

the military family hospitals which are maintained for the care of the wives and children of British officers and soldiers.

The amalgamation of the Indian Nursing Service with the Imperial Service, which at present provides nurses for the British Army outside India, seems certain in the near future.

Chapter XIII

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES: EMIGRATION

International Conferences

India is an original member of the League of Nations and has been admitted to the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation as one of the eight States of chief industrial importance. India has ratified the draft conventions on such varied questions as hours of work, unemployment, night hours for women and young persons, white phosphorus, rights of association for agriculturists, industrial weekly rest, minimum age for stokers, and medical examination of young persons at sea. During the last three years the Indian Legislature has to its credit an improved Factory Act and Mines Act, a Workmen's Compensation Act, and a measure for the protection of girls.

Her representation on these bodies is arranged by the Secretary of State and the Government of India, and has enabled ex-Viceroy, Indian Ruling Princes, high officials of the Indian Government and the India Office, and leading public men in Indian political life, to discuss world affairs with the representatives of the other members of the British Empire and of foreign States.* But long before

* Mr. Srinivasa Sastri was a member of the British delegation at the Washington Conference on Disarmament in 1921.

the League of Nations existed the Indian Government took part in international congresses and conferences on various questions, becoming, for instance, a member of the Universal Postal Union. Apart from the various conferences directly connected with the League of Nations, India has a share in the permanent committee of the Office International d'Hygiène Publique and the general assembly of the Institute of Agriculture, and takes a regular part in the international meetings on Geology, Meteorology, Navigation, Railways, Roads, Posts, Telegraphs, Radio-telegraphs and Aerial questions, and though she neglected the opportunity of making her voice heard on the problems of Phytopathology discussed at Wageningen in 1923, joined in the consideration at Geneva of Obscene Publications in the same year.

The glare of publicity that pervades Geneva has directed general attention to the opium question, but there has been far more readiness in some quarters to denounce the Indian authorities for producing and selling opium than to acknowledge the indisputable fact that India is the only country in the world which sacrificed £4,000,000 annual revenue to enable a foreign State to reform its own people. A Royal Commission considered the Indian opium question in 1893, reporting in 1895, and its conclusions explain the accepted Indian policy of limiting the cultivation of the poppy and securing for Government a monopoly of manufacture and wholesale supply. When China in 1908 made a genuine effort to suppress opium smoking, the Government of India entered into an agreement to

limit the export of opium to China, and in 1913 stopped it altogether, at the cost to Indian revenues cited above. India joined the Hague Opium Convention in 1912. The internal consumption of opium is strictly regulated, and export has been allowed only to countries whose Governments certified that the consignments were approved, and required for legitimate purposes. But in February 1926 the Government of India gave a public pledge to reduce progressively the exports of opium, so as to extinguish them altogether within a definite period, except as regards opium for strictly medical purposes, and to stop the system of auction sales in India. This notable step has been taken in order to fulfil in the largest measure India's international obligations, "and to obviate complications that may arise from the delicate and invidious task of attempting to sit in judgment on the internal policy of other Governments."

Emigration

Indian traders have gone to the East Coast of Africa on their lawful occasions for generations; the "Banians" of Zanzibar are a long-established community. Ceylon, of course, has always been closely connected with India, and the Malay Peninsula is almost within the Indian sphere; in fact Hindu culture centuries ago was carried as far as Cambodia and Java. But the modern problems of Indian emigration arise mainly out of the developments of British colonisation in Africa, the West Indies, and the Pacific, and are due to two conflicting factors—the need of British planters in tropical and

sub-tropical colonies for a regular supply of agricultural labourers, and the desire of British settlers in more temperate regions to establish purely European communities.

Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have in the past refused to admit British Indian subjects or imposed restrictions which made entry difficult. Their attitude was based on considerations which were clear, if unpalatable to Indian sentiment; they did not wish for any Asiatic admixture in their populations. This principle, whatever its local justification, made no distinction between Asiatic British subjects and alien Asiatics, and is an obvious hindrance to Imperial solidarity. But South African policy was differentiated by the fact that one colony which is now a province of the South African Union for half a century deliberately imported Indian labourers while showing dislike to the entry of Indian traders, put pressure on those labourers to return to India when their term of contract labour was ended, and refused to allow to the Indians who remained such rights and amenities as they considered due to them. It is true that the other provinces of South Africa had no responsibility or liking for the labour immigration policy of Natal, which began under Crown Colony Government. But it is not surprising that Indians regard South Africa as a country which has desired to exploit the usefulness of the humbler classes as labourers but has not regarded Indians as fellow-citizens.

The system of indentured labour emigration never completely washed away its birth-stain as

an arrangement for supplying cheap agricultural workers to sugar-growing Colonies in which the emancipation of negro slaves had paralysed the labour supply and threatened economic ruin. The engagement of Indian manual labourers under contract was sanctioned for Mauritius in 1834, British Guiana in 1838, Trinidad in 1844 and Jamaica in 1845, and was extended later to other British West Indian islands. The much more questionable policy of sending British Indians under indenture to foreign colonies was adopted for the benefit of France (Réunion, Cayenne, and the French West Indies), Holland (Surinam), and Denmark (St. Croix) between 1838 and 1872. The conditions in Surinam were fairly satisfactory and indentured emigration to that country was continued until the total abolition of the system in 1916. But the St. Croix experiment was a complete failure, and the arrangements in the French Colonies never worked well, and were brought to an end a generation ago.

For the purposes of Indian labour emigration an "emigrant" was defined as a person who departs by sea out of British India under an agreement to work for hire in any overseas country. It was obvious from the first that uneducated labourers might easily be misled as to the nature of their engagement, or actually decoyed by recruiters in Indian villages, and an elaborate system of safeguards was established. The indenture agreements were registered before magistrates in India, the ports from which emigration was lawful were defined, and Indian Government Protectors of Emigrants appointed to inspect the labourers before

embarkation. Strict conditions were laid down for feeding and medical care on the emigrant ships, and the Colonial Governments entered into engagements with the Government of India as regards conditions of employment, wages, inspection of estates and sanitary measures and facilities for repatriation (wholly or partly at the Colony's expense) when the period of indenture ended. The Indian Emigration Acts were gradually made more stringent; in 1856 the Government of India took power, which it used on occasion, to prohibit emigration to any country in which the labourers were proved to be improperly treated, and in 1883 further safeguards were enacted, but it was not until 1910 that a further Indian Act enabled emigration to any country to be stopped at discretion. Next year this provision was used against Natal on account of its unsatisfactory policy regarding the free Indian population, for the local authorities had not failed in their obligations towards the labourers while under indenture. The indentured system was examined by a Committee under Lord Sanderson in 1909, which made suggestions for reform and brought about the stoppage of further emigration to Mauritius, and the Colonies in which the system continued were visited in 1913 by two Government of India delegates, whose report, while pointing out the need of a number of practical improvements, gave no corroboration to certain sensational allegations of systematic ill-treatment.

The establishment in distant countries of bodies of Indian labourers whose speech was unintelligible to most of their employers was obviously open to

abuse. The worst feature of the system was the failure to insist upon a due proportion of women among the emigrants, with the result that immorality and crimes of violence marred the overseas communities. It was not until the system was moribund that it was realised that family colonisation was the only satisfactory method. The labour laws of some Colonies were for a long time so stringent as to result in disproportionate punishments for labour offences, but the principle of a "penal contract" for labour long existed in India itself in the case of workers going from other provinces to the tea-gardens of Assam. On the other hand, the labour emigration system established fairly prosperous communities of Indians in several Colonies in which the climatic and other conditions were suitable. These emigrants regularly remitted large sums of money to their relatives in India, and often returned at the end of their indentures with considerable savings, while facilities were usually given them, if they preferred to stay in their new homes, for earning good wages as free labourers or settling down on the land as peasant proprietors.

It soon became apparent that as an outlet for over-population in India the colonial demand for labour was too small and irregular to count for much. Lord Salisbury as Secretary of State in 1875 had invited the Government of India to embark on a policy of encouragement of emigration, but Lord Lytton's Government made it clear that there were strong objections to doing more than allow the Colonies the access already given to the Indian labour market. Indentured emigration has always

been unpopular amongst educated Indians. The conception of India as a supplier of coolie labour to the outer world was galling to Indian pride. Land-owners in recruiting districts could not be expected to favour the tendency of agricultural labourers to leave India in order to obtain higher wages, and the growth of industrial enterprise in Indian cities, needing workers from the villages, stimulated the feeling against emigration. Indignation at the anti-Indian policy of certain Dominions reacted against Crown Colonies in which Indians were freely received as desirable settlers. The very strong anti-emigration feeling in India came to a head before the War, and Government abruptly stopped indentured emigration in 1916, utilising at the moment, rather paradoxically, a rule under the Defence of India Act, and next year definitely ended the system. The West Indian islands no longer desired labour immigrants, but British Guiana, and Fiji (which had for some forty years imported Indian workers) are anxious to attract Indian agricultural settlers, and negotiations have been in progress for several years, accompanied by colonial deputations to India and the visits of Indian delegates to those Colonies to inspect local conditions. If Indian agricultural emigration can be resumed, a matter of supreme economic importance to those two colonies, it must be by a system of family settlement, not short-time labour, accompanied by the extension to Indian immigrants of full political equality, which in British Guiana they already enjoy. An important political departure in India was marked by the new Emigration Act of 1922, under which

the definition of emigrant is extended to cover persons assisted to emigrate, though not under any agreement, and the approval of both chambers of the Indian Legislature is required for any scheme of assisted emigration of unskilled labourers or agriculturists. Mauritius was in 1924 temporarily allowed to import Indian labourers for Government work.

Indian labour emigration under the former system has had the result of permanently establishing Indian communities overseas which now number over 265,000 in Mauritius, 124,000 in British Guiana, 128,000 in Trinidad, 60,000 in Fiji, and over 30,000 in Jamaica, as well as the 140,000 in Natal whose position will be discussed later.

Ceylon and Malaya were allowed to recruit labour outside the provisions of the old Emigration Acts: of the one and a half million Indians in Ceylon some 700,000 represent labour immigrants, and over half a million are settled in the Malay Peninsula. Geographical proximity of course facilitates the transit of Indians to and from these countries, and the elaborate machinery for repatriation and other requirements necessary in the case of distant colonies was not needed here. Ceylon employers were allowed to recruit in the Madras Presidency by means of Indian "Kanganis" but the arrangements have been brought under stricter supervision. The main defect in the old Ceylon system was that Indian emigrants received advances of money from these "Kanganis" and too often found it impossible ever to free themselves from debt. The Straits Settlements belonged to the

Government of India until 1867, and there has been a constant flow of Indian migration. In 1872 a regular scheme of labour emigration was established, but the indenture system was abolished in Malaya and the Straits in 1910. The arrangements for assisted emigration to Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula have now, as explained above, come under the control of the Indian Legislature.

The question of Indians in the Dominions might be treated as entirely distinct from the problems of labour emigration were it not for the peculiar case of Natal. As a Crown Colony, this province, finding it impossible to induce the enormous Bantu ("Kaffir") population to work regularly for European farmers, began to import Indians in 1860 under the same arrangements as the West Indies. Indian emigration was stopped for eight years in 1866, but then renewed until 1911. But there was a double influx of Indians to Natal, for traders, generally Muhammedans and misnamed "Arabs," came across from Bombay or passed down the coast from Zanzibar, entered as free immigrants, made their way into Cape Colony and the Transvaal, and aroused the dislike of the European shopkeepers, who largely control municipal politics in South Africa. Their numbers were reinforced by time-expired indentured Indians, for, though many of these settled down on the land as small agriculturists or market-gardeners, others found it more profitable to take to petty trading. Thus arose a sharp diversity of interest between the comparatively small section of European farmers and mine-owners in Natal who depended on Indian labour, and the

rest of the European South Africans, faced by very difficult native questions, and led by colour feeling, political views and economic interests to resent the entry of the Asiatic. When the union of South Africa was effected, it was obvious that the particular interests of Natal employers could not prevail against the general sentiment, and the Government of India by stopping labour emigration to Natal in 1911 only anticipated a step which the Union Government must inevitably have taken. Sweeping restrictions on the immigration into Natal of free Indians had been imposed as early as 1897. The £3 annual tax imposed on ex-indentured emigrants who remained in the colony was ultimately removed, but not before it had caused an acute feeling of grievance. India owes to South Africa the political training of Mr. Gandhi and a stimulation of racial antagonism both in Imperial and domestic affairs. Cape Colony, which has an old-established "Malay" community of Asiatic origin, has always treated Indians more favourably than its neighbours; but the South African Republic, while independent, vexed them by laws restricting rights of residence and employment, and these were more strictly enforced by the Transvaal when it became a province of the Union. It was hoped that the definite exclusion of further Asiatic immigration, except by special permit, would reconcile the white democracy of South Africa, freed from the dread of unlimited influx, to a more generous policy towards the domiciled Indians, but the hope has not been fulfilled. While Indian local leaders may have done little to conciliate their adversaries, and have shown little sense of proportion

in the presentment of particular grievances, a general sense of insecurity besets the Indian community, and hardly a year passes without proposals for some fresh measure which may affect their position. Inter-provincial migration is practically barred, since the Cape with an Indian population of about 6,000 and the Transvaal with some 10,000, having as separate political entities restricted Asiatic immigration, naturally did not desire their entry into the Union to open the door to the 140,000 Indians of Natal. But the voluntary repatriation now suggested of a community which has grown to this size and has existed for sixty years does not seem very promising, and new difficulties are at present under discussion between the Indian and South African Governments.

Kenya is constitutionally a Crown Colony, but the vigorous and enterprising European population in its Highlands regards the Asiatic question from the Dominion point of view. Inter-racial friction in Kenya is peculiarly mischievous because it is only in the East African group of provinces* that the Imperial Government has direct responsibility for holding the balance between a local European community with a strong anti-Asiatic tinge, and the obviously just constitutional claims of Indians to a status of equality in Crown Colonies. Indian traders had settled in the country before it came under the British flag, and Indian labourers were

* Uganda and the mandated territory Tanganyika have resident Indian communities but their presence has caused no acute difficulty. The same may be said of Southern Rhodesia, which, however, restricts the entry of Asiatics. The number of Indians settled in Kenya is about 25,000.

employed to make the Uganda railway, but the development of British colonisation has produced a political atmosphere similar to that of South Africa. Controversy has ranged round the questions of Indian representation in the Legislative Council, suggestions for the segregation of Indians in towns as a sanitary measure, the reservation of land in the Highlands for European ownership, and the effects of the intercourse of Indians of the lower classes with the native African population.

Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, resolutely determined to restrict future immigration to people of European stock, have avoided any discrimination against Indians by name and devised different means of achieving their object. Australia (like the Cape and Natal when they first adopted the exclusion policy) subjects immigrants to an educational test which formerly in the hands of local officials displayed useful qualities of elasticity. Canada made rules against the entry of persons who did not come direct from their country of origin—and there is no direct steamship line between India and Canada—and required Asiatic immigrants to possess a considerable sum of money. The Union of South Africa took power to prohibit the entry of any classes of persons officially declared to be unsuitable to the country, and decided, after nearly 150,000 Indians had settled there, that Asiatics were unsuitable. The Indian question in Canada* presents several

* Canada shares with the United States the habit of describing all the peoples of India, whatever their race or creed, as "Hindus," because in North America the term "Indians" is applied to the aboriginal people known to ethnologists as "Amerindians" but commonly called "Red Indians."

individual features. The immigrants were in nearly all cases Sikhs or other Punjabis who had gone to Chinese ports as police constables or watchmen or servants and were drawn across the Pacific by the high wages of lumbering and similar work in British Columbia. It is here alone that the Indian immigrants come from the hardy and martial stock of Northern India. Here, again, British Indian subjects, many of whom had served in the army, met somewhat less favourable treatment than Japanese, because Japan agreed with Canada to restrict the emigration of Japanese labourers, while the Government of India long clung to the doctrine that a practical arrangement restricting emigration but ensuring a better position for the Indians who were admitted would be fatal to the claim, absolutely unenforceable in practice, that Indians had a right to settle freely in any part of the Empire.

Fortunately the Imperial Conferences have done much to solve some of the difficulties. It was agreed in 1917 and 1918, by which time India's part in the War had made a wide and real impression, that each part of the Empire "should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population by means of restriction on immigration from any of the other countries," and mutual arrangements were made for the admission of students and visitors for purposes of commerce or pleasure. India is free to discriminate against citizens of the Dominions. The claims of resident Indians to political rights were furthered by the declaration of the Imperial Conference of 1921,

which, while reaffirming the principle of reciprocity, recognised "that there is an incongruity between the position of India as an equal partner of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire." The Conference therefore recorded that "in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, it is desirable that the rights of such Indians to citizenship should be recognised." But the South African representatives "in view of the exceptional circumstances of the greater part of the Union" regretted their inability to accept this resolution. In 1922 Mr. Sastri on behalf of the Indian Government visited, with satisfactory results, Australia (where about 2,000 Indians are settled), New Zealand (containing about 500) and Canada (where the number is now about 1,000) to confer with the Dominion Governments. At the Imperial Conference of 1923 Canada, Australia and New Zealand encouraged the suggestion for visits from Committees appointed by the Government of India, but General Smuts frankly explained the peculiar difficulties created in South Africa by economic factors.

The exclusion policy of the Dominions has of course greatly impeded the efforts of the Imperial Government in negotiations with any foreign Powers that were inclined to erect barriers against the entrance of British Indians. The Federal Government of the United States, while freely admitting students and temporary visitors, has barred the door against the entry of people from a large zone of Asia which includes India, while

State legislation has in some cases told heavily upon Indians who acquired land.

The new status of India has been recognised by the grant of powers of direct negotiation with Dominion Governments, and in 1924 the Government of India itself appointed a Committee in London to confer direct with the Colonial Office. For many years the India Office has been constantly engaged in difficult discussions with that Department on the problems arising out of legislation and executive policy in the Dominions, and on the results of labour emigration to Crown Colonies, and one of the most important duties of the Secretary of State for India is to see that the Indian point of view is presented as clearly as possible to the Imperial Cabinet and the Governments of the other members of the Empire.

Chapter XIV

THE LIBRARY AND RECORDS

The Library—The India Museum—The Imperial Institute—The Indian Scientific Departments—Indian Archæology—Literary Patronage—The Geographical Department—The India Office Records

The India Office Library

It is to the liberal policy of the East India Company that the India Office owes the possession of a fine Library.* Its collection of books is much more than an official reference library used for purely departmental purposes. The historian Robert Orme, whose close narrative of our struggles with the French in Southern India is perhaps more honoured than perused in these hurried days, was Historiographer to the Company in the closing days of the eighteenth century, and urged insistently upon the Directors the advantages of forming a collection of Oriental manuscripts and printed books. Though he did not live to see the Library formed at the East India House in Leadenhall Street, it was created at his suggestion, and enriched by his bequest to the Company of his large collection of

* The India Office Library has been described by Mr. F. H. Brown, C.I.E., in "The Library," July, 1904, and *The Pioneer Mail* of Allahabad, August, 1904, and by Mrs. Storey ("James Cassidy") in "The Indian Magazine," July, 1906. I am indebted to these articles for several interesting particulars.