

THE  
COLLECTED  
WORKS  
OF  
MAHATMA  
GANDHI

VOLUME TWELVE



THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION



338. LETTER TO INDENTURED INDIANS

[CAPE TOWN,  
After June 22, 1914]

TO  
INDIANS COMING WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ACT 17 OF 1895  
MY DEAR BRETHREN,

You must have known by now that the £3 tax which you, your wives and grown-up children had to pay every year has been repealed and that the collection of arrears has been suspended. This means that you can live in freedom in this Province without re-indenturing yourselves. The Act of 1891 which applied to those who arrived before 1895 will now apply to you as well. It was in order to bring this about that you, I and hundreds of our brethren put up a struggle and went through suffering. But *The Natal Mercury* has stated that your position has become worse than it was and that now you will be either compelled to re-indenture yourselves or sent back to India. This is not true. The Government has stated categorically in one of its communications that the inference which the *Mercury* has drawn is not correct.<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Government and the Government of India are parties to the settlement. I know how they understand it. They have no doubt that the repeal of the tax means that you can live as free men and that, if you live so in Natal for three years, you will get the same rights of residence as Indians who arrive as free immigrants. And finally I want to tell you that, if, under the new Act, you are treated as prohibited immigrants, as *The Natal Mercury* says you will be, no matter in what part of the world I may be, I shall use all my strength to get so terrible an injustice removed. I am convinced, however, that the Government intends nothing of the kind and also that the Act bears no such meaning. This is the view of Mr. Marshall Campbell, too, who worked so hard to secure the repeal of the tax. You need have, therefore, no apprehensions on this score and I hope that no Indian will henceforth re-indenture himself out of fear of being expelled from this Colony.

[From Gujarati]  
*Indian Opinion*, 29-7-1914

<sup>1</sup> Vide footnote 1 on p. 427.