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HOUSE OF
COMMONS

1920

POSITION OF INDIANS

5th JULY

Mr. Bennett. — To ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Secretary of State has come to a decision on the subject of a representative deputation of British-Indians in East Africa which was made to him headed by Lord Isingiro on the 19th April; and, if so, when that deputation will be made public. [Wednesday 7th July.]

Secretary of State for the Colonies

Mr. H. Bennett
Mr. J. H. Fisher
Rebby

The matter is still requiring the Secretary of State's consideration and I regret that no definite answer can be made at present.

C. G. 6/7/20

Subsequent Paper

33234

(BRITISH INDIANS).

ed the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the subject of a representation concerning the position of British Indians in the West Indies which was made to him by a deputation headed by Mr. J. Islington, on the 19th April; and, so, when that decision will be made public?

Lieut. Colonel AM. AY. The matter is being engaged the earnest consideration of the Secretary of State, and I am not yet in a position to make a statement.

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Summary of meeting between the Secretary of State and Deputation from India 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 members:-

Sir W. H. ...
 Mr. P. Sandbach-Baker.
 Sir Charles Armstrong.
 Sir Krishna Gupta.
 Mr. A. W. Jeevanjee.
 Mr. T. J. Bennett, M.P.
 Mr. S. I. Thakore.
 Mr. S. Achariar.
 Major H. Crosby Gore.
 Mr. Bhugwandin Datta.
 Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P.
 Mr. S. L. Polak.

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

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

... inter-departmental ... between offices ...

... is not a self-governing Dominion.

... differential policy approved by H.M.G. ...

... the Indian community suffer both materially and ...

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
as a test of the fealty of a
reforms in India.

Indians in East
constitu-

Indians in East Africa are
consideration to H.M.G. for the work
in East Africa where they were
Europeans, and East Africa
a field for the development of Indian
enterprise.

and to every
have
long
regarded as
enterprise

Solution of Indian questions in
ought not to be left to the S. & S. for
should be a matter for consideration of
the question is too large and too diffi-
cult to be dealt with by a single Department.

Africa
s, but
cause
difficul-

Realises that solution of
giving general franchise to
because of their numerical superiority
who would in their turn be at a
relation to the Indians.

and in
Africa
Europeans,
disadvantage in

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

impartial enquiry

Sir M.M. Bhowmager: Feeling strong in
India that Imperial Government is indifferent to
disqualifications imposed on Indians in the Colonies
including South Africa (Lord Milner demurred to this).
East Africa is following the baleful example
of South Africa in its attitude towards Indians.



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 India as to Indian disabilities in East Africa is widespread, and is being fanned by a few agitators. Argues that the privileges of Indians in India will be lost if the best of the law is to be an outlier in other parts of the Empire.

Refers to Lord Curzon's proposal for an impartial Commission, holding that the conclusion of the Royal Commission set up for the purpose must be accepted by H.M.G.

Notes that the Government supports suggestion of Royal Commission in which British Government Colonies in East Africa and Indians will all be represented, but urges that pending findings of Commission, no legislation should be passed in East Africa involving disabilities of Indians.

Emphasizes view ^{taken} in India that position of Indians in East Africa, i.e. position of Indians in British Empire outside India, is of crucial importance.

at

at the present time.

Present feeling between Europeans and Indians

in East Africa is becoming acute and must be removed.

States proclamation of Queen Victoria 1859

reference with which Indians were not to be treated
in a case, race or colour throughout the Empire.

prohibitive laws, it might well be
limited, with the usual bona restriction placed on
race, colour or colour.

As regards currency, urges that Indian point

of view should always receive careful consideration
before any changes are made.

Recommendations: If Royal Commission

is appointed, it should investigate all disabilities on Indians, eg. as
regards land and acquisition of township plots.
Commission is appointed.

As regards currency, if changes were made
in East Africa, it would be disastrous to the natives, and there
is no change at all.

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

Protests against representation of Indians on
Municipal Council of Nairobi, and state that Indians will
refuse to pay any taxes imposed by the Municipality or to obey
instructions issued by the Municipality.

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 agitators 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 is 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. T. J. Barnatti: Political reforms of H.M.G. in India are stultified by the restrictions and prejudicial

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

...solely and parts of the
 ...Indians will soon say 'Is the

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

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

Endorses Mr. Swarth's request for re-consideration
 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 Valparaiso: There must be regarded as
 provisional only, as many big and difficult questions
 affecting East Africa are now under consideration, and
 India, therefore, unable to arrive at definite conclusions.

...is not used
 cannot ... responsibility for treatment of
 Indians ... of the
 Empire.

...will have to
 settle

...settlers, ... Native. ... of S. for
 ... the S. for
 ... exactly the same
 light, ... between
 all parts of ...

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... settlers; and it is in the nature of ...
 An regards the suggestion for ...
 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 have a Commission of Enquiry;
 but that it is for the Government to make the decision on that
 point; that in an event of a Commission, if
 appointed, should not confine its attention to the position

...
 ...

to examine the... wishes
to examine the... as quickly
as possible and to report... it will be practicable
to take steps in the immediate future to mitigate if not
to remove also... the sense of grievance felt by
the Indian community in East Africa.

A.C.C.F.

21.4.20.