

Acknowledgments.

India did not figure in the agenda of our Conference when we assembled around this table, but, as an Indian, I thank the Prime Minister and the British Government for having agreed to our suggestion to set aside a day for the discussion of the important problem of Indians overseas. We owe acknowledgments for letting the discussion extend to a much longer time than originally conceived, in order to give every one an opportunity to unburden their mind and to put forward their points of view.

Summary of Previous Discussion, and thanks to Prime Ministers and other Speakers.

In my own personal capacity I said at the commencement of the Conference that, rightly or wrongly—and I believe rightly—I came with the determination of giving co-operation and good will, and I am happy to be able to acknowledge to-day that during our discussions we have found the full measure of it.

I thank the Prime Minister of Canada for having given a very welcome lead, in viewing our problem relating to his Dominion, from a broad point of view. On behalf of my order I thank Mr. Bruce for his sympathy, and the Prime Ministers of New Zealand and of Newfoundland for the very warm and cordial support of India as related to their Dominions. From Ireland came a very warm-hearted response towards their fellow-citizens of the Empire in my country.

I hope I may even thank General Smuts for such kind references as he has made for my countrymen, and I thank him for extending to me personally an invitation to come to South Africa to see for myself the problems and difficulties that exist. I sincerely hope that I may be able to accept his very kind invitation, and I almost wish I was going back with him to his country. But at the present moment this is not feasible; but that invitation will certainly not pass into oblivion, but will remain in a tender corner of my heart, and I hope for the sake of my country I may be able to respond to it at no great distant date. I make it clear, however, that I should like to come in my personal capacity, and not as a representative of my country or of my order, for that would be the best way to enhance my own personal knowledge of the difficulties that exist and to understand the problems that exist in that country, which are, perhaps, the main sources of the whole question having come up so prominently.

General Smuts will appreciate, however, that, although I may deprive myself of coming as a representative, I shall still come as an Indian, and as one in whose heart these questions undoubtedly rankle, but who, for his personal satisfaction, and if he can be of any use and is desired to be of any use to his country, will be able to do so, while at the same time keeping in mind the broader view of trying fully to appreciate the difficulties that exist on the different sides.

Position of Indians in Canada.

Now, what is the position of Indians overseas as we see it to-day on the bright side, if you look? Mr. Mackenzie King has told us that in Canada there are eight provinces in which no legal disability exists as regards Indians, and where, I understand, they have equal rights of franchise.

Mr. Mackenzie King: There are nine provinces. They have no legal disabilities; there is a political disability in one—that is all.

In Australia.

The Maharajah of Alwar: In Australia, although the domiciled Indians amount only to about two thousand, we have the promise of the Australian Premier that they will be treated sympathetically, and that this question has been the subject of considerable public discussion, and the representatives of every shade of political thought have shown sympathy with the claim that lawfully domiciled Indians should enjoy full citizen rights; and, finally, that, so far as the position of Indians domiciled in Australia is concerned, any measure which is conceived in the interests of the Empire as a whole would be welcomed.

In New Zealand.

In New Zealand the number of Indians is small, but the spirit which recognizes no difference of race, colour, or creed is indeed one that should inspire not only our admiration, but also our gratitude, and the Prime Minister of New Zealand has told us that they give the Indian residents in New Zealand practically the same privileges which are enjoyed by people of the Anglo-Saxon race, and that there is practically no difference between them. It is even a happy augury to hear words come out of the mouth of this responsible statesman that the aboriginal tribes in New Zealand are in exactly the same position as the European residents, and that they have the same privileges in parliamentary and local affairs.

In Newfoundland.

In Newfoundland the numbers of Indians are smaller still, but we are glad to see the same spirit prevailing there as in New Zealand.

In Irish Free State.

In Ireland the problem does not arise, but we nevertheless appreciate and welcome the sentiments on behalf of its representatives.

In South Africa.

In South Africa, General Smuts has told us that, in the Cape of Good Hope and the Cape Province, Indians are on exactly the same footing as the whites and have a franchise. General Smuts has hinted to us that in the Transvaal and the Free State the franchise was not laid down by South Africa, but by the British Government.