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SSOCIATION

POSITION OF INDIANS

1920

2nd NOV.

The report of speech by Mr. J. Ainsworth respecting good work done by Indians as pioneer settlers and consisting of no more valuable corroboration could be desired.

previous Paper

5/52168

Mr. H. C. ...

If the S. O. A. are content with the position that the Indian demand from one of Mombasa till the Simba administration came along, well & good. We know it before.

Yours truly

G. C. ...

4.11.20

at once

W. J. R.

5/21/20

subsequent Paper

54277

President of Council:

Chairman of Executive Committee:  
H.H. AGA KHAN.  
Deputy Chairman:  
S. M. BHOWNAGGREE  
K.C.I.E.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:  
Hy. S. L. POLAK

# Indians Overseas Association.

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London, Strand, London.  
London.  
Central 2832.

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47-48 Danes Inn House,

265 Strand, London, W.C.2.

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

November, 2nd.

1920.

Sir,

I beg to submit herewith for the information of the Secretary of State a copy of a newspaper report of a speech made by Mr. Sohu Ainsworth, C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O., Chief Commissioner of Native Affairs in East Africa, made at a public gathering at which he was entertained by the Bond and Indian Communities upon his retirement after more than thirty years' continuous service in the Colony.

In my Association's opinion, no more valuable corrobor-  
ation of the Indian claim to be pioneer settlers in the Colony  
could be desired, and it effectually answers the <sup>challenge</sup> ~~charge~~ that has  
been thrown out by the European papers in East Africa.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Hon. Secretary.

ENCL.

Report of speech made by Mr. Schur Ainsworth, C.M.G., O.B.E., D.S.O., Chief Commissioner of Native Affairs in East Africa, at a public gathering at which he was entertained by the Goan and Indian Communities upon his retirement after more than 30 years' continuous service in the Colony.

"He began his reply with evident emotion. He recalled that, from the very beginning of his many years in East Africa, dating back to the year 1889, the Indian community had always been most helpfully friendly, loyal and helpful to Government. When he arrived in Mombasa, in the year 1889, he remained for two or three years at the Coast. Mombasa was then consisting entirely of Indian traders and merchants. There was no railway, no Administration, no recognised coinage for trade in the interior; every purchase was carried on entirely by barter. Under these difficulties, he, as representing the B.E.A. Company, commenced the administration of parts of the interior. At that particular time, they were obliged to carry trade goods, to say for the products of the interior. There were no shops except the store kept by the Officer of the B.E.A. Company. They naturally looked for some means of carrying out the work of the interior more rapidly. He tried to introduce money instead of barter. There were difficulties as to who would take the money, and he wrote to a member of an old Indian firm, named Alibhai, in Mombasa and he agreed to come up country and start a shop at Machakos. Following him, other merchants arrived, and in a very short time, the B.E.A. Company had transferred its trade goods into the hands of the Indian merchants, and started a money exchange in the interior. Had it not been for the Indians, they could not have done that. The Indians deserved every credit for being the first traders in East Africa, and also for being the first means of introducing a monetary medium of exchange into the Interior. Two or three years later, the construction of the great Uganda Railway began; they had large numbers of Indians working all along the line. The only means of carrying on the work was through the Indian Traders, who advanced along with the railroad into the Interior, step by step, and enabled the Government to carry out the system of cash payment of labour at the rail-head itself. These facts were vividly present in his memory, and the actual fact did remain, that the pioneering work of this description was done by the Indian Traders. Wherever he had gone into the Interior, the Indians had gone, and had been ready to start trading centres, and to take the risk, whether it paid or not. As Administrator, he felt the Government owed the Indians something in the way of thanks for the efforts the Indians constantly made to carry the trade into the Interior. Without trade, no native could advance in any particular matter. For trade, among the natives, was always the pioneer of movement and progress. The general question of advancing trade at any rate in the Interior, had always been in the hands of the Indians. For that, so far as he was concerned as an Administrator, he thanked them. From the other point

of view, he had always found the Indians extremely generous in contributing to such things as Red Cross Funds etc. He had been responsible during the war, for much of the work in these directions, and he had invariably found the Indian community ready and eager to help. He had known the Goans in East Africa for over thirty years, and he took with him memories of the Goan community which he should always treasure. They had been extremely helpful to the country, in supplying men for the many offices of the Administration."

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Summary of meeting between the Secretary of State and Deputation from Indian Overseas Association, including members of the Indian Delegation from East Africa, at the Colonial Office on the 19th April, 1920.

Lord Islington introduced the Deputation which consisted of the following gentlemen:-

Sir M. M. Bhowmallee, K.C.I.E.  
 Mr. F. Sandbach-Baker.  
 Sir Charles Armstrong.  
 Sir Krishna Gupta.  
 Mr. A. M. Jeevanjee.  
 Mr. T. J. Bennett, M.P.  
 Mr. S. T. Thakore.  
 Mr. S. Achariar.  
 Major W. Ormsby Gore, M.P.  
 Mr. Bhugwandin Dube.  
 Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P.  
 Mr. H. S. L. Polak

Lord Islington: No continuous and consistent line of policy laid down by H.M.G. in regard to treatment of Indians throughout the Empire.

Where administrative action has been taken in East Africa by the Colonial Office in the interests of British settlers, the interests of the Indian community have suffered, and representations to this effect have been made through the India Office.

Inter-departmental divergence between offices of H.M.G. is unsatisfactory.

Indians have impression that, especially in East Africa which is not a self-governing Dominion, there is a differential policy approved by H.M.G. under which the Indian community suffer both in status and in rights.

India is now admitted to a position of equality with the self-governing Dominions; it is very sensitive as to the treatment of Indians in the Empire, and it

regards

regards the treatment to be given to Indians in East Africa as a test of the reality of recent constitutional reforms in India.

Indians in East Africa are entitled to every consideration by H.M.G. for the work which they have done in East Africa where they were established long before Europeans, and East Africa should be regarded as a field for the development of Indian industrial enterprise.

Solution of Indian question in East Africa ought not to be left to the S. of S. for the Colonies, but should be a matter for consideration of H.M.G., because the question is too large and too difficult for settlement by a single Department.

Realises that solution would not be found in giving general franchise to Indians in East Africa because of their numerical superiority over Europeans, who would in their turn be at a disadvantage in relation to the Indians.

Suggests an independent and impartial enquiry should be conducted quickly, on which all parties interested would be fully represented, in order to secure a just settlement of the present difficulties.

Sir H. H. Bhowagree: Feeling strong in India that Imperial Government is indifferent to disqualifications imposed on Indians in the Colonies including South Africa (Lord Milner deputed to this).

East Africa is following the baleful example of South Africa in its attitude towards Indians,

and

and urges that whatever may be the position in South Africa, H.M.G. should not tolerate differential treatment in East Africa.

States that when Protectorate in B.E.A. was formed, it was generally made known that this was to assure protection to British Indian Subjects and that the Protectorate owes its existence to Indians.

Emphasizes the fact that feeling in regard to Indian disqualifications in East Africa is widespread, and is not limited to a few agitators; quotes Aga Khan in support.

Points out that rights and privileges granted to Indians in India will be useless if the best among the Indians is to be an outcast in other parts of the Empire.

Agrees with Lord Islington's proposal for an impartial enquiry, on the understanding that the conclusions arrived at by the Royal Commission set up for the purpose must be accepted by H.M.G.

Major W. Ormsby Gore: Supports suggestion of Royal Commission on which Imperial Government Colonists in East Africa and Indians will all be represented, but urges that pending finding of Commission, no legislation should be passed in East Africa involving disabilities on Indians.

Emphasizes view<sup>taken</sup> in India that position of Indians in East Africa, i.e. position of Indians in British Empire outside India, is of crucial importance.

at the present time.

Present feeling between Europeans and Indians in East Africa is becoming acute and must be removed.

Quotes proclamation of Queen Victoria 1868 in accordance with which Indians were not to be disqualified through caste, race or colour throughout the Empire.

If franchise given generally, it might well be limited, but there should be no restriction placed on race, creed or colour.

As regards currency, urges that Indian point of view should always receive careful consideration before such changes are made.

Mr. A.M. Jesvanise: If Royal Commission appointed, urges that all disabilities on Indians, eg. as regards transfer of land and acquisition of township plots should be removed before the Commission is appointed.

As to currency, states that changes were made without enquiry of persons interested in East Africa, that no notice was given to the merchants, that the present action is disastrous to Indians, and that there is no need for a change at all.

Feels strongly as regards absence of Indian representation on Municipal Council of Nairobi, and states that Indians will refuse to pay any taxes imposed by the Municipality or to obey instructions issued by the Municipality.

Protects against representation of Indians on Legislative Council by nomination instead of by election,

and



and against number of Indian representatives being smaller than that of the European representatives.

States that anti-Indian feeling in East Africa is really due to a very small number of European settlers who come from South Africa and are imbued with the ideas prevalent in South Africa.

Mr. Charles Roberts: Indian political extremists are making every use, for purposes of agitation, of the genuine grievances of Indians in East Africa.

Position of Government of India in the matter most invidious; Secretary of State for India and Viceroy assure Indians of their sympathy and practical co-operation, presumably speaking on behalf of H.M.G.

Asks Secretary of State to repudiate policy in report of Economic Commission, and asks that no policy based on trade jealousy or racial prejudice shall be put into effect in East Africa.

Enquiry as suggested by Lord Islington might well be made, provided that, before the enquiry the equality between the Europeans and Indians, which has now been lost, should be recovered by the suspension of administrative decisions adverse to the Indian community.

Mr. J.J. Bennett: Political reforms of H.M.G. in India are stultified by the restrictions and prejudicial

prejudicial enactments in the Colonies and parts of the Empire other than India. Indians will soon say "Is the Empire any good to us?"

Most undesirable to do anything which will prevent the development in India of a value of the sense of citizenship within the Empire.

As to representation of Indians on Legislative Council, urges that principle of elective representation at least should be accepted.

Endorses Mr. Roberts' request for re-iteration of language used in report of Economic Commission, which is closely akin to that written by other persons in East Africa e.g. Lord Cranworth.

Urges that principle must be equality of races within the Empire.

Mr. H.S. Polak: Gives list of persons who support Deputation but unable to be present.

Lord Milner: Reply must be regarded as provisional only, as many big and difficult questions affecting East Africa are now under consideration, and he is, therefore, unable to arrive at definite conclusions.

States that in his opinion H.M.G. is not and cannot be relieved of all responsibility for treatment of Indians in self-governing Dominions, or any part of the Empire.

As regards the Colonies and Protectorates administered by the Colonial Office, H.M.G. will have to settle

settle any definite conflict that might arise between White Settlers, Indians and Natives. While S. of S. for India necessarily supports the India view, the S. of S. for the Colonies cannot regard the matter in exactly the same light, as he must endeavour to keep the balance between all parts of the community in the Colony or Protectorate concerned.

Gives assurance that in settling any questions regarding Indians, he will not be influenced by trade jealousy or racial prejudice.

As regards the report of the Economic Commission, states that the Commission was appointed before his day and that it is not altogether what he would have favoured; that while the Commission has clearly done some very good work, the expressions contained in the Report with regard to Indians are regrettable and in no way represent the spirit in which His Majesty's Government or the S. of S. for the Colonies approach the matter.

As to currency, points out that the action taken is objected to, not only by the Indians but equally by the European settlers; and it is in the nature of a compromise.

As regards the suggestion for an enquiry, states that he is not opposed to it; that in some ways it would be a relief to him, as it would take the responsibility off his own shoulders; that in the long run it may be found desirable to appoint such a Commission of Enquiry; but that it is not for him to take the decision on that point; and that in any event such a Commission, if appointed, could not confine its attention to the position

of

of Indians in East Africa. In the meantime he wishes to examine the various questions at issue as quickly as possible; and he hopes that it will be practicable to take steps in the immediate future to mitigate if not to remove altogether, the sense of grievance felt by the Indian community in East Africa.

A. C. C. P.

21.4.20.

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DRAFT.

The Hon Secretary  
Indian Overseas Assn

MINUTE.

9 November 1920

- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. Battenlee, J.P.
- Mr.
- Mr. Girdle.
- Sr H. Lambert.
- Sr H. Read.
- Sr G. Fiddes.
- Col. Amery.
- Lord Milner

I have letter of the 2nd Nov  
forwarding a copy of a  
new paper report of a  
speech made by the  
Jainworth comm. off. & so  
with regard to the  
position of Indians in  
west Africa