

REC
REF

India Office

Position of Indians

1920

Serial

previous Paper

Trans copy of article in Bombay Chronicle.

28384

Mr. H. P. G. D. D. D. ^{28148 28387 28532}

I wish the P.O. had sent me
the two new articles, but would
be much more than paid than
voluntarily.

I have read of them the letter
& copy of the Hindustani article can
be obtained & sent to you.

C. C. J. 7.6.20.

H. J. P.
01/07/20

Part 116

See on 28537 with all the same & P
So proceed R. T. C.

subsequent Paper.

28537

communications on this subject should be
referred to-

Under Secretary of State,
Public Dept.,
India Office,
London.

Following documents noted -

C. A. P. 3148/20

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter from the India Office of the 7th June,
No. 3304, 1920.

28532

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INDIA OFFICE,

4 June 1920.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council
to transmit to you, for the information of the Secretary of
State for the Colonies,
copy of the paper noted below, on the subject of Indians in
East Africa.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

~~_____~~
F. W. Duke.

Under Secretary of State.

10.1.1 Office

Date

Description

1920

in "London Chronicle" dated 1st

28532

THE EAST AFRICAN CRISIS.

The situation in East Africa has reached a critical stage. The deputation of Indians from East Africa has interviewed Lord Milner and the reception is reported as being unsatisfactory. Of the grievances of Indian settlers, we have written at length. The report of the Economic Commission, its tenor and significance, the attitude of the indigenous population, and the anti-Asiatic zeal of white residents, who have captured the Executive have been fully discussed by Mr. Andrews. There is no question as to the right or wrong of the situation. The white residents are keen on ousting Indians in the name of Africans who have repeatedly testified to the benefits of Indian settlement. In fact, the indigenous population want Indians, who have been working in the country long before the advent of the British. The east about the Indian community being a non-conducting and parasitic medium between the local population and the exponents of Western culture, is one of the most abominable that may be conceived. It is commercial cupidity which is at the root of the anti-Asiatic agitation. The country has been developed by Indian labour. To wrest the fruits of other people's labour in the name of a community which cries for its retention, is motivated by principles that can be defended by no honourable person. That is the attitude of Lord Milner? It is described as non-committal. We know that there are at present, in London East African millionaires like Major Brown who want the country for exclusive occupation. They count and the odds against us are great in all conscience. The fear that the Colonial Office might be overborne by the claims of imperialistic exploiters is diminished by the attitude of Lord Milner. Mr. Montagu is said to have taken a strong attitude. He has no difficulty, because the claims of Indians are unassailably just. But the situation is a contest of might and right.

The message received by the Hon. Mr. Abdulrasul Viamram shows that we should not allow judgment to go by default. East African residents are in a weak position and they are not able to press their claims with effect with the Government virtually under the controlling influence of the whites. It seems that the present policy is to rush some sort of hostile settlement before the issues become widely known in India. Rushing, stealthy tactics are good for a cause so unrighteous. But can the matter be settled before it gets abroad like the scandal it is? And once "settled", will a matter so grossly unjust improve by citing such a decision? The duty of Indians is plain. They cannot, after all the talk about righteous policy, equal citizenship and war sacrifices, be asked to keep quiet, in the confidence that Englishmen will not abuse their power to our ruin. Let us, therefore, realising the magnitude of the issues and economic consequences of foul play, strongly protest against the expropriation of our rights. Bombay has, in this respect, a special duty to fulfil. Many of the East African traders are emigrants from our Presidency. It is they who have been libelled as immoral and corrupt, and worthy of nothing but extinction at the hands of the white exploiters of Africa. Of the Imperial Citizenship Association we have often written with limited patience. Instead of waiting for documents from here and there they ought to realise the gravity of the main issues which are not disputed, and canvass strong public opinion at this crisis. They ought to arrange public meetings and, if possible, muster to secure a hearing from the Viceroy by means of a deputation. A meeting of the Council is now impossible. It is not in the power of non-officials to demand a special one on an emergency. Let us, therefore, do the work outside, as a popular cause. There should be no difficulty in getting an audience with the Viceroy. It may be objected that the issue is being fought out in England. All the more reason that the demonstration of opinion

India should be complete. There should be no explanation, or, of our having lost our case by default. It is an All-India motion and let us not, by professions of punctilio, minimise support which our countrymen have a right to expect in the hour of jeopardy. 146

The President of the Nairobi Congress has appealed to His Highness to represent their case. His Highness has many occupations. He has left in Britain the Overseas Association to represent the grievances of Indians abroad. May we ask him, view of the gravity of the crisis, to proceed to Britain and use his personal influence in defence of Indians? Once a final decision is formally announced, there may be the plea that it is irrevocable. Things are yet in the melting-pot; and while they are shaping themselves, the good offices of His Highness are of tremendous value, if only in helping to neutralise the influence of the colonial magnates and allowing an unbiased deliberation of the issue. We ask His Highness to subordinate other considerations of health and prior engagements to a cause whose location is dear to him and of immense importance to the country. His Highness knows how scattered are becoming the ranks of Indian leaders and how few are the men who display a valour with courage and masterfulness. If a small number of Indians, including leaders like His Highness, the Aga Khan, Mr. Andrews, are able to proceed to England and plead their cause before the courts on occasions, formal and informal, we have done something to strengthen the ranks of the movement of India and hearten our secret countrymen in that land. We hope that, on this occasion at least with the cry of our land ringing in our ears we shall not exhibit those selfish concerns and irresolution that prejudice our rights. A right may be often spoiled by bad pleading, and we hope that steps will be taken, promptly, to secure a verdict in favour of what is just and just.

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146

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29537/20th Africa

147°

2nd

DRAFT.

The 1st Secy
India Office

Amesbury 16th June 1920

MINUTE.

15 June
Parliament

- Mr. Grindle
- Mr. H. Lambert
- Mr. H. Road
- Mr. G. Fiddes
- Mr. Amery
- Mr. Milner

(24108)
(24357)
(24552)

I am to ask the
 of your letter to
 33rd
 3148 of the 8th 1911 of
 June enclosing articles
 entails for Bombay
 Madras Benegal
 newspapers dealing with
 the position of Indians

in East Africa.

I am to inquire whether this
Dept can be furnished with copies of
the articles by Mr Andrew
to which reference is made
in these extracts

(Signed) H. J. READ.