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THE PIONEER MAIL.

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THE PIONEER MAIL
AND INDIAN WEEKLY NEWS.

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ALLAHABAD—JUNE 19, 1914.

INDIANS AND THE COLONIES.

UNTIL Mr. Ghandi commenced his movement in South Africa little was heard by the outside world of the natives of India (Indians is a word which locally implies red men) in British Columbia. Presumably it is the satisfactory settlement of the South African question—for we take it that the Union Government will have no more difficulty over its amending Bill—which has induced the wealthy Sikh, Gurdit Singh, to arrange the voyage of the Komagata Maru and to test, as he says, the right of Asiatic British subjects to enter any part of the British Empire. The cases of the two Colonies are not identical. In South Africa many Indians were resident in the Transvaal before the war, while Natal had definitely invited Indian coolies to develop her planting industries. The situation was complicated in the Union by the ever present "native question," the South African blacks being a vigorous race of barbarians; while the red men of Canada are not a factor which counts. Finally the strong colour prejudice of the Boers led the South African Government into taking measures which were something more than "unsympathetic" towards the Indians; and impartial outsiders agreed that in the Union the Indians had some wrongs which ought to be redressed. Things were different in Canada. British Columbia wished to keep Asiatics out chiefly, it seems, for economic reasons. But in the earlier stages of the

question colour prejudice, if it existed at all, was not a marked feature of the controversy. We know of at least one rich farmer of British Columbia who wished for patriotic reasons to give employment to some Sikhs on his farm, but had to give up the idea as he found the difficulties of providing the food they demanded to be insuperable. Leading Canadian papers wrote articles calling upon the Dominion to remember the services of Punjabis to England during the Mutiny; and for a long time the Ottawa Government was very averse to assisting the western province in its exclusion policy. But, though Canada does not seem a suitable country for Indians to select for emigration, the movement continued and grew, until as a natural result the feeling of opposition in Canada likewise grew and hardened. The matter might have been amicably settled at the beginning, but now it has come to a struggle in which the whole Empire is interested.

The British Empire consists of two main divisions: one in which Englishmen form the population and the other in which they are merely transitory administrators. South Africa does not strictly belong to either class, but for the purpose of this discussion must be included with the first, as the whites are, if not the majority at least the dominant section of the resident population. Had British Empire-builders been as far-seeing as the Romans were they would long ago have settled the status of each half of the Empire and the relations of each to the other. But Englishmen are averse to forethought and rejoice in compromise after a difficulty has arisen. As in private theatricals, so in international sport, in war and in politics, they are convinced that "everything will come right on the night"—and it is surprising how often this cheerful optimism is justified by results.

The present question, however, of what British citizenship implies has been left very late and the solution, though it will surely be found without rending the Empire asunder, can scarcely avoid causing some bitterness of feeling which none will regret more deeply than Imperial-minded Britons. The Imperialists' attitude of mind towards Indians is something of this nature. We required rule in India in a haphazard way, partly by treaty, partly by conquest. We do not doubt our ability to hold India by the sword, but we have not the least desire to do so. We hate to think that any Indians should feel themselves a conquered race, or in any way humiliated by their connection with England. In their own country they have under the law as much personal freedom as any people in Europe, except as regards the Arms Act—and there certain ill-disposed sections make it impossible for the restrictions to be relaxed. By word and deed England has shown and proved to Indians that they are not conquered slaves, but fellow citizens. They enter the Imperial services and become members of the Indian Government and Council of India; Queen Victoria's proclamation guaranteed their free citizenship,

and King George's Durbar brought home the fact to them before their very eyes. The citizen of India could not conceivably have more freedom were the connection with England severed, and would almost certainly find that under the rule of any other European or any Asiatic power he would in fact have far less. In return we ask for loyalty to the connection, and to that call the great majority of Indians cordially respond, the greatest example being the splendid services of the Indian Army. That is the position so far as India is concerned. In the United Kingdom an Indian finds himself possessed of all the rights of an Englishman. Indians can sit and have sat in Parliament and at present one is a member of the Privy Council. If merely born at sea on a British ship an Indian is legally a European. British subject, as witness the case of Barendro Ghose, the brother of Asabindo Ghose, the anarchist.

But Indians have claimed that the rights which they enjoy in India and England should also be extended to them in the Colonies. The Colonial Governments, they say, are making naught of the promise Queen Victoria gave to India, and as the King of England is King also of each Colony his promise ought to hold good in every unit of the Empire. In theory it is a very specious plea. Each Premier is a King's Minister, and the acts of General Botha for example when sanctioned by the Governor-General are in theory the acts of the King. How can the King both affirm and deny? How can he as Emperor of India grant rights which he confirms as King of England, while as King of South Africa or King of Canada he denies those rights? The answer is that though the King is the same everywhere, the Crown is in each case but part of a Constitution and a Government depending therefrom, and the Governments of the United Kingdom, of India, of South Africa and of Canada are not identical. Much trouble would have been saved if this had been clearly laid down when India was annexed by the Crown, but at the time no one thought of doing so, for no one anticipated Indian emigration on a large scale. But certainly no jurist could hold that what was promised on behalf of the Governments of India and the United Kingdom was also promised on behalf of Colonial Governments, many of them at that time unborn.

It would be lamentable if Indians felt—not in excited moods and under the influence of agitators but on calm reflection—that their exclusion from the Colonies was a serious curtailment of their rights as British subjects. Apparently some of them do think so, and the question has been asked, why should they continue to profess and feel loyalty to an Empire in which they only receive partial rights. Many Imperialists are deeply distressed that the feelings of Indians should thus be wounded and are themselves hurt by the charge that the Empire demands loyalty without giving a proper equivalent. But it should be remembered that there are dangers in the theory that all British subjects

the greatest difficulty experienced is in finding suitable landing places, as the country is very uneven, especially in the irrigated portions.

consession of its printing press came on for hearing on the 12th instant before a special bench of the Punjab Chief Court. Arguments were heard for two days and judgment was reserved.

figures:—Bombay, 123 deaths; Madras, 2; Bengal, 15; Bihar, 217; the United Provinces, 448; the Punjab, 2,358; Burma, 86; Mysore, 7; the North-West Frontier, 11; and Jammu, 2.

have equal rights wherever the Union Jack flies, and that in the future Indians themselves might suffer from the universal acceptance of such a principle. Indians are not the only coloured subjects of the British Crown. The Empire contains Chinese, Malays, Polynesians, Red Indians, and Negroes in various stages of civilisation or barbarism. Indians themselves would not maintain that a "Hubshi" ought to have the same rights as an Englishman. Indians are fully aware of the inferiority of the African natives both to themselves and to Europeans. And once an exception (an exception which applies to millions of souls) is granted, the whole theory of the equal rights of all British citizens falls to the ground. As for the right of exclusion it cannot be maintained that every Englishman has the right to enter a Colony from which Indians are excluded. A Colony's powers of exclusion apply also to any Britons whom it may consider undesirable immigrants and that also proves that permission for a British citizen to wander where he will throughout the Empire is not a privilege which can be claimed as an inherent right. If it is possible to exclude a native of the mother country there must be an equal right to exclude citizens from other parts of the Empire.

It is, however, unfortunate that the Colonies do not always recognise the social grades of Indians. They sometimes show themselves unaware of the fact that the aristocracy (by birth or money or brains) of India is as far removed above the coolie and peon as an Oxford Professor is above a drunken bar-lounger. In this respect, however, the Colonials are becoming better informed, as was proved by South Africa's reception of Mr. Gokhale.

But it would be better, if it is not already too late to make the innovation, to define legally what is meant by British citizenship. Definite grades and classes would have to be instituted, and there Rome has left us a precedent. When the Republic began to extend its power over Italy, we find three grades of citizens were recognised: the Roman, the Latin and the Italian. Even in the early Empire all subjects had not full rights. When St. Paul pleaded in the courts that he was a Roman, he did not merely mean that he was a subject of Caesar, but that he was entitled to the highest rights of citizenship. The names soon lost their racial meaning, for Saul of Tarsus was a Hebrew by birth. It was found convenient to promote suitable persons to a higher grade without altering the racial name of the grade. Something similar might be introduced into the British Empire, where the races are even more heterogeneous than were those under the sway of the Caesars. We might make three grades, European, Asiatic and African. The first would include Maltese, Afrikanders, the highest grades of Indian society, and such persons as the most prominent Maoris and West Indians. Enlightened Chiefs of Basutos or Red Indians might be honoured with promotion to the Asiatic grade. Of course the actual names

selected for the classes would not matter, and numbers (but not colours) would do as well as geographical labels. But if it were definitely laid down what exact rights each citizen possessed and if the Imperial Conference guaranteed that these graded rights should be respected throughout the King's dominions a fruitful source of trouble would be easily removed.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LANGUAGE STUDY.

THE Education Department, after spending the first two or three years of its existence in patiently probing and mastering the conditions of the great matters placed in its charge, has recently been giving India, at intervals, the benefit of its researches in the shape of resolutions on Education, Sanitation and kindred subjects. Its latest pronouncement, published some days ago, has reference to the study of the languages of this country—oriental languages as these are more often styled in the absence of a more precise designation—by Government officers. The term oriental is obviously of too wide application, whereas Indian is too narrow, for Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and Pali are included. The interest of Sanskrit and Pali is not local, but philological and Buddhist; Persian, though formerly of great use in India itself and at one time a certain stepping stone to Political employ, is now only appreciated for its use in Persia and possibly Afghanistan; and Arabic, to administrators in this country, is of importance only because of its connection with the religious literature of the Mahomedans; although to the soldier, our many and growing interests in Mesopotamia, the Arabian peninsula and Egypt make its practical study a matter of immediate interest.

Leaving aside the classical languages as these four are styled in Indian Universities, the outstanding feature of the Revised Rules for the encouragement of the study of the languages of the country among officials is the introduction of an examination in the purely vernacular languages, intermediate between that which the official has to pass as an obligatory qualification at the time that he passes in other departmental subjects, such as law, after his first two or three years in the country, and that considerably higher voluntary examination known as the High Proficiency. This new standard is the Proficiency, and it is on the extent to which this examination "takes" that the success or otherwise of Government's endeavour to stimulate the cultivation of the native languages depends. Such an examination exists already in Urdu, and it appears to be popular, the number of military candidates being particularly large. This is probably accounted for by the fact that Urdu—or as it is more commonly known among Europeans Hindustani—is the *lingua franca* of the Indian Army, and it may also be due to the

reward of Rs. 500 having been too small to induce the more highly paid and busier Civilian to take up its study. This reward has, however, now been increased to Rs. 750.

The ideal that Government no doubt has before it in this respect is that all European officials in India, whether soldiers or civilians, should pass this Proficiency examination either in Urdu or in the vernacular of the Province to which they are posted or in both. Whether an officer goes on to take the High Proficiency and Degree of Honour is another matter which would depend on a variety of circumstances, such as leisure, and taste and natural capacity in that line. After perusing what has been said at Home in connection with the proposed School of Languages, as to the very great lack of linguistic attainments shown by officials and other British in the East, it is a matter of surprise to the lay mind that Indians, and those who voice their opinions, should not have included this matter of the importance of officials being more familiar than they are with the languages of this country, in their stock of complaints against the shortcomings of the Government. One wonders whether it is sheer kindness on their part, a delicate fear of hurting the feelings of the Government official, that has prevented them bringing this matter to the fore or whether the motive has been a keen perception of the advantages of keeping the power of personal intercourse with the Government official a prerogative of the educated class.

Next in importance among the changes introduced by the Education Department in this new set of rules is that new text-books have been prescribed in nearly every case in the different languages. It has been a long standing complaint that the books hitherto prescribed were generally so out of date and so classical that to read them was almost to lose all ability to talk with anybody but a pundit or a maulavi, and that in a most stilted style. We fancy that prospective students will gladly welcome the increased human interest possessed by the new books, which is apparent from a glance at the kind of text-book now substituted. These include novels, plays, modern popular poetry and, we notice, in one or two cases, even a farce. Reading such as this should enable an official to come into conversational grips with the people he is governing, and not only teach him the modern common language but also give him an insight into the ideas and habits of the people—a matter so obviously important that it scarcely needs the stress laid on it by Sir G. Birdwood and other speakers at the meeting in the City recently held in connection with the School of Oriental Languages.

The Military Department, for several years past, have allowed officers to go abroad to study languages on the spot under reasonably liberal conditions as to allowances and rewards. But the experiment has not answered expectations. It is strange that young officers should not have accepted with more alacrity the opportunity thus