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DIA

1920

9th June

Previous Paper.

30209

POSITION OF INDIANS

The extracts from Indian newspapers.

Dear Sir,

*It is interesting to note the
Indian attitude towards the
unhappy famine in the
Commissioner's Report, the
restricted Indian immigration
expressed by a large number of
land holders for the Legislative Council,
and the misunderstanding of the
Removal of the Deodar Bill
(which has been mentioned because
of the clamour).*

Previous Paper

0483

21/6/50

Communications on this subject should be
addressed to—

Under Secretary of State,
P. O. Box 11, Dept.,
INDIA OFFICE,
LONDON,

following number quoted:—

P. 3364/20.

Reference to previous correspondence.

Letter from the India Office of the Indians in
East Africa.

30330

INDIA OFFICE,

REC- June 19 20
REC 21 JUN 20

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,
of the papers noted below, on the subject of Indians in
East Africa.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

~~W. W. Hollister~~
F. W. Duke,

Under Secretary of State,
Office.

Date

Description

& 3th Extract from reports of ... newspapers.

Extract from ...

Extract from Reports of ... newspapers

22. "The Imperial Government will do well to let the Indian community in British East Africa as well as their countrymen here know once for all whether the view which has been so frankly expressed by Sir W. Joynson-Hicks in his letter to the *Times*, as to British East Africa being a 'White land,' reflects the view of the question held by the Colonial Office and His Majesty's Government. Things are reaching a stage in regard

to that colony, when it will be doing a positive disservice to the cause of the Empire to camouflage truth under specious pledges and vague generalisations. Indians will prefer to be told the blunt truth, without further attempts at prevarication or ill-disguised hostility. If the East African Protectorate is to be converted into a 'White man's preserve' by a policy of deliberate hounding out of Indians long settled there, let the Imperial Government plainly say so to the Indians resident in the Protectorate, so that they may know where they stand. They have, no doubt, vested interests on a vast scale in the Protectorate, but a lightning stroke of violence would be preferable to the injustice and persecution which they shall have to face at the hands of the White settlers, who are out to drive them beyond the pale of their 'preserve' or to keep them in a state little removed from the lot of Israel in Egypt..... The indigenous people of East Africa have expressed their cordiality towards Indian settlers. Not only this, the Indians have been the pioneers in every sort of activity in British East Africa, which has reached its present state mainly through Indian enterprise. The claim to convert it into a White man's land is on a par with the claim of the porcupine of the fable to own the house of the snake—that is to say, of pure Might over Right. Let Englishmen and their statesmen at the helm of the Empire declare that no other considerations weigh with them in their schemes of imperial aggrandisement, and the world will be in a position to judge pretensions of right and justice the better. "Are we to alter the phrase about the White man's burden into that of the White man's booty, after all our condemnations of German activity in Africa?"

23. "The situation in East Africa has reached a critical stage.....

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 toiling in the country long before the

Alleged critical situation of Indians in British East Africa. *Bombay Chronicle* (1), 1st May.

interest of the British. The cant about the Indian community being a non-producing and parasitic medium between the local population and the proponents 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 situation..... Mr. Montagu is said to have taken a strong attitude. He has no difficulty, because the claims of Indians are unassailable just. But the situation is a contest of might and right..... 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 issue becomes widely known in India. Rushing, stealthy tactics are good for a cause so unrighteous. But can the matter be settled before it goes abroad like the scandal it is? And once 'blended', will a matter so easily unjust improve by citing such a decision? The duty of Indians is to stand up. They cannot, after all the tall talk about righteous policy, equal citizenship and war-time sacrifices, be asked to keep quiet, in the confidence that Englishmen will not abuse their power to our ruin. Let us, therefore,

realizing the magnitude of the issues and economic consequences of foul play, strongly protest against the expropriation of our rights."

24. "From a telegram published elsewhere, however, it appears that the Imperialist Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has assumed a very unsatisfactory attitude towards the Indian Deputation. Nothing better could be expected from his Lordship by those who know his antecedents. He nearly lost South Africa to the British during his High Commissionership after the Boer War and the situation was saved by the statesmanship of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who converted a sworn enemy into a staunch friend by giving self-government to the Boers. His recent mission to Egypt has been a failure; the Egyptian Nationalists, knowing what sort of 'reforms' they likely to get from an Imperialist, have boycotted the Milner Committee. Mr. Jivanji, head of the East African Mission, says the Colonial Office is anxious to arrive at a decision before matters get publicity; the Colonial Office cannot resist the strong pressure of the East African whites; Lord Milner will then conveniently stick to the 'settled fact' theory. The situation is grave."

25. Writing at length upon the condition of Indians in British East Africa, the *Praja Mitra and Parsi* says:—The publication of Lord Milner's sympathy for the whites is indeed disquieting. The time has come when we should have recourse to all possible means of strengthening the hands of the Government of India and the Secretary of State for taking up a vigorous attitude in the matter. It is essential for us to declare firmly that the highhandedness of the whites in the colonies is to be tolerated, we shall deal with them in the same fashion. The Indians in German East Africa openly prayed for the success of the British and suffered the consequences of hoping to obtain greater freedom under British rule and relying upon the fact that East Africa had not obtained self-government as was the case in South Africa. The case of East Africa is different from that of South Africa in other respects also. In South Africa, Indians were not allowed to take part in the war against the Boers, whereas in the last war they were allowed to assist in conquering the territory of the enemy and preserving order in Africa. It is an accepted fact that the British success there was very largely due to Indian troops. But what is their reward? East Africa has not been granted self-government; the Secretary of State for the Colonies directs its administration, and yet the white population there are getting ready for introducing legislation boycotting Indians, as if they were members of a self-governing colony already. Indians ask whether the sacred principle of giving freedom to all the nations and of fully appreciating the valuable services of Indians in connexion with the war held out by His Majesty's Government are to be looked upon as mere "scraps of paper". A deputation from East Africa and Uganda is to be sent to England for representation of the grievances of Indians to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but as long as Lord Milner occupies the post there is no chance of obtaining justice after our experience of him in South Africa. A firm resolve that Indians will not lag behind in paying the whites in the same coin is necessary. Whites will have to suffer heavy pecuniary losses if Indians set up to a resolve, because the whites cannot do without the Indians. Such a course of action will make the Secretary of State for the Colonies yield and do justice for India.

26. "Sir Joynson Hicks, M. P., is a Tory Imperialist. In a letter to the *New Times* (9), 8th May, on the East African question he says if the rules with regard to the influx of Negroes from Zambesi to Bengal and Bombay, she must not dictate a different policy to Africa! Sir Joynson for that the self-government is to be within the Empire. India will not part with Englishmen from coming to this country. Should Indians be treated as pariahs in other parts of the Empire? If the Indians have a right to the hand of the Negroes of the Zambesi and are allowed to live there peacefully enjoying equal rights and responsibilities, they will never object to the inf

Negroes to Bengal or Bombay. Indeed, Indian genius, tradition and history are against the supposition of Sir J. Hicks. India does not object to other members of the Empire enjoying Home Rule; but she urges that her children, as members of the Empire, should be treated equally with the white races, British or Boer, throughout the Empire. Sir Joynson Hicks forgets, too, that in British East Africa there are only 6,000 whites as against 30,000 Indians and 30 lakhs Negroes, and that the 6,000 whites are recent settlers who came a long time after the Indian settlement. Are the interests of 6,000 white exploiters to dominate those of hundreds and thousands of other people who do not wear a white skin?..... The East African situation is growing very serious, and we do hope the Government of India are alive to the needs of the situation."

48. "India is to-day entering upon a new path, as a free Nation, on the road to Dominionhood within the British Empire. The susceptibilities of her people can no longer be ignored, as they have in the matter of the welfare of her colonies been only too often in the past. In South Africa, the existence of an independent Dominion Government has been held by the Imperial Government to excuse them for non-intervention on behalf of the unhappy and ill-used Indian population. The same considerations do not apply to East Africa, where the Imperial Government are solely responsible for policy and administration, a responsibility which they cannot share and have no right to delegate. As to the Tanganyika Territory, which will be governed under a mandate from the League of Nations, the British Government will be responsible to the international conscience of the world. But India, too, is an original member of the League of Nations, and is entitled to demand not only that all peoples alike should be treated equally in the mandated area, but that in the neighbouring British Territory equal treatment should be adopted, lest the evil results of the opposite policy react adversely upon the peoples on the other side of a vague and artificial boundary. In the eyes of the Indian public, the sincerity of Great Britain's attitude towards India on Imperial questions will be tested to a great extent by the policy enforced in East Africa..... It is believed in India that, when reminded of all the facts, the British people and the British Government will not allow judgment to go by default, but will respond generously to India's claim to the equal treatment of her colonists in East Africa, and the reversal of the present prevalent anti-Indian policy."

*49. "Now the question is what should the Imperial Government do to redress the grievances of the Indians [in British East Africa]? At present ~~the~~ Affair is engaged in solving this question with the help of Mr. Montagu and the Governor of that Protectorate. Upon that decision is staked British honour and British prestige. The colonists have done their best to tarnish it, and it now remains for the Imperial Government to remove the stain. That British Indian subjects, who were the pioneers of civilisation in East Africa, and who are still the greatest factor in all commerce and trade, should be made to serve as helots in a British colony, and this pernicious mischief should be not only not discouraged under the guise of 'administrative conveniences' by Britishers themselves, is the greatest stigma on the British Empire for which every Britisher ought to bend his head with shame. That such a treatment which spells dishonesty, prevarication, cruelty, ingratitude and injustice, should be given to the men and women of India, one of the original members of the League of Nations, in spite of all the tall talk about equality and liberty, is an intolerable breach of faith. The situation cannot have been made more galling than this to the self-respect of Indians. India now awaits with bated breath the decision of the Milner Conference on the matter. If it is favourable to us Indians—well and good; if not, faith in British justice will be exploded to atoms."

50. The English are now busy expelling Indians from British East Africa and making it a white man's country. There is no doubt they will succeed in their endeavour. The British Government is on their side and it has already been settled that no attention is to be paid to the protests of Indians. We Indians are fools. We send deputations and hold meetings in the hope of getting success because our cause is just; but we do not yet realise that justice lies in the writ. The world will think that we have grasped the real meaning of politics when we give up making entreaties and rely only on ourselves. Deputations are only of value when you have the power to enforce your will. But if we solely rely on them then we are doubtless fit to become extinct.

Lokasangraha (109).
10th May.

3. The following is from the *Tribune* of the 5th May:—"There is

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no sadder chapter in the history of India's relations with the rest of the Empire than that relating to the present position of Indians in East Africa. . . . Utterly indefensible as is the treatment which has in the past been, and is even now being accorded to Indians in several other parts of the Empire, notably in South Africa, the treatment that is being accorded to our countrymen in East Africa is even worse. There is a case in which neither of the two usual pleas for the unequal and unsympathetic treatment of Indians will for a moment hold water. East Africa is in no sense a white man's country. The present European population of the territories is said to be approximately 8 thousand. The present Indian population of the territories, on the other hand, is certainly not less than 25 thousand, and it is estimated that it is between 30 and 35 thousand. Again, East Africa is not a self-governing colony, but only a Protectorate, and so the argument that the Imperial Government is powerless cannot bear a moment's scrutiny." Next the paper refers to the services of Indians to East Africa and to their demands on the Government there. In conclusion, it says:—"We can think of no ground either of justice or equity on which these demands can be resisted, and we have no hesitation in saying that if the European settlers cannot content themselves with equality of treatment with their Indian fellow-subjects, it is they who ought to be asked to go. In any case, the duty of the Imperial Government is perfectly plain, and they cannot fail to do that duty without laying themselves open to the severest condemnation at the bar of public opinion both in India itself and in the world at large."

8. Rerecting the cry about the injustice of many of the European settlers

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in East Africa trying to drive away the Indians therefrom, the *Swadesamitran*, of the 14th May, quotes from the words of eminent British statesmen to prove that it was due to the trouble taken by the Indians in reclaiming the soil there and making the country habitable that the Europeans were able to settle there later and observes:—"It is on account of this service rendered by the Indians and the help given by them to the British to conquer German East Africa, that the Europeans there are trying to drive the Indians out of the country." It should be noted in this connexion that it is only in the last 20 years that the Europeans have been there and that they are not more than seven thousand, while there are about 40,000 Indians. It was solemnly declared by the late Queen Victoria that the Indians in this colony should always have the preference of the British and should not be left under the control of others. Therefore, they have a right to demand that the Europeans who are hostile to them should be asked to leave the colony. But the Indians are claiming only an equal treatment with the Europeans. Though even this claim may be unpalatable to the Europeans, the British Government are bound to consider about the situation and act impartially. The world knows how a few Englishmen, who settled in other countries for purposes of livelihood, have endangered the Empire itself by their untoward acts. So we hope that there will be no occasion for trouble again even in this twentieth century when several Englishmen are vaunting that they are establishing justice throughout the world. The leaders in England and the Indian deputation from East Africa have stated in their memorial to the Secretary of State for the colonies that if the Indians in East Africa are to quit the country immediately it will be ruined and the aboriginal tribes therein will become merged in barbarism. The interests of the Indians should, therefore, be safeguarded at least in view of the self-interest of the Empire and of the aboriginal tribes in the colonies. Otherwise we fear the question may turn out to be one of racial struggle.