

1924

229

KENYA

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C.O.  
32995

12 JUL 24

DATE

11th July 1924.

INDIANS OVERSEAS ASSN.

CIRCULATION :-

Dr.

Mr.

Mr.

at U.S. of S.

*S. A. B. S.*

18/7/24

at U.S. of S.

at U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

17

24/7/24

Previous Paper

9.6. 32564

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION IN NAIROBI.

Fwd ebsons based on Mr Shams-ud-deen's narrative of what transpired at Conference. Considers events clearly indicate that Local Administration is amenable to pressure from White Settlers.

MINUTES

The issue ultimately became one of whether the Governor's second nominee should be an official or the retiring mayor of Nairobi. It is a tiny point and, as we have already told the Governor, the views of the Europeans cannot be allowed to overrule both Indian sentiment and the settlement originally agreed upon unanimously in the Conference. We need not bother much about the statement at the end of this letter, that the Governor is too much influenced by European opinion.

The main point is the statement that the change in the European view took place as a result of the leakage within a few days after their signature, of the contents of the confidential statements put in by the Indian and the European sides of the Conference, followed by a period of intense propaganda by the European Committee.

The actual facts appear from the papers in

Subsequent Paper

*200*  
*55604*

And 25 July 24

*200*  
*1-2604*

On this point I think that there is at all events no need to suppose that the European Unofficial members of the Conference themselves were pushed by pressure from outside and that the leakage (within a few days) probably did not precede Mr. Schwartz's representations to the chairman.

There is no need whatever to suppose that there is any deliberate misrepresentation in the letter from the Indians Overseas Association. Mr. Shams-ud-deen was not a member of the Conference and therefore speaks at an interval of three months, on second-hand information. The Association are dependant on his memory and without any intentional corruption of what he has told them, are not likely to have made the least of any point unfavourable to the Europeans in this matter.

We should be kept busy if we undertook to traverse all the accusations made against various sections in Kenya and I do not think that we should take up this point.

I acknowledge receipt merely.

W.C.S. 177/4

H.J.R.  
(18721) 24

177

Received on 20/7  
177/4

in Governor/28654. Some of the enclosures are undated but the most important point is settled by the dates of meetings given in Annexure I.

The Indian members' statement advocating "two officials" and containing the proviso as to their adherence to the principle of the common ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> dated the 7th April. The European statement (signed by officials and unofficials) accepting with hesitation the Indian statement, was dated the 8th of April. On the 9th, the last meeting of the conference was held and the participants (in the absence of Mr. Schwartz) maintained their attitude of the previous day. Later in the <sup>same</sup> day Mr. Schwartz ~~was~~ told the chairman that the European Unofficials wished for more time for consideration. Then the European pressure began, but at what stage the ~~terms of the~~ actual European rider, recommending one official and one unofficial was put in, is not clear. It is in Annexure 5 and that is not dated.

It is quite possible that the terms of this rider followed on the European propaganda, but the important point is that within the inside of two days the doubts of the European Unofficial side of the Conference had taken shape and had been expressed by Mr. Schwartz's desire for more time.

On

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WCS  
17/7/4  
H-JR  
(187/7) 24  
W 18/7

Accepted on 29/7  
187/7

Chairman of Executive Committee:  
MR. THE AGA KHAN.

Deputy Chairman:  
SIR M. M. BHOWNAGGREE,  
K.C.I.E.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:  
MR. S. L. BOLAK

# Indians Overseas Association,

554 C. O.  
32995  
12 JUL 24

47-48, Danes Inn House,  
265, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

11th July 1924.

The Under Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office,  
S.W.1.

Sir,

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5674  
With further reference to your letter <sup>507</sup>22899/1924 of the 27th May and my reply thereto of the 28th idem regarding municipal representation in Nairobi, my Committee has now had the advantage of hearing personally from Mr. Shams-ud-deen, a member of the Executive Committee of the Eastern Africa Indian National Congress and its acting General Secretary, who is now in London, the narrative of what actually occurred on the occasion referred to.

Mr. Shams-ud-deen informs my Committee that both the non-official parties at the Conference that sat to work out an arrangement agreed, subject to the proviso with regard to the Indian claim to a common franchise, that the Nairobi Corporation should consist of five elected Europeans, five elected Indians, including one Moan, and two officials. The official members of the Commission also agreed to this and the settlement arrived at was

thus unanimous. The European non-official group and the Indians each sent a separate memorandum in writing to the Governor signifying their agreement. Although the contents of these two documents were strictly confidential they became known within a few days to the Europeans of Nairobi, with the result that the latter set up an energetic agitation, bringing powerful political and social pressure to bear upon the European officials and non-official members of the Commission alike.

Deputations, including a women's deputation, were organised also by the Europeans to the Governor, who was informed that the agreement reached amounted to giving equal rights to Indians, and that no such proposal would be countenanced by the European population. As a result of the pressure brought to bear upon them, the non-official Europeans, who had previously agreed to the above mentioned memorandum, indicated their desire to amend the agreement by suggesting that in place of one of the two officials to be appointed by the Governor, a European non-official should be nominated by him. The Governor thereupon called the Indian members of the Conference to Government House, and there pressed them to accept the suggested alteration. This they refused to do. The Colonial Secretary thereupon similarly sought to persuade them, with the like result.

The report of the Conference up to this stage had not been drawn up. The Governor was anxious to have the new European proposal embodied in the Report as the unanimous view of the Commission. To this the Indians refused to agree with the result that the European non-officials added a rider embodying their amended suggestion

and signing it. The Indian members were, of course, unable to prevent the European non-officials from adding anything they liked as an expression of their views, to which, however, they (the Indians) were not a party. It is to be observed that the Indian proviso as to the Indian claim to the common franchise was embodied at the time of the first and original agreement and before the European members, under pressure, changed their view.

The following points appear from the foregoing:-

- (1) That there was at first unanimity among all the members of the Commission.
- (2) That unsuccessful attempts were made to get the consent of the Indians to alter the terms of the agreement.
- (3) Had the Indian members agreed to the altered terms, there would have been no necessity for a separate rider by the Europeans for the Report would have contained the full terms unanimously agreed and signed by all the members of the Conference.

Mr. Shams-ud-deen's narrative of what transpired during these negotiations amply confirms the preliminary views expressed by my Committee on this subject in its letter of the 28th May. In the circumstances my Committee feels that a regrettable attempt had been made by the Governor of Kenya to place an interpretation to the detriment of the Indian community upon the events connected with the Conference which they cannot properly bear, and which indicates once more very clearly how amenable is the Local Administration to the unfair and improper pressure of the white settlers and how consistently it subordinates Indian to European interests.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Yours obediently,

  
Hon. Secretary

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Hon. Secretary



Ind. 32495/24 Kenya

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read &

DRAFT.

25 July 1924

Hon. Secretary, Sir,  
Indian Overseas Assoc.

Thank you adv. the recd

MINUTE.

Mr. Dutt July 23  
Mr. Calder 237  
Mr.

Sir O. Davis.

Sir G. Grindle.

Sir H. Read.

Sir J. Masterton Smith.

Lord Arnold.

Mr. Thomas.

of your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> of  
July, <sup>reporting the</sup> ~~relative to a~~ <sup>to your</sup> ~~Committee~~ <sup>Committee</sup>  
made by Mr. Shams-ud-deen

regarding the Conference  
respecting Municipal  
Representation in Nairobi.

(Signed) H. J. READ.