

THE
COLLECTED
WORKS
OF
MAHATMA
GANDHI

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THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

The Union Government, if they have any sense of honour, are bound to remove the racial inequality before the law, and in any measure passed to bring about that end, they are bound not to disturb existing rights. They have failed to carry out either part of the compact.

Mr. Harcourt seems also to be under the impression that the few amendments that have been made in the Bill are due to the initiative of the Union Government or their desire to do justice. They have been wrung from them by an Opposition in Parliament which was as creditable as it was unexpected by the Ministry. Indeed, had the Opposition been only a little stronger and more consistent we should now have a law in spite of the Union Government, that would have made final the provisional settlement of 1911.

As it is, unless the Royal sanction is withheld from the Bill, and fresh assurances given to the community that the terms of the settlement of 1911 will be entirely carried out, and that the marriage difficulty will be removed, passive resistance, this time both by men and women, will be taken up. The Union Government may be, indeed are, indifferent whether it is or is not, but I have faith enough in this sovereign remedy for all the ills that the civic and political life of a community is heir to to know that, if we are true to ourselves, it must succeed.

The latest proposal of the Government to remove the £3 tax only from women demonstrates beyond doubt their consistently hostile attitude and bad faith towards the Indian community.

The Cape Argus, 13-6-1913

80. THE BILL

The Bill may now become the law of the land any moment and Indians may find themselves deprived on the 1st August and, thereafter, of several rights which they have hitherto enjoyed. It is not possible to speak with certainty of the amendments so far carried or of the full effect of the Bill. Mr. W. P. Schreiner, who put up a strenuous fight on our behalf, was able to secure a modification of the marriage amendment and, in spite of Mr. Fischer's threat that he would not only not withdraw the registration clause but that if we did not accept the Bill in full, he might take out the whole amendment and restore the original draft, the registration clause seems to have been omitted. What the new clause in its latest form is one cannot judge without having the full text.

But even if the marriage difficulty is over, there is no doubt that the Bill leaves much that is offensive enough to compel passive resisters to resist it. It appears to leave the question of jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in a very unsatisfactory state. It deprives Indians resident in Natal of the usual facility with which they have hitherto been able to re-enter it. They may not now, as of yore, be able to do so on the strength of three years' previous residence in Natal. Nor may indentured Indians who may have paid the £3 tax be allowed to claim the right of residence therein. South Africa-born Indians may not *now* enter the Cape under the Cape Act. The Free State difficulty remains as it was before. It therefore appears that this is a Bill, resistance to which is a duty and compliance a crime.

It is remarkable, however, that the Bill, though avowedly an anti-Indian Bill, had a stormy passage through both the Houses and that concessions, such as they are, were wrung from an unwilling and hard-hearted Minister. In the Senate, on two occasions the voting on certain clauses resulted in a tie. This is a good augury for the future and speaks well for the effect of passive resistance. It has quickened the spirit of inquiry into Indian matters on the part of a large number of members.

But, if some members of the Union Parliament have spoken zealously in our behalf, the Imperial Government seem to have neglected us entirely and wholly accepted the Union Government's view. Indeed, so far as they are concerned, they appear, incredible as it may seem, to have accepted the Bill as it was originally published, thus going back upon their own despatches. If Mr. Harcourt is correctly reported, he appears to believe that the Union Government are desirous of doing us full justice. This opinion certainly could not be based upon the original Draft Bill nor upon what happened in Parliament. The original draft could not well be more drastic; it was so considered by the South African Press; the attitude of the Minister in charge of the Bill could not well be more hostile.

But we need not feel sore if the Imperial Government have betrayed us and neglected their trust. They are more concerned with pleasing the Union Government who represent an infinitesimal but a boisterous European portion of the Empire, than with pleasing India which, though supposed to be the brightest diadem in the British crown, represents a people who are long-suffering and who do not require to be pleased, much less pampered. Our final court of appeal must be ourselves. If we are true to

ourselves, no doubt others will be true to us, as soon as they discover the fact, but no sooner.

Indian Opinion, 14-6-1913

81. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HEALTH [-XXIV]

6. INFECTIOUS DISEASES: SMALLPOX--I

We have discussed a few things about fever and some other ailments. It is not intended in these chapters to go into detail with regard to all diseases. Indeed, it is unnecessary to write individually of each disease when both cause and treatment are common to all of them. Infectious diseases like smallpox also arise from the same cause and it is not really necessary, therefore, to write separately about them either. It will not be wrong, however, to devote one chapter to smallpox.

An outbreak of smallpox creates such a scare that hundreds of superstitions connected with it are current. In India, it is actually ascribed to a particular goddess and countless men and women take vows in order to be cured of the disease. Like other illnesses, smallpox arises from polluted blood, which in its turn originates in fever of the intestines. The body throws out accumulated poisons by way of eruptions. If this view is correct, there is no need whatever to be afraid of smallpox. If it was uniformly infectious, then all those who freely touch the body of the smallpox patient would catch the disease. But we know that this does not happen. There is no need, therefore, to dread smallpox, though, of course, we should take precautions against it. We cannot say definitely that it is not infectious. If anyone pre-disposed to the disease touches a smallpox patient, he will certainly get it. That is why, whenever smallpox breaks out, a number of people fall a prey to it. Because the infection is caught in this manner through contact, people are infected with cowpox and misled into believing that the cowpox infection will induce smallpox in a mild, harmless form and so prevent an actual attack of smallpox. The process consists in first infecting a cow's udder with smallpox and then introducing the vaccine taken from that part into our body through the skin, in order to induce smallpox in us and thus protect us against an attack in an acute form. At first it was believed that one vaccination of this sort would provide life-long immunity. But on experience it was found that even those who had been so vaccinated did not remain immune against infection for a very long time. It has been concluded, accordingly, that after the lapse of a certain period, it is necessary to repeat vaccination. Nowadays,