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## RAILWAY RATES INCREASED

**R**AILWAY fares and goods traffic rates are to be increased as from October 1, according to Mr. F. C. Sturrock, Minister of Railways.

The increase has become necessary to meet the additional expenditure involved in improvements in working hours, salary and wage scales. An amount of £4,000,000 is involved.

(See Page 6, cols. 4 and 5)

# NICHOLLS WARNS NATAL

From Our Special Representative

**T**HE Administrator of Natal, Mr. G. Heaton Nicholls, yesterday analysed the results to Natal if the Occupation Control Ordinance were rejected.

Mr. Nicholls was opening the Natal Municipal Association conference at Port Shepstone.

"It is common knowledge that the Association has led the war against the draft Ordinance and, in furtherance of its campaign, it has advised its constituent local authorities to take common action in opposing the measure," he said. "What I think it is my duty to tell you, is that a great responsibility rests upon this Association should its assumptions prove to be erroneous and the draft Ordinance does not become law.

"In the first place you are probably not unaware that, by the terms of the Pegging Act, the operative clauses concerning Natal can be withdrawn by proclamation at any time; and once that is done only a new Act of Parliament can restore the position; that is, these clauses cannot be made operative again by proclamation. In the second place, the duration of the Pegging Act is limited to March 31, 1946, i.e., 18 months—though provision is made in the Act for its prolongation, presumably from year to year, by resolution of Parliament. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the protection afforded to Natal—or to be precise, to Durban alone, since it has not been extended to any other town—would disappear immediately deproclamation took place; and, in that event, the possibility of the introduction of another Pegging Act into Parliament must, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, be regarded as distinctly problematical.

### WITHOUT PROTECTION

"In such circumstances, the Occupation Control Ordinance would peg the position as far as any further Indian penetration into European residential areas is concerned and leave open the door for a progressive policy after proper inquiry; should however, the draft Ordinance fail to pass and the Pegging Act be withdrawn, we should then revert to the old position and be without protection of any kind against Indian penetration. We must assume that you have fully weighed the position.

"In taking this course so un-animously you have satisfied yourselves that it is a safe course to take in the interests of Natal. The argument, I take it, runs something like this. The Government dare not deproclaim the Pegging Act and Parliament will only see that it is continued. It will determine that it shall apply to all parts of Natal. Then for this belief may be satisfied upon the success of the  
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# S.A. INDIANS UNITED

The Government of India have recognised the Natal Indian Congress, founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894, and resuscitated yesterday, and will discourage any future attempt to create a rival organisation.

This statement of his Government's policy was given in Durban yesterday by the High Commissioner for India, Sir Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, when he presided at the inaugural meeting of the revived Congress. He added: "The Government of India think that the decision to form a united organisation is of great importance and most welcome. They will regard anyone who fosters or perpetuates disunity as rendering the Indian community great disservice."

Later he impressed upon Congress that as about 85 per cent. of local Indians had been born and bred in South Africa there should be no divided allegiance, and that Indians must be wholly devoted to the political and economic interests of South Africa, which had given them sustenance. "I realise it is difficult to evoke sentiments of devotion when numerous discriminatory laws restrict their activity in many directions. This is, I believe, a passing phase, for this country contains many Europeans of good will and understanding."

## MENACE TO PEACE

Sir Shafa'at referred to the "Pegging" Act, saying: "The Indian question in South Africa has become a menace to world peace. Japan has been using it to rouse the whole of Asia, Zeesen has also used it, while the feeling in England and other countries is no less strong."

"It was one of the most unfortunate measures that has ever been passed by any legislative body in recent times, and the events of last month showed conclusively that there is no real need for it. The Pegging Act is an ideal programme for the production of frustration and disappointment among Indians. It is not really a solution of the pressing problem of housing, and we have yet to find a remedy."

He went on: "The attitude of the Government of India on this subject has been clear from the outset. It has formally lodged an emphatic protest against a piece of legislation which is inconsistent with Allied aims and inimical to the spirit of the new world which the Allies wish to construct at the end of the war. It is my earnest hope that Indians throughout Natal will speak with one voice on this issue."

The need had long been felt for adequate Indian housing, he went on, but no effort had yet been made to meet this demand.

## STRONGLY OPPOSED

"Instead of providing amenities for Indians, where it will be possible for them to live with men of their race and culture, legislation has been passed to prevent what is termed 'penetration.'"

"My attitude on this point has always been clear. The Indian people and the Government of India are most strongly opposed to segregation, and the effects of the Pegging Act are now visible not only in India but throughout the world."

In this connection he contended that the cry of penetration would never have been raised had there been some Indian members in the Durban City Council, for the good sense and moderation of the leaders of the two sections in the Corporation would have brought about a compromise. Indians should be eligible for membership of the municipal and Parliamentary bodies, for, he said, it was easier for Indians and European members of town councils to adjust their differences in the Corporation "than to make some trivial disputes of a small street or locality the subject of an acute political controversy between South Africa and India."

## FRANCHISE WANTED

Sir Shafa'at also urged Congress to move for municipal and Parliamentary franchise on a common roll, without which the racial cleavage between the two races would continue to widen, and the two races would drift apart. Representation of Indians in the civic and parliamentary life of the country was necessary because "unless Indians have an opportunity of playing their part in the civic and parliamentary life of their country, the Indian problem will continue to be a recurring cause of friction between the two races."

Declaring that the signatures to the agreement resulting in the revival of the Indian Congress revealed that not a single influential section of the community had been left unrepresented, Sir Shafa'at emphasised the necessity for its keeping in view the need for co-operation between Indians and Europeans, and the need to work for freedom from discriminatory laws. He also urged Congress to work for freedom from the colour bar in industry.

He added that attempts might be made in future to divide the Indians on economic or religious grounds, but was convinced that these would fail miserably; for the youth were not interested in the personal quarrels of a few top leaders.

## MORE APPRECIATED

A motion of appreciation for the services of Sir Shafa'at, Mr. Kajee and Mr. Pather in achieving unity among the Indians of Natal was passed.

Before Sir Shafa'at's address several Indian speakers declared that the 1,500 Indians present were an answer to "The Natal Mercury," which had been trying to divide the community, claiming that the leaders did not represent the masses.

The new Congress came into being yesterday with the dissolution of the old Congress and the Natal Indian Association, and an agreed list of office-bearers to serve a probationary period of 12 months before others can be democratically elected was adopted, after being drawn up as a matter of expediency by Mr. A. I. Kajee and Mr. P. R. Pather. The new president is Mr. J. W. Godfrey, with Mr. Kajee as chair-





# The Natal Mercury

and

Commercial Advertiser

SATURDAY, DEC. 4, 1943.

## Communal Franchise For Indians

Senator C. F. Clarkson is to be congratulated on his bold and far-sighted approach to the Indian problem. His statement to the Natal Municipal Executive yesterday that the time is not far distant when Indians must be granted the municipal franchise on a communal roll is of first class importance. Coming as it did from a Minister of the Interior who is so well versed in the intricacies of the matter, it deserves immediate and authoritative attention. The proposal is one that has repeatedly been made in these columns. The Indian is an integral part of the community, and must be treated as such. As far as Natal is concerned, the Indian population now equals the European population, and it is clearly unjust that it should remain voiceless in the control of municipal, provincial and State affairs.

### Right Approach

If all aspects of the Indian problem—housing, health and education, to name but three—could be dealt with in the spirit in which Senator Clarkson dealt yesterday with the question of penetration and the franchise, there would soon cease to be an Indian problem. He quite rightly urged the municipalities to lose no further time in setting aside adequate and suitable land for Indian settlement, and pointed out that the penetration that has taken place was the work not of any large section of the Indian community but of fewer than five hundred wealthy Indians. There can be little doubt that the vast majority of the Indian population prefer to live among their own race. They should be given the opportunity to do so by opening up new land in suitable localities—and by this we mean land in attractive surroundings and within easy reach of the centre of the city. It is essential that these areas should be served by efficient transport and other public services, and that they should become exclusively Indian as far as ownership and occupation are concerned.

### Rights And Privileges

As we have said before, there is only one way in which to solve the Indian problem and that is by way of an honest endeavour to turn the Indian into a valuable South African citizen, with rights and privileges, with responsibilities, and the knowledge that he has a real stake in the future of the country. It is on these lines that the Government are apparently now working. All that remains is for the municipalities and the Provinces to follow suit. The Indian himself must, of course, contribute his share of effort. He must show more readiness to co-operate, and less of the "touchy" and unyielding attitude he has hitherto displayed. If the Indian community as a whole are going to allow themselves to be led by the nose by a few, not entirely disinterested, leaders, into believing that the establishment of exclusively Indian owned and occupied suburbs implies the stigma of "segregation," then it is difficult to see what can be done to help them. There must, after all, be reasonableness on both sides if a satisfactory solution is to be found to this difficult problem.

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