

of the policy must be reserved. Sapru's proposal in letter to Sir Narasimha Sarma to reserve the right to challenge policy when India's interests are affected, though substantially the same as ours, is less elastic. We earnestly hope that you have secured Smuts's agreement to abandon or modify the segregation policy as suggested in our despatch. We attach very great importance to it. We hope also that the Dominions and the Colonial Office will consent to the appointment of agents to assist them and us in this difficult question as suggested in our memorandum. Please send copy of the telegram to Sapru."

I will not take up your time further. I have tried only to reinforce the argument which Lord Peel put forward by showing how the different classes of our people are agreed on this question.

#### **Present Position of Indians Overseas.**

Having explained the depth and implication of Indian feeling, I will now proceed to explain the circumstances in various parts of the world by which this feeling is at present aggravated. I have been studying such official papers as are available to me, and, for the sake of convenience and to save your time, I propose to read out to you a very brief summary of the position. There are about one and a half million Indians now settled in other parts of the Empire, and in many parts they are subjected, as Indians, and quite irrespective of how well they shape up to local franchise standards, to grave political and even economic disabilities.

#### **New Zealand.**

Let me start my brief survey of these grievances by paying a tribute to the Government of New Zealand, which is represented by my distinguished friend over there. That Government, in its own territory at least, treats Indians on a footing of equality with all other inhabitants of the country. And my countrymen can live there among the New-Zealanders as fellow-citizens in honour.

#### **Australia.**

In Australia also the disabilities which Indians suffer are comparatively small. We hope that before long legislation will be passed to enable them to exercise the Dominion franchise, and to remove the disqualification they at present suffer in regard to invalid and old-age pensions. In certain provinces also there are minor disabilities which I hope it will not be hard to remove. In Queensland they have no State franchise; and they have to undergo a dictation test for employment in the sugar and dairy industries, which is apt to operate prejudicially. In Western Australia also they have no State franchise; while in Southern Australia they are disqualified for leases under the Irrigation Act. Let me tell you plainly that, if I have failed in this statement to convince Mr. Bruce, I hope he will at least extend to me the hand of fellowship on this question; I am willing to co-operate with him to devise methods for a solution of these difficulties.

#### **Canada.**

In Canada, of which Mr. Mackenzie King is the distinguished Prime Minister, there is a small population—I hope he will correct me if I am wrong—of not more than six thousand.

*Mr. Mackenzie King*: Over twelve hundred.

*Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru*: Thank you very much. In British Columbia there is no Dominion, provincial, or municipal franchise.

#### **South Africa.**

Now I come to the most difficult part of my task: I come to South Africa. In South Africa the problem is most serious. Here there are 161,000 Indians, of which all but a few thousands, mainly resident in Cape Colony, have no political franchise. In Natal, besides this, they fear to lose the municipal franchise. In the Transvaal there is no franchise of any kind. Nor is it only of political subjection that my countrymen complain. They also suffer under severe economic handicaps. In Natal they are restrained from acquiring town lands in townships. In the Transvaal they are prohibited, either as individuals or as companies, from acquiring land; and in the gold area they may not occupy land. To make their lot more miserable, the laws governing the grant and regulation of traders' licenses are administered in a manner which strikes directly at their own interests. Moreover, the Union Government, of which my friend, General Smuts, is the head, is even now contemplating legislation which will provide for the compulsory segregation of Indians in urban areas by restrictions on the ownership and occupation of land.

#### **References to previous Statements by General Smuts and Mr. Burton.**

May I be permitted, at this stage, to invite the attention of the Conference to a curious discrepancy between this very serious state of affairs and the sentiments enunciated in 1917, I believe in this very hall. General Smuts then said (and I quote his very words): "Once the white community in South Africa were rid of the fear that they were going to be flooded by unlimited immigration from India" (a fear removed once and for all by India's acceptance of the reciprocity resolution of 1917) "all the other questions would be considered subsidiary and would become easily and perfectly soluble."

May I also remind you of what Mr. Burton said on a former occasion at the Imperial Conference—and I attach considerable importance to the testimony he has given as to the character of my countrymen in South Africa. Mr. Burton said: "As far as we are concerned, it is only fair to say, and it is the truth, that we have found that the Indians in our midst in South Africa, who form in some parts a very substantial portion of the population, are good, law-abiding, quiet citizens, and it is our duty to see, as he—i.e., Sir S. P. Sinha—expressed it, that they are treated as human beings, with feelings like our own and in a proper manner."