is responsible for their welfare. In Bihar and Orissa, the Director of Industries is selected for the purpose. Thus we see that the repatriates have some one to look to for help in every province. The Special Officer was appointed in Madras, because it is the port of entry and home for the majority of repatriates. The Committee have no suggestions to make except that the heads of the larger department and organisation should form into a body to assist the Special Officer in securing suitable employment for the repatriates. The report does not reveal to the public what happens to those repatriates who fail to get work and there are several such cases. The only recommendation that the Committee has deemed fit to make is hardly fair on the increasing number of unemployed in the Madras Presidency. Their recommendation, if carried out, will make the problem of unemployment more serious in Madras. Undoubtedly it is the clear duty of the Government of India to help them in every possible way but it was never intended that they should do it at the expense of the unemployed in India. And why should decrepits be sent back from South Africa? These poor people spend their youths in developing South Africa and now when they are aged and unable to work, are repatriated to India, where they have no friends and relations. But the hardest lot is of the South African-born Indians, for most of them, India is a foreign land. Many of them do not know Indian vernaculars. No wonder some of them returned to South Africa. The time for revising the Cape Town Agreement is near and pressure should be brought to bear upon the Governments of the Union of South Africa that India will never accept again in any form or at any stage, any repatriation scheme.

In considering the report, it is well to remember that Mr. Venn, Commissioner of Asiatic Affairs in South Africa was deputed two years ago to study on the spot and report how far the Government of India were discharging their obligations in terms of the Cape Town Agreement. His report has not yet been published. It is strongly rumoured that Mr. Venn has recommended that the repatriation scheme has failed, because India is not in a position to assimilate repatriates from abroad. However that may be, the fact remains that if his report is made available to the public, it will help to understand the Indian problem from the South African point of view. The report of Pandit Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi on his investigation into the position of repatriates in India is also eagerly awaited.

## Appendix No. V.

### NATAL HOUSE IN MADRAS

Swami Bhawani Dayal Sanyasi of South Africa is now in Madras on a tour in South India to gain first-hand information about the condition of Indians repatriated from South Africa. He is collecting statistics about the economic condition of repatriates with a view to submit a report to the Indians in South Africa, the Government of India and the South African Government and thereby draw public attention to their conditions. The Swami is convinced of the harmful effects of repatriation and his present attempt is to focus public opinion on the matter and try to get the system abolished.

On December 8th he opened the home for decrepit repatriates at the request of Mr. Kunhiraman Nair, Special Officer for South African repatriates. This home was recently sanctioned by the Government of India and is located at No. 89, Brodies Road in Mylapore and is intended to provide a home for decrepits and cripples among the repatriates who have no relations in India. The House is well-ventilated with a spacious backyard and can accommodate about 12 to 15 persons. A clerk in the office of the Special Officer who is also a repatriate from South Africa is in charge of it. There are at present four inmates, an old woman and an old man both of about 80 years' old and a old woman of 60 years who lost her husband after her arrival in India and a man of 45 years who is a cripple. About six more persons in similar circumstances who are now in the mofussil are expected shortly.

The scheme is the result of the sympathetic attitude of Mr. Gray, the Commissioner of Labour, towards the repatriated Indians and the interest evinced by Rao Saheb M. Kunhiraman Nair, the Special Officer in all matters connected with the South African repatriates. Mr. Ramachandran Pillai, the Personal Assistant to the Commissioner of Labour, represented the Commissioner of Labour at the function.

After prayer the Swami declaring the home open said that he congratulate Mr. Kunhiraman Nair on his success in his efforts to get a home opened for the houseless decrepits among the repatriates and on behalf of the South African Indians he sincerely thanked him. He hoped that the home would support and provide shelter to the South African repatriates.

With a vote of thanks proposed by the special officer to the Swami the function terminated.

After the opening ceremony was over the inmates were sumptuously fed. Rao Saheb Mr. Kunhiraman Nair bearing the expenses.

*The Hindu, Madras*  
9-12-1929

## Appendix No. VI.

### NUMBER OF INDIANS REPATRIATED FROM SOUTH AFRICA

The following statement show the number of Indians repatriated from South Africa and who have returned to India under the assisted emigration scheme up to the end of 1929:—

| Name of Steamer       | Date of Arrival | Number of Repatriates belonging to |          |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------|
|                       |                 | Madras                             | Calcutta |
| Umisinga              | 58— 8—27        | 164                                | 26       |
| Umflosi               | 9— 9—27         | 225                                | 22       |
| Umzumbi               | 8—10—27         | 343                                | 84       |
| Umisinga              | 10—11—27        | 179                                | 38       |
| Umflosi               | 16—12—27        | 245                                | 50       |
| Umzumbi               | 14— 1—28        | 348                                | 98       |
| Umisinga              | 3— 2—28         | 235                                | 15       |
| Umona                 | 28— 2—28        | 406                                | 35       |
| Umvolosi              | 4— 4—28         | 261                                | 38       |
| Umisinga              | 1— 5—28         | 240                                | 43       |
| Umona                 | 4— 6—28         | 295                                | 76       |
| Umvolosi              | 12— 7—28        | 121                                | 49       |
| Umzumbi               | 15— 8—28        | 178                                | 69       |
| Umvolosi              | 20— 9—28        | 147                                | 111      |
| Umzumbi               | 24—10—28        | 279                                | 77       |
| Umvolosi              | 28—11—28        | 214                                | 33       |
| Umzumbi               | 3— 1—29         | 415                                | 45       |
| Umvolosi              | 6— 2—29         | 290                                | 24       |
| Umzumbi               | 2— 4—29         | 225                                | 56       |
| Umvolosi              | 15— 5—29        | 82                                 | 15       |
| Umzumbi               | 4— 7—29         | 37                                 | 18       |
| Umvolosi              | 14— 8—29        | 73                                 | 3        |
| Umzumbi               | 9—10—29         | 98                                 | 20       |
| Total                 |                 | 5100                               | 1045     |
| To Bombay same period |                 |                                    | 426      |
| Grand Total           |                 |                                    | 6571     |

### DISTRIBUTION IN INDIA

This statement gives the names of the districts in India, with the number of repatriates who have gone to them :

| Name of Destination | Number | Name of Destination | Number |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Anantpur            | 7      | Ahamedabad          | 2      |
| Arcot (North)       | 1620   | Bellary             | 9      |
| Arcot (South)       | 309    | Bettiah             | 1      |
| Allahabad           | 83     | Bahraich            | 14     |
| Arrah               | 28     | Basli               | 76     |
| Azamgarh            | 21     | Benares             | 12     |
| Agra                | 5      | Bulandshahr         | 3      |
| Aligrah             | 1      | Ballia              | 2      |



## Appendix No. VII.

### CONGRESS AND REPATRIATES

*The following letter was sent by the Secretaries of the South African Indian Congress to several leaders in India, including to Mr. J. B. Petit, of the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, Bombay :—*

"We desire to bring to your notice that at the ninth session of the South African Indian Congress held at Durban, Natal, in January of this year (1929) the subject of repatriation of Indians from South Africa to India under the Assisted Emigration Scheme provided in the Capetown Agreement was fully discussed, and we quote below an extract from resolution passed by this Congress, namely :

"In view of the reports emanating from repatriates that their welfare in India is being neglected, this Conference feels that a thorough investigation into this matter should be instituted and for this purpose instructs the Executive to do the needful."

Following upon this resolution, the subject was further discussed at an Executive meeting of this Congress held at Johannesburg on the 17th February, 1929.

When this subject engaged the attention of delegates present at the Conference, it was stated that the Government of India have taken no steps to assist the repatriates, that they are stranded and are unable to find employment, that the present day conditions in India are not congenial to them, that reports have been read conveyed by letters from repatriates, that owing to absence of work and assistance from the authorities, they are either starving or undergoing much suffering and consequently many of them have, by force of adverse circumstances, migrated to Fiji or Malaya.

In the Capetown Agreement, one of the condition accepted by the Government of India in regard to the Scheme is that on their arrival in India the emigrants will be helped as far as possible to settle in the occupations for which they are best suited by their aptitude or their resources.

Judging from the report received from the repatriates, it is doubtful whether the Government of India are doing anything at all to help the repatriates.

This Congress will be extremely grateful to you, if you will afford information on the subject so that it may be guided in making full representations to the authorities."

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*Mr. Petit was kind enough to draw the attention of the Honourable Sir Mahammed Habibullah, K. C. S. I., Member in charge of the Departments of Education, Health and Lands to the Government of India to the above subject, and he received the following reply dated 9th May 1929, at Simla :—*

"Many thanks for your letter of 19th April 1929. I have taken a little time over replying to it as I was anxious to get together all the information available to enable me to answer your inquiry. As you say

the Secretaries of the South African Indian Congress have also addressed to my Department a letter similar to the one copy of which formed an enclosure to your letter of the 19th April. We shall send a reply to the Congress either direct or through our Agent in South Africa. Meanwhile, I am communicating to you in brief the steps that we have taken to carry out our obligations (1) to advise and, so far as possible, protect returning emigrants against squandering their cash or losing it to adventurers ; and (2) to help them, as far as possible, in settling in occupations for which they are best suited by their aptitudes and resources. I have textually reproduced the provision in the Annexure setting forth the terms in the Cape Town Agreement so as to enable you to judge for yourself what the Government of India undertook.

2. I returned from South Africa in February 1927. In April 1927, I paid a special visit to the Governors of Madras, Bombay and Bengal in order to enlist their personal interest in any arrangement that might have to be made for dealing with emigrants returning from South Africa in terms of the Cape Town Agreement. From all these Governors I received assurances of cordial co-operation. In Bombay, the Commissioner of Police was made responsible for arrangements connected with the return of emigrants from South Africa. In Bengal, the duty was entrusted to the Protector of Emigrants at Calcutta. In the United Provinces, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies was selected for this purpose ; in Bihar and Orissa the Director of Industries. In Madras which is the port of entry for and home of the majority of emigrants returning from the Union, we took steps to appoint a special officer who has no other work than to look after the returning emigrants. I enclose a statement showing the number of Indians who have returned under the Cape Town Agreement and their provinces of destination. Column 4, which shows the repatriates bound for Madras, includes all those who returned to places in the Madras Presidency. Column 5, which gives the number of repatriates bound for Calcutta, cover repatriates whose homes are in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa or the United Provinces. You will observe that there is no Column for Bombay. This is due to the fact that the Bombay element in the population of South Africa consist mainly of traders, hardly any of whom takes advantage of the assisted emigration scheme.

3. Now as to the action taken by us to safeguard the monies which returning emigrants bring back with them. The Bengal report is that the one anxiety of the returning emigrants is to realise all their savings and bonus as soon as they land and make for their homes. In the circumstances it has not been found necessary to make arrangements for these people to bank their savings. It would, you will recognise, be unfortunate if any impression were given that we wished to compell any returned emigrant to deposit his money with a Government agency to a Bank. The Protector of Emigrants, however, has so far as we know, done everything possible to prevent these fellows' losing any money to the human sharks who are always found in the bigger towns ready to prey upon the unsophisticated, and we have not received a single complaint of any returned emigrant passing through Calcutta having been molested with regard to his money. In Madras which claims a large majority of returned emigrants, arrangements have to be made at the requests of emigrants for banking their monies. According to the report

submitted to us by the Special Officer during the half year ending 31st December 1928, this officer received Rs. 342,861 in cash from assisted emigrants and assisted them to deposit Rs. 186,139 in the bank. During the same period he paid out Rs. 341,755 in cash and authorised withdrawal by those who deposited money with the banks of a sum of Rs. 147,484.

4. As regard finding work, the position during the first six months or more of the working of the agreement was that the returning emigrants did not communicate to the Commissioner of Asiatic Affairs in South Africa a statement of their requirements. We were informed that this was due to the mistaken impression that, if they expressed any desire for work on returning to India, they would be compelled to work. We soon took steps through our Agent to have this mis-understanding dispelled. In spite of that, as you would note from the statement which is enclosed, out of 3259 people who had returned to India by the end of 1928, only 256 had expressed any wish to be found work. The Protector of Emigrants, Calcutta, reports that he finds it impossible to get any replies from the people who on reaching Calcutta expressed a desire to be found work by him. The number affected, however, as you will observe, was only 22. In Madras, the Special Officer has been approached with requests for work and has endeavoured, so far as possible, to find for applicants work suited to their capacity and aptitude. In his report for the quarter ending 31st December 1928, it is stated that 35 people applied for work and were recommended to suitable authorities or individuals. Mr. Sastri, who was recently in Simla, told me that during his stay in Madras he paid a visit to the office of the Special Officer and was satisfied by his discussion with him and by inquiries which he privately made that what the Government of India undertook under the agreement was being done for these returned emigrants.

5. I hope that, from the account which I have given you, you will see that no time was lost by us after the conclusion of the Agreement in setting up the necessary machinery at different provincial centres to deal with returned emigrants from South Africa and that where any call has been made upon this machinery it has worked satisfactorily. I made a special point of inquiring from Mr. Sastri whether, during his term of office as Agent in South Africa, he had received complaints from Indians who had returned to India under the assisted emigration scheme about their lot in this country or whether any complaints had been made to him in South Africa by the friends or relations of persons who had come back. He said to me that during his term the only complaint he heard of was from some one in Port Elizabeth who alleged that the Government of India neglected these repatriates, but that on inquiry he had found that none of these charges could be substantiated. Whether, therefore, we draw our deductions from authoritative information which comes from South Africa or from similar information which is available in India, I find the allegation that the Government of India are not doing what they undertook to do towards emigrants returning from South Africa has no real foundation. If either your Association or the South African Indian Congress would only oblige me with specific instances in which neglect is alleged and which can be investigated, you may rely upon me and the Department to do everything possible to

remedy defects in our organisation which such investigation may bring to light.

6. Thanking you for your courtesy in writing to me and for giving me an opportunity of explaining to you the position as we know it."

## Appendix No. VIII

### REPATRIATES AND GOVERNMENT'S OFFER.

(Statement prepared by the Special Officer of Madras)

Instances where the repatriates declined the offers, which were procured with much difficulty.

*Borra Bulliah*: Offered a job in Perambur Railway Extension—declined.

*Govinda Reddy*. Offered a fireman's job in the Madras Corporation on Rs. 15 per mensem—declined.

*Maduramuthu and Chinniah*. Offered waiters' jobs in Hotel Bosotto, Madras—declined.

*Kuppuswamy*. Offered a job in laundry attached to Messers. Spencer's Hotel—declined.

*Subroyalu Naidu*. Was appointed an attender in the Central Record Office—declined.

*Chinnapain and Nanjan*. Were offered jobs as permanent coolies with quarters in the house of Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar—declined.

*Munuswamy*. Worked in Mr. Rangachariar's Estates for some time and then went away.

*Narayana Nair*. Appointed as a driver on a road roller, in the P. W. D. Department, Calicut, but left the job, without any reason.

*Chellan*. Was appointed peon in Survey Office, Madras, but left the job after three months.

*Munuswamy*. Appointed cook at the Railway Refreshment Room at Podanur on Rs. 30. Left the job after a month. Got appointed as a cook under Polliono's Hotel—left the job.

*Arunachalan*. Does not want any job, carrying a pay of less than Rs. 50.

*Pakkiti*. Offered a peon's job in the Labour Commissioner's Office—declined.

*Krisfnaswamy*. Selected for a Police constable's place—declined.

*Ramaswamy Padiachy*. Selected for a Police constable's place in Madras City Police declined.

*Jogi Naidu*. Offered a cooly's job, declined to work as he wants to be a mistri.

*Sriranga Gounden.* Offered a job in the Nellikuppam factory declined.

*G. Ramanna and G. Latchmanna.* Were offered jobs in the road works by District Board Engineer, Nellore, but declined to accept as they were prepared only to boss coolies.

*Venkatigadu.* Wanted a fireman's job, but had no testimonials showing his past experience. He was offered a job in the steam road roller with a promise of promotion as fireman after two months—declined the offer.

*Venkatswamy, Rajamanikam, and Myladoo.* Went to Churakulam Tea Estate and came away taking with them other repatriates who were working there. They are all without any jobs now.

*Papiabh.* Was not prepared to accept a job on Rs. 15 per mensem.

*Parasuraman.* Was appointed a peon in the Taluk Office at Cocanada, but he declined the offer as he heard from interested persons that the work was heavy.

*Subrayalu Naidu.* Got a peon's place in the office of the District Educational Officer, Chinglepet. Took an advance of Rs. 2 and left the job after three days without repaying the advance. Got him appointed as a peon in the Labour Commissioner's office. There also he took an advance and went away without repaying the advance.

*Gabriel.* Started his career with handing me a forged letter recommending him for a Police constable's place. Subsequently sent forged letters to his father-in-law telling him that he died immediately after his arrival. He has improved considerably after the frank talk that I had and is now working well.

*Kanni.* Produced no certificates. Knows only work in a bakery. Promised help nevertheless, but he did not turn up afterwards.

*Munuswamy.* Wanted a job in the Railways. During the attempts to secure a job in the South Indian Railway, he changed his mind and emigrated to the Federated Malaya States.

*Sreenivasalu.* Was a pointsman in the Railways. Wanted a job in the South Indian Railway. Got him appointed as a pointsman, but declined the job as the pay was not sufficient.

*Devachyal.* Got appointed as peon in the Secretariat. There was a short break in the service, and so when he was reappointed he declined the offer and went to the Federated Malaya States.

*Govindarajalu.* An old man of 60 unfit for any work.

*Kochit Raman.* The D. P. W. offered to give him a job. He had to wait for some time in the office before he got orders, and so became angry and came away.

*Viapuri.* Was appointed in the Government workshops, but disappeared when the order was received.

*Perugadu.* He required work in a sugar factory, Was recommended to the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Vizagapatam. He was offered a job at Anakapalle, but refused to go there and join duty.

*Narasa Reddy.* Required a job in the city. Was recommended to the Mysore Oil Mills in Madras. Declined the offer—since left for Penang.

*Kuppuswamy.* He is an intelligent young man. Was recommended to the Public Works and Labour Secretariat. He was appointed a peon: but he did not join duty. Then he was recommended to the Cosmopolitan Club, Madras. Worked there for three days and stayed away without informing the authorities of the Club. He is now a loafer,

(i) *P. Munuswamy Mudaly.* (ii) *Pushparatham.* (iii) *Egambaram.* (iv) *Ramapuram.* No I. is the father and the other 3 are his sons. Nos. I, III and IV got appointed in the city with the fairly good start and No. II, Pushparatham, was promised a clerical post in Messers. Parry & Co., Ltd. They all resigned their jobs and went to Delgoa Bay from where they were forced to return to India.

*Ranganatham Pillay.* Produced school certificates that he had studied up to standard V. in Natal. Recommended to the Superintendent P.W.D. Workshops in Madras. Was offered an attender's post on Rs. 15 p. m. to start with. Refused the offer. Would not accept anything less than a clerk's post on Rs. 40 per mensem.

*Subramany.* On arrival proceeded to Vellore taluk with his father. Spent every thing and came to Madras as a destitute. Immediately got appointed in the Labour Commissioner's Office as a peon. Two months later, he resigned the appointment and went away. His whereabouts are not now traceable.

*David Yessadian.* Recommended to Mr. Koman I. C. S. for a cook's place. Would not accept Rs. 25 per mensem to start with and requires very light work.

*Veeriah.* Recommended to P. W. D. Workshops, and to the Principal, Engineering College. In the latter, he was appointed as a peon. Worked there for about a fortnight and stopped away. Recommended to the Public Works and Labour Secretariat. He went to the office but did not care to wait for the orders of appointment. When he was called he was not to be seen.

*Muniammal and Madurai.* Mother and son. Muniammal is the mother of a large family. She deposited Rs. 700 for her and Rs. 200 for her son. Madurai on landing at Madras went to Bangalore. Recommended to Mahalakshmi Woolen and Silk Mills. Both the mother and the son got employed but due to the evil influence of some advisers stayed away from their work, came to Madras and withdrew their entire money in spite of my warning to the contrary. They intended emigrating to Federated Malaya States.

*Kamalanatha Mudaly.* A man with a big family. Came via Bombay and so his name is not in my registers. Had about Rs. 2000 when he came. No body knew of his existence until he had spent the last pie and became a destitute. Sent a forged letter to his friends in South Africa that he died, so that a subscription might be raised there for the benefit of his family. He is a bricklayer by profession. Quite unwilling to work, his excuse being that he cannot stand the climate of India. Wants to be a fruit seller and is going about begging. If he is prepared to work as bricklayer he has no difficulty at all.

*Venkatachalam.* Required work on the day of his arrival itself. Took a ticket to Polur but did not go there. Stayed in Madras. Recommended to the Director of Industries, and Cosmopolitan Club. Worked in the latter for two days and stopped. Withdraw Rs. 100 from his deposit to purchase a cow and do milk business. Did not purchase the cow as promised, but wasted the money. Recommended to Chief Secretariat. Appointed peon but immediately resigned. Again recommended and appointed peon in the Revenue Secretariat. Did not want to join duty. I made him understand the difficulties of securing jobs in this country and persuaded him to accept the post.

*M. Krishnan Nair.* This man proceeded on his arrival to a village in Chinglepet District. He applied for a post. He has good number of certificates as an attendant in Hospitals. I recommended him to Dr. Major Pandalai for employment as a ward attendant in his private hospital. He was offered Rs. 20 to start with, but was prevented by his wife from joining duty. He was about to decline the offer and I sent for his wife and advised her to allow her husband to take up the job. He is now working in the hospital.

*Atchuthan Nair and Krishnagiri.* Father and son. The father is a good cook and as he had experience in that line, I advised him to open a hotel in Madras. The son had a temporary motor driving licence and he was advised to learn motor driving and mechanism, so that he may run a bus in the city. He was working in the Spencer's Garage and the father was running a hotel. But the whole family disappeared from Madras and I recently came to know that they are in Colombo.

*M. F. Naidu.* He required to get himself employed as a medical officer. Had no certificates at all. He would accept nothing less than that. As soon as he landed he would not listen to my advice but went straight up to a big hotel in Madras and spent more than Rs. 100 a week. In two weeks he became a destitute and then left for Penang. A swelled headed man.

*Kuppan.* I had an offer for him from a Tea plantation in South India as an estate labourer but he would not go.

*Arumugam.* He was recommended to the Chief Engineer, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway. He got an offer and was sent to the District Traffic Superintendent with a note. He did not care to wait for the orders and went away. He thus lost the job, and he is a destitute now.

*Nettai Naik.* An agricultural labourer. He was asked to go to a tea plantation in South India, but declined.

*Chinnaswamy.* He said that he was working in South Africa as a mill hand. He had no certificates with him to show his previous experience in any line. So he was asked to go a tea plantation in South India. He declined and did not come afterwards.

*Munaswamy.* He applied for a job. But I found him to be a mental defective and quite unfit for any job.

*Chinnaswamy Pillai.* He was recommended for a forest guard's place in the Western Districts. He declined the offers made to him. He has now returned to South Africa.

*Frank Perumal.* Required employment as a cook but would not accept less than Rs. 30 per mensem, to start with.

*Sangasi and Poylygadu.* Had no references and had no idea of the job they required:

*A. B. Naidu.* I first came to know of his existence through an appeal published in the *Hindu* on his behalf under the signature of Mr. C. F. Andrews. I enquired about the man but I could not trace the whereabouts of the man, till he came to me in the beginning of this year and applied to me for help in finding employment. He told me about his activities in South Africa in politics and about his interviews with leading officials and non-officials in India who are interested in the South African question, than about his qualifications for employment. He required a

minimum pay of Rs. 70 per mensem. I explained to him that it would be futile to expect more than Rs. 25 per mensem, for a man of his qualifications. He closed his conversation with me with a request for some financial help out of my pocket. He came to me twice afterwards but on both the occasions his request was for some money. In July last he came to me in my camp at Vizagapatam and requested a certificate and I granted him one that he is a South African repatriate and recommended him to the Vizagapatam Harbour Engineer for a clerk's post.

*Chintadu Sannayasi.* Recommended to the Director of Agriculture, Vizagapatam. He was offered a post but his whereabouts were not traceable.

In the matter of recommendations for assignment of lands the repatriates are not steady and they do not stand by my proposals. In one case one Munuswamy who settled in Chinglepet District applied for land. It was recommended to the Revenue Department. As the land in question is a wet assessed land, the Tahsildar had to take the orders of Government for its free assignment. The Government granted the request as an exceptional case, but when the orders were received his whereabouts were not traceable. In another case, I recommended to the Revenue Department for selling a piece of valuable land at a concession rate. I had a sum of Rs. 400 belonging to a repatriate deposited in a savings bank for the purpose. I saw him personally in his village and advised him to take the Government land. But owing to other influences he negotiated for a piece of private land in the village and informed the Tahsildar that he did not require any land, though Government land valued at Rs. 600 was offered to him for Rs. 400. In a third case, one Kabiri, who has settled in Tiruvannamalai Taluk of North Arcot District applied for assignment of land. I wrote to the District Collector recommending his application. As the land applied for by him was under the Sivaijama occupation of another, the Collector offered him another piece of land in the same village 8.28 acres in extent. The applicant did not even consider it worth while to give it a trial but straight away refused the offer.

During my tours, I tell every repatriate that Government have ordered that such of them as are in need of Government lands would be granted lands. In spite of my warning that they should not apply for lands the grant of which is objectionable, e.g., lands reserved for communal purposes, lands required for irrigation projects, etc., most of the applications received are for such lands and to be rejected.

## Appendix No. IX.

We reproduce below an extract from annual report of the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa for the year ending 31st December 1929, which deals with assisted emigration :—

The year under review has been marked by a very severe fall in the figures of "assisted emigrants." In paragraph 12 of last year's Report it was stated that there had been a recovery in these figures during the last quarter of 1928. In accordance with this recovery 313 persons availed themselves of the boat sailing to Madras in January 1929. From the date of this sailing, however, up to the end of the year, the numbers continued uniformly low. The total figures of those who availed themselves of this scheme during 1929, including both those who sailed for Madras and Calcutta by the "King Line" and those who went to Bombay on the British India Mail steamers, are as follows :—

|               | Adults. |         | Children<br>(Under 16<br>years) |         | Total. |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|--------|
|               | Males   | Females | Males                           | Females |        |
| Indian born   | 511     | 143     | 1                               | 3       | 658    |
| Colonial born | 84      | 105     | 251                             | 230     | 670    |
| Total         | 595     | 248     | 252                             | 233     | 1,328  |

During the year a total of 172 persons returned to India on the British India Mail steamers sailing for Bombay. The remaining persons went with the main stream of repatriates *via* Madras, a stream which fluctuated as shown below, the 1928 figures being given also for purposes of comparison :—

|             | 1928.     |       | 1929.     |       |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1st quarter | (3 ships) | 956   | (2 ships) | 585   |
| 2nd quarter | (3 ships) | 777   | (2 ships) | 149   |
| 3rd quarter | (2 ships) | 480   | (2 ships) | 176   |
| 4th quarter | (3 ships) | 1,046 | (1 ship)  | 246   |
| Total       |           | 3,259 | Total     | 1,156 |

This decrease in the number of persons availing themselves of the Assisted Emigration Scheme has caused the gravest anxiety both to the Agent and to the Union Government. For, there can be no doubt that Europeans in South Africa judge the success or failure of the Cape Town Agreement by the working of this scheme. In August, 1929, Dr. Malan, the Minister of the Interior, was questioned in the Assembly

by some of the Natal members as to the Assisted Emigration figures. He admitted the fall in the number of emigrants but refused to write off the scheme as a failure. During the sittings of the Select Committee on Asiatics in the Transvaal too, this question was several times brought up.

The fall in the figures is too great and too prolonged to be accounted for by any of the reasons which have given rise to the periodical fluctuation that has been noticed in previous years, reasons such as the Monsoon or the state of employment in the Natal sugar cane estates. The real reason for the fall in the figures is difficult to discover. Reference was made in paragraph 19 of last year's report to various rumours that had been started in regard to the effect of Mr. Sastri's departure from South Africa on the granting of the bonus. There is no doubt that these rumours and a certain amount of propaganda that has been carried on against the scheme have both had no small effect, for after the first boat of the year sailed in January, the figure of passengers has remained consistently low. The Agent lost no time in condemning the propaganda mentioned above and in giving a public denial to the rumours.

When in August the Minister was questioned on the scheme in the Assembly, he was able to point out the fact that only four assisted emigrants have returned to South Africa. By the end of the year, the number, however, had increased and totalled 53, composed as follows :— eighteen men, nine women and twenty-six children, some of these were interviewed and declared that the special officer at Madras had made every effort to help them in finding suitable employment.

## Appendix No. X

### THE SUTLEJ SCANDAL

By PANDIT BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

Over-crowding has been a regular feature of the steamers that carry Indians labourers to and from the Colonies and we usually read in the Indian and colonial papers about the sufferings of the deck passengers. Mahatma Gandhi has written quite strongly more than once on this subject but in spite of all our agitation things remain almost as bad as before. The death of as many as 44 Indians on board the *Sutlej* reminds us again that there is something very wrong with the companies that are responsible for this state of affairs and the Government of India too cannot escape its responsibility. Take the case of the *Sutlej* that is owned by the James Nours, Ltd. of Nourse Line.

About two years ago I interviewed the Hon. Badri Maharaj and Mr. Gopendra Narayan Pathik who arrived from Fiji on board the *Sutlej* and they bitterly complained against over-crowding on board the steamer. They told me that the deck passengers had a miserable time and suffered many inconveniences during their voyage on board this steamer. This interview was published by the Free Press of India and I was told by the Hon. Badri Maharaj himself that one of the highest officials in the Government of India asked him specially about the question. Whether the Government of India took any steps to prevent over-crowding on the steamer in future, we do not know.

More than a year ago the news of the deaths of about 24 Indians on board the same steamer *Sutlej*, was published in the Indian papers. As soon as I read it I at once wrote to the Government of India about it and received from them the reply that they were considering the question of making an inquiry into this tragedy, I wrote the following note in the *Modern Review* :—

"Newspapers have published to-day the following news from Durban :—  
 "Durban 25-9-28—Twenty-four Indians died on board repatriation ship *Sutlej* which called here on a voyage from George Town. The *Sutlej* has seven hundred and seventy-five Indians on board and these were employed at George Town as indentured labour on sugar plantations—*Reuter*."  
 It is a pathetic news, the full significance of which has not been understood by our papers. There is a barbaric rule—a relic of the old indenture days according to which so much space is allowed to the labourers on board the 'collie' ships and though the indenture system has been abolished this rule still continues to hold good and consequently there is very much over-crowding on these steamers. Last time the S. S. *Sutlej* brought to Calcutta more than 900 passengers from Fiji—as packed like animals. I interviewed Hon. Mr. Badri Maharaj and Mr. Gopendra Narayan, who returned by that steamer about this question and they bitterly complained against over-crowding on board the *Sutlej*. Now comes the news that twenty-four Indians returning from British Guiana have died on board the same steamer. Who is responsible for these deaths? The Government of India or the James Nourse, Ltd. of Nourse Line? Imagine the case of those poor people, who were returning to their motherland after a long period but who died in the way on board the steamer! The cable has been sent from Durban and the *Sutlej* has still

to make a voyage of 20 days more. We are, therefore, afraid that some more deaths may take place before she reaches her destination. It is the duty of the Government of India to enquire into this case immediately after the arrival of the steamer. The inhuman regulations which allow this over-crowding ought to be removed from the statute book as early as possible."

Mahatma Gandhi also wrote a leading article in *Young India* on this subject.

Whether the Government of India got an enquiry made into this tragedy and what was the result of it, we do not know. I may add here that by the time the *Sutlej* arrived at Bombay some more deaths in addition to the 24 deaths already cabled from Durban, had occurred on the *Sutlej*.

This tragedy has again been repeated on a bigger scale for as many as 44 deaths occurred on board the same steamer again. I came to know of it on January 21, when the *Sutlej* arrived at Calcutta. On the 22nd I went to interview the passengers on the steamer along with Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi. We were really shocked to hear the statement of the passengers who narrated their troubles to us most pathetically, and we could easily imagine the great sufferings of the poor passengers. We decided to issue our statement to the Press but before that we thought it advisable to inform the Government of India about it and to interview the Protector of Emigrants also. Accordingly we interviewed him on board the steamer the next day. I will not say anything about the objectionable attitude adopted by the Protector of Emigrants except that he had already made up his mind on the question. We sent the following telegram to the Government of India on this subject on January, 22 :

To Sir Habibullah, Secretariat, New Delhi.

Forty-four emigrants died on *Sutlej* Returned West Indies. Bad diet Worse accommodation Immediate inquiry essential—Benarsidas. Bhawani Dayal.

On January, 23, we received the following reply from the Government of India :

Many thanks for your telegram of yesterday regarding deaths of returning emigrants on *Sutlej*. Have telegraphed to Local Government for report and am considering your suggestion regarding inquiry. Habibullah.

Taking into consideration the fact that it was a very serious question and that it was the second tragedy of its kind on the same steamer the Government of India ought to have started the enquiry immediately. But it took them full eight days to come to this conclusion! Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi received the following letter from the Protector of Emigrants at 8 P. M. on January, 30 :

D. Calcutta the 30th Jany. 30.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that as desired by the Government of India the Government of Bengal have deputed the Magistrate of the 24-Parganas to hold an enquiry conjointly with you and me regarding the deaths of 44 Indians repatriates returning to India from the West Indies by the S. S. *Sutlej*.

2. The result of the enquiry is to be submitted to Government as soon as possible for communication to the Government of India.

3. The enquiry will be held at this office on Monday, the 3rd February, 1930, the time at which it will take place will be communicated to you later as soon as it is fixed.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
(Sd.) A. Denham White, Lt. Col., I. M. S.,  
Protector of Immigrants.

By this time most of the returned emigrants who were detained to appear before the enquiry commission departed for their homes. It is to be noted that the Government of India did not consider it essential even to delay the departure of the *Sutlej* that was going to Fiji Islands again with 900 passengers! Under the circumstances Swami Bhawani Dayal refused to be a member of this committee as he thought that no useful purpose could be served by making this enquiry in this haphazard way.

What the Government of India has been doing on this subject since then we do not know. The *Sutlej* has been responsible for more than 70 deaths of poor Indians during its two trips from the West Indies. What a hue and cry would have been raised if these 70 persons were Englishmen. But since they were Indians nobody cares about it. What the Government of India is going to do to prevent the repetition of such tragedies is not known to us. They may do anything or not but the poor 70 Indians will not return to tell their sad tales of misery and deaths on board the *Sutlej*.

Leader.  
8-3-30

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Honorary Secretary, the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, Bombay, has issued the following Press Note for general information :**

It will be remembered that in the month of September 1928, *Reuter* reported the death of 37 repatriated Indians on board the s. s. "*Sutlej*" returning to India from British Guiana. The Hony. Secretary, at once telegraphed to the Government of India to supply him with full information regarding the circumstances under which that unfortunate tragedy occurred; and also suggested that the Government of India should institute a public enquiry on the arrival of the boat in Calcutta. It transpires now that an official enquiry was held by the Government of Bengal at the request of the Government of India. The investigations were conducted by Major W. O. Walker, I.M.S., Protector of Emigrants, Calcutta, and Mr. E. N. Blandy, I.C.S., Collector of the 24-Parganas. The report of this official enquiry says that there were 745 passengers on the s.s. *Sutlej* out of which 37 died. Of these deaths, thirty, were due to respiratory diseases and seven to other causes, such as heart diseases, nephritis, enteritis, serility, and malaria. The report further observes that the deaths were practically confined to old people, who were not strong, and who, but for their great anxiety to return to their homeland, would probably have been advised not to undertake so long a voyage. It also shows that the incident was no exception to the previous years; as since 1923, deaths among the repatriated Indians on those boats, have regularly occurred.

Any comment on this most unsatisfactory report appears to be unnecessary. The tragedy of the deaths of these unfortunate labourers on these boats to and fro British Guiana is by no means of recent origin. As early as 1839, Lord Brougham referring to the mortalities among Indian labourers on the boats bound for British Guiana, said "mortality and massacre of the voyage far exceeded the African middle passage itself."

The Hony. Secretary of the Association is in correspondence with the Government of India with a view to urge upon them the immediate necessity of the adoption of means for terminating this most scandalous and antiquated state of affair.

## Appendix No. XI.

The following letter dated 16th Sept. 1921, was sent by Mr. F. E. James, O. B. E., Secretary, Indian Emigrants Friendly Service Committee, Calcutta, to Pandit Benarsi Das Chaturvedi.

My dear Benarsi Das,

I am sending you herewith a list of the various offers which have been received for the returned emigrants. It is necessary to state that in all cases we have done our very best to persuade the emigrants to accept. Moreover, we promised to escort them to their new settlement and to visit them later on to see that they were happy. We also promised that we would receive them back into the depot if they did not settle down in the new locality. A number of people making the offers went down themselves to the depot, placed them personally before the emigrants.

If there is any other thing you want please let me know.

With kindest regards,

Your sincerely,  
F. E. James.

### List of Offers of Help for the Returned Emigrants.

1. The Arya Representative Assembly, Agra. (Offer of general help).
2. S. P. Bhattacharji, P. O. Mertala, Dist. Burdwan. (Offer of land and accommodation for 25 to 50 families)
3. Sisir Kumar Bose, Bairigipuker Farm, Bistupur, Via Behala. (Offer of work at Farm for 3 men, possibly more).
4. A Bengalee gentleman (anonymous). (Land materials for building for 50 or 60 families).

5. J. Haldar, 90-1, Grey Street, Calcutta. (Offer for 10 to 12 emigrants at a Farm).

6. Norendra Nath Mozumdar, 5, Royal Exchange Place, Calcutta. (Offer of land, accommodation, materials, etc., for a large number in district Dinajpur).

7. Offer from Deohall Tea Estate, Assam. (With good conditions. Suggested that deputations be sent to see the conditions for themselves. No one in the depot found willing to go though we were prepared to pay the expenses).

8. Offer from Dakadong Sugar Estate, Assam. (Deputation suggested as in No. 7).

9. Offer from East Bengal Sugar Mills, 55, Ezra Street, Calcutta. (For a large number of emigrants for sugar plantation).

10. Offer from Madan Mohan Jain. Ujjain. (For 200. Railway fare to be paid by him. None of the emigrants in the depot were willing to go but we sent 150 Fiji emigrants from the last *Ganges*. I understand they are happy).

11. Offer from N. N. Chatterjee, Hatisala, Nadia. (For accommodation and food for 50. This offer came from the whole of the village community).

12. Offer from Thakur Prithi Raj Singh, Rais and Zamindar, Budhanlee P. O. Bareilly. U. P. (Land, etc., for 25. Deputation to be sent previously to approve).

13. Offer from Thakur Sadho Singh, B. A., ; Zamindar, Shahpur, P. O. Khandhar, Tashil Jalabad, Shahjahanpur, U. P. (Agricultural land, housing, educational facilities for a large number. Deputation to be sent previously to approve of the locality and conditions).

The distressing part of the whole business is that not only have the Fiji-men refused to consider any of these offers but even the Demerara, Trinidad and Surinam people, who have little or no chance of returning to their colonies, have refused to consider any proposal of settling in India. It is really difficult to know what is to be done with these people and my own patience has been very greatly tried.

F. E. JAMES

## Appendix No. XII

THIRD SESSION. FIRST COUNCIL, L. C. N.

Document No. 9. 1858, (Presented 30th November, 1858)

I am aware from the past correspondence that the Indian Government do not appear very desirous of seeing an emigration of coolies from India to Natal, and that many difficulties do exist to such a scheme, but seeing that the planters here regard this privilege as of importance, I shall be glad if these difficulties could be overcome. A compliance to the extent now asked for the present applicants might, I think, be conceded. It would serve as an experiment, and would test the advisability of a larger emigration.

The Rt. Hon.

H. Labouchere.

J. Scott.

\* \* \* \* \*

HOME DEPARTMENT. (No. 44)

31st March 1858.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COURT OF DIRECTORS OF THE EAST INDIA CO.

By the emigration of Indian labourers in Natal was originally proposed by the Government of the Cape of Good Hope in November 1855, but the adoption of measures to that end was discouraged by us for the following reasons: First, the abundant demand for labour existing in India, especially in the Bombay Presidency to which the attention of the Natal authorities had been particularly given, and the high rate of wages prevailing here, compared with that obtaining in the Colony. Secondly, the greater advantages held out to emigrants by the Mauritius and West India Colonies; thirdly, the difficulties already experienced in meeting the wants of those colonies; and fourthly, the want of precise and satisfactory information as to the rate of wages to be allowed to emigrant in Natal.

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3rd. SESSION, 1st COUNCIL, L. C. N.

Document No. 9, 1858 (Presented 30th Nov., 1858)

(Further correspondence relating to the introduction of coolies)

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

NATAL.

Aug. 6th, 1857.

EXTRACT.

2. Finding on my first assumption of this Government that there was a difference of opinion amongst the public as to the desirableness or the necessity of introducing coolies from India, there being within the colony itself so vast a number of Zulus so well qualified, both by intelligence and physical strength, to discharge every kind of labour, I considered the expediency of bringing this question before the Legislative Council.

3. By their report it will be seen that the Council strongly advise an arrangement being made with the Indian Government by which parties desirous of having coolies may at their own expense be permitted to procure them, subject to the same conditions and regulations under which the introduction of Coolies into the other British Colonies is allowed. The Council is also of the opinion that a large number will be required in this Colony, and at rates and inducements equal, if not superior, to those offered in the Mauritius or West Indies. The Council also states that the parties requiring coolie are fully prepared to give such security for the payment of expenses, the rate of wages, etc., as the Indian Government may require.

*The Rt. Hon. H. Labouchers.*

J. SCOTT

3rd. SESSION. 3rd COUNCIL, L. C. N.  
Document No. 18, 1864.

Correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
on the subject of Coolie Law.  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

NATAL.  
Aug. 11th, 1863.

EXTRACT

Each year as the white population increases in number there is an increasing demand for labour, and this we cannot expect to be met by the Natives; the competition for Native labour already existing has had the effect of raising the monthly wages of the Kaffir from five shillings in 1857 to ten shillings in 1863, which is equal to the monthly wages of the coolie. White labour is very costly, and altogether beyond the means of the colonists: cheap labour is, in fact, a necessity. The introduction of a limited number of coolies each year will supply this; it will render the colonists less dependent that they now are on the Natives, and by lessening the competition will keep down the wages of the Kaffir.

Each coolie is bound to five years of industrial service, but before he can claim a free residence of ten years in the Colony. These Indian coolies are not a saving people, and few of them will, I believe, be in a position to pay their own return passages, and there is every reason to believe that most of them will become permanent residents, in this respect: therefore, the colonists generally will reap great advantages from the labour these coolies will supply when their five years of contract service has expired.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

J. SCOTT.

3rd. Session—6th Council L. C. M.  
General conditions of Coolies in Natal. (page 13)

In the neighbourhood of Durban there are many small locations of coolies, who cultivate land and carry on a thriving trade in the sale of vegetables and tobacco, grown by themselves. Some are employed as boatmen, and hold shares in boats plying between the wharf and harbour. A considerable number are thriving well as fishermen, and enjoy almost a monopoly of the supply of fish.

The settlement of seven coolies near the Waterloo estate, where they have held 120 acres of land at £1 annual rent per acre has

already been noticed, and coolies have retired from estates and settled in land adjacent thereto, to grow sugar there, and to avail themselves of the mill on the estate they vacated.

We were frequently told that the acquisition of land in the neighbourhood of a market was a great object of ambition, and there is reason to suppose that if small grants of eight or ten acres could be made in the neighbourhood of Durban, in lieu of a return passage, they would be accepted in numerous instances, and would be far cheaper to the colony, while the advantage of retaining in the country a race of men of industrial habits and skill can scarcely be doubted.

## Appendix No. XIII

### RESOLUTIONS.

(1) That this meeting of Indians assembled at Rooikopjes places on records its absolute disapproval and dissatisfaction of the speech of the Viceroy of India, Lord Chelmsford delivered before the Imperial Legislative Assembly of India, at Simla on the 20th August, 1920, regarding the position of Indians in South Africa under the Voluntary Repatriation Scheme, and further disapproves of the action of the Indian Government's representative Sir Benjamin Robertson at the Asiatic Commission in suggesting or approving of the said scheme, and is therefore of the emphatic opinion that his action tends to harm our position and cause, consequently our confidence and faith in him is lost.

(2) That this meeting is of the unanimous opinion that in view of the existence of the Indian Relief Act of 1914, there is no necessity for the creation and propagation of the Voluntary Repatriation scheme under the Interim Report of the Asiatic Commission, and for the sake of advancement, and development of the Natal Industries, respectfully suggests that the Union Government consider the advisability to immediately withdraw that scheme.

(3) That this meeting unanimously appeals to all concerned and those particularly have the interest for the progress and development of the Natal industries to co-operate and assist in matters pertaining to the Voluntary Repatriation Scheme and to generally educate and induce the illiterate and labouring class to refrain from leaving the Province under that scheme.

(4) That this meeting unanimously deposes Pandit Bhawani Dayal to convey the above resolutions to the proper quarters and to perform all matters necessary in connection therewith.

Following is a part of the speech delivered by Pandit Bhawani Dayal in a public meeting in connection with the so-called Voluntary repatriation :-

"When I had occasion to travel up the country I had met several of the illiterate and uneducated class of my country-men that gave me to understand that the impression given them was that they were to be compulsarily repatriated from this country and under these circumstances many of the uneducated Indians had accepted the scheme and had left the Natal. This rumour I however was not in position to definitely say from where it originated, nevertheless it had been instrumental in serving its purpose. In view of these rumours I felt it my duty to write to the Repatriation Commissioner for permission to be allowed to inquire of those Indians that were leaving the country as to whether they had been given the correct interpretation of the scheme. But sorry to state that not even an acknowledgment had been received by the Repatriation Commissioner."—*Natal Advertiser*.

\* \* \* \*

(*The Pretoria News*)

"According to the *Natal Advertiser* the Natal Indians have made a reply to the "*Pretoria News*" which recently passed some not very unsympathetic comments on a protest of theirs against voluntary repatriation. They replied at a reception to Pandit Bhawani Dayal on his return from the Motherland. The speeches add nothing new to the position, but one phrase in Pandit Dayal's address certainly does call for comment. It would seem that he wrote the Repatriation Commissioner asking to be allowed to inquire of those Indians who had voluntarily asked for repatriation to their Motherland if they had been given the correct interpretation of the scheme, and that not even an acknowledgment of the letter had been received. Apparently Mr. Dayal is an acknowledged leader of Indians, and though his letter contained a gratuitously offensive insinuation, it should most certainly have been acknowledged; *there was no necessity to accede to his request*. Our standards of courtesy, not Mr. Dayal's, demanded at least that. We make this comment because of the suspicion that our Government's observances of the niceties of life are apt to be lax. It has been put to us, for instance, that on the occasion of a consular reception on the national day of the country concerned, the only nation that omitted to pay its respects was the South African nation; Holland; Italy—in fact the whole of the civilised nations except South Africa responded to the call which international feeling and common courtesy made upon them. This Indian complaint is on a par with it. These things should not be if we would not be mistaken for boors."

\* \* \* \*

*Durban Retailers Council.*

At the general monthly meeting of the *Durban Retailers Council* Mr. H. T. Peach in his presidential speech referring to the Indian question said that the "*Natal Advertiser*" reported regarding a Indian meeting recently held in Rooikopjes. The report of that meeting was no doubt read by all thoughtful people with a great deal of interest, and it must have been very enlightening to some who did not know, not having

seen or heard how much the Indian emigrant had contributed to the development of Natal. It appeared from the discussion which took place that it was not advisable, in the interests of many of these people, to leave these shores, and it was suggested that an appeal should be made to the authorities for the withdrawal of the repatriation scheme. Two prime reasons were given. One that the returning immigrants, on their arrival in India, were considered as outcasts by their relations, and were not permitted in their homes, which resulted in many of the poor people running about the streets to do anything to earn a livelihood. Some women had married in Natal men not of their caste, and found when they got to India they were deserted by the men whom they trusted in Natal, and were left in a state of destitution. He submitted that to give the people an opportunity to place themselves in this position was not creditable to the people who invited them here, and who had profited by their labours. Another reason was that all the help they could give by their labour was badly needed in this country, and industries which were developed and those in course of development, needed them.

"The parasites who fattened on these people, and who neither toiled nor spun in contributing to the industrial output were the folks that needed repatriation. "Industrialist" in the "*Advertiser*," when speaking of a meeting convened by the District Committee of the Associated Carpenters and Joiners said: "Undoubtedly the Indian question is a grave one for Natal, and the menace is every day becoming more and more pronounced." I could not help feeling when I listened to all the Trade Union eloquence that our system of society must be very queer one, when the presence in our midst of a number of industrious wealth-producers, whose ability is rapidly increasing and whose wants are easily satisfied, should be a menace instead of a blessing."

"Natal Advertiser"

## RE-ENTRY INTO UNION

6. An assisted emigrant wishing to return to the Union will be allowed to do so within three years from the date of departure from South Africa. As a condition precedent to re-entry an emigrant shall refund in full to some recognised authority in India the bonus and cost of passage, including railway fares, received on his own behalf, and, if he has a family, on behalf of his family. A prorata reduction will however be made (a) in respect of a member of the family who dies in the interim or of a daughter who marries in India and does not return, and (b) in other cases of unforeseen hardship at the discretion of the Minister.

7. After the expiry of three years Union domicile will be lost. In agreement with the proposed revision of the law relating to it, which will be of general application, the period of three years will run from the date of departure from a port in the Union and expire on the last day of the third year. But to prevent the abuse of the bonus and free passage by persons who wish to pay temporary visits to India or elsewhere, no person availing himself of the benefits of the scheme will be allowed to come back to the Union within less than one year from the date of his departure.

For the purpose of re-entry within the time limit of three years, the unity of the family group shall be recognised, though in cases of unforeseen hardship the Minister of the Interior may allow one or more members of the family to stay behind.

A son who goes with the family as a minor, attains a majority outside the Union, marries there and has an issue which will be allowed to return to South Africa, but only if he comes with the rest of his father's family. In such cases he will be allowed to bring his wife and child or children with him but a daughter who marries outside the Union will acquire the domicile of her husband and will not be admitted into the Union unless her husband is himself domiciled in the Union.

## Act No. 37, 1927

## AMENDMENT OF SECTION SIX OF ACT No. 22 OF 1914

11. Section six of the Indians Relief Act, 1914, is hereby deleted and the following substituted therefore :—

## FREE PASSAGES TO INDIANS

6. (1) The Minister may in his discretion cause to be provided, out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, financial assistance and a free passage from any place in the Union to any place outside the Union for any adult Indian (other than an Indian who is or may become entitled under Law No. 25 of 1891, Natal or any amendment

## Appendix No XIV

The following is a part of the conclusions reached by the Round Table Conference on the Indian question in South Africa relating the

## SCHEME OF ASSISTED EMIGRATION

1. Any Indian of 16 years or over may avail himself of the scheme. In the case of a family the decision of the father will bind the wife and the minor children under 16 years.

2. Each person of 16 years or over will receive a bonus of £20, and each child under that age the sum of £10. A descrepit about, who is unable to earn his living by reason of physical disability, may at the discretion of the Union authorities receive a pension in lieu of or in addition to a bonus. The pension will be paid through some convenient official agency in India out of a fund provided by the Union Government, to such amount as they may determine. It is expected that the amount will not exceed £500 per annum in all. In every case the bonus will be payable in India on arrival at the destination or afterwards through some banking institution of repute.

## FREE PASSAGES

3. A free passages, including railway fares to port of embarkation in South Africa, and from the port of landing in India to the destination inland, will also be provided.

4. Emigrants will travel to India *Via* Bombay as well as *Via* Madras. Emigrants landing at Bombay will be sent direct from their ship to their destination at the expense of the Union Government. The survey and certification of ships shall be strictly supervised and the conditions on the voyage, especially in respect of sanitary arrangements, feeding, and medical attendance improved.

5. Before a batch of emigrants leave the Union information will be sent to some designated authority in India at least one month in advance, giving :—

- (a) A list of intending emigrants and their families ;
- (b) Their occupation in South Africa, and
- (c) The amount of cash and other resources which each possesses.

On their arrival in India emigrants will be :—

- (a) Advised and so far as possible protected against squandering their cash or losing it to adventures, and
- (b) Helped as far as possible to settle in the occupations for which they are best suited by there aptitude or their resources.

An emigrant wishing to participate in emigration schemes authorised by the Government of India will be given the same facilities in India as Indian nationals.

thereof, to a free passage to India) in respect of himself and his family (if any): Provided that such Indian makes a written request on the form prescribed by regulation for such financial assistance and free passage and agrees in writing to the following conditions:—

(a) Such Indian shall, if married, be accompanied by his family (if any) upon departure from the Union;

(b) Such Indian shall furnish to an Officer designated by the Minister such means of identification as may be prescribed by regulation of himself and each member of his family;

(c) Such Indian and his family (if any) shall not re-enter the Union within one year from date of departure from the Union, but may re-enter the Province of the Union in which he is domiciled after the expiry of one year from the date of departure, but not later than the date of expiry of three years from date of departure from the Union:—  
Provided that—

(i) all moneys paid in terms of this section to or on behalf of such Indian in respect of himself and his family (if any) are repaid in full to an agent of the Union Government duly appointed there to, before departure from the country to which such Indian emigrated, and proof of such payment in such form as may be prescribed is produced on arrival at a Union port:

(ii) such Indian and his family (if any) excluding any member thereof who may have died in the interim and excluding any daughter who, since the date of departure from the Union, has married a person not entitled to enter or to remain in the Union, shall re-enter the Union simultaneously. Proof of any such death or marriage to the satisfaction of the Minister must be produced. In cases of unforeseen hardship the Minister may in his discretion exempt the Indian or any member of the family from re-entering the Union. In such cases, or in the event of the Indian or a member of the family, the repayment in respect of the persons concerned as provided in sub-paragraph (i) of this paragraph may be remitted;

(d) unless such Indian accompanied by his family (if any) or in the event of the death of such Indian, his family re-enters the Union as prescribed in paragraph (c) of this sub-section, he and all the members of his family (if any) shall be deemed to have voluntarily and finally abandoned all rights possessed by him or them to enter or reside in any part of the Union, together with all rights incidental to his or their domicile there in, and the fact that re-entry did not take place within the time specified in paragraph (c) of this sub-section shall be conclusive evidence of such abandonment.

(2) For the purposes of this section—

“adult Indian” shall mean an Indian of either sex of sixteen years of age or over and an Indian woman who is or has been married;

“family” shall include the wife of an emigrant Indian and all children of any emigrant Indian who were not adult Indians at the date of departure from the Union;

“date of departure from the Union” shall mean the date of departure from a port;

“port” shall have the same meaning as defined in section thirty of the Immigrants Regulation Act, 1913 (Act No. 22 of 1913).