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Asiatic Clerks of Milky Audit + M.L.C

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Mr. Tadwalkar's Telegram

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President of Council

Chairman of Executive Committee  
H. H. THE AGA KHAN  
Deputy Chairman:  
Sir M. M. BHOWNAGREE  
K.C.I.E.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer:  
By: S. L. POLAK

# Indians Overseas Association.

Office: Kaloph, Strand, London  
Kaloph, London.  
Phone Central 2832

47-48, Danes Inn House,  
265, Strand, London, W.C.2



January 7th. 1920.

The Under Secretary of State,  
Colonial Office, S.W.1.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter No. 68196/1919 of the 8th ultimo, the contents of which I note.

I now beg to enclose herewith a copy of the report referred to in Mr. Tadwalder's telegram, for your information.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

of the petitioners is briefly thus:-

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petitioners are Asiatics and were engaged early in 1914-1915 in the Military Audit Department and Military Labour Corps. Majority of them have been attested for the convenience of the Departments and have been serving loyally since that year. When the economic conditions became more and more acute they applied to the General Officer Commanding and also to His Excellency the Governor of the Protectorate for relief and requested that the privileges due to Military men be granted. They also pointed out that other Asiatic Clerks of the East Africa Pay Corps who were on the same footing as your Petitioners have been granted the Military privileges of War Bonus and Gratuity. As they were attested and their case therefore should be similarly treated, but this was declined on the ground that the petitioners were Civil men. Petitioners having been compelled to throw themselves on the help of the Government applied for civil concessions as recommended by Sir Alfred Lascelles in the case of Civil Servants. This was also declined for the reason that the petitioners were neither Civilian nor Military men and that individuals concerned were locally engaged temporary clerks who were taken on as Civilians to supplement the establishment of certain Military Departments and that they therefore are not entitled to any of the concessions applied for. The Staff Captain East Africa Expeditionary Force further stated in his letter of 22nd October last "They were given certain allowances on account of extra cost of living and in view of the fact that several had rendered long service, General Officer Commanding sanctioned their being given leave on discharge according to the length of the service." Petitioners fail to understand the reason given above. According to office records it is clear that Military Audit Department was considered purely a Civil Department by the authorities and after the ruling of His Excellency the Governor to this effect, Civilisation is only due by the Civilian and recovery from them. But as it was found inconvenient for

Government to allow clerks to work on Civil conditions in the Military such restrictions or stipulations were imposed on them and thus the Petitioners were compelled by these restrictions to share all the hardships entailed by Military service along with other Military men but were not allowed to participate the benefits due to such service. From the above it would be clear to you that the Petitioners were neither Civil nor Military men is an erroneous one causing grievous injustice to your humble petitioners. It is further stated that the petitioners were temporary Civil clerks engaged to supplement the establishments of certain Military Departments and hence no concessions are due. So far as the Military Audit Department is concerned the above statement is far from truth. The clerks were never engaged to supplement the Military establishment but were engaged to start a new branch of Civil Audit after the advent of the war and formed the main body of the Military Audit Staff in British East Africa. It might as well be stated that no terms of agreement were set out before the petitioners were engaged in 1914/15 and subsequent to that year it is therefore doubtful what the Staff Captain East African Expeditionary Force really meant by "temporary" and how the state of being "temporary" became a disqualification for the concession asked for. The petitioners have not worked for few days or few months only but for about five years and further entered into agreement on 1st April 1919 with the Government to serve one year or less as required after the Military operations ceased to exist and the peace treaty was signed and ratified. The men of the permanent Civil staff went on leave and have by this time returned on duties and yet the petitioners who were considered only "temporary" have not been granted leave after such a long period of service. The petitioners of course understood that after six months of the termination of the war, services of the petitioners would be dispensed with, if this is to be taken as the temporary service then the whole war was after all a temporary one and the augmented staff of the Military become combatant or otherwise was on the temporary service but in spite of all this the Military

privileges appear to have been given. Such being the case the Petitioners consider it a piece of misfortune that such an excuse should have been brought forward in the way of relief although they did so excellent work refraining all the time from protesting against more trying hardships they had to contend with during the critical times of the War. Petitioners' services have been at least as long if not longer as those of any staff of permanent civil department, the rigours of War were equally trying to both permanent and temporary; the Petitioners therefore doubt the justification for withholding the grant of relief on the Military or civil scale which was deemed so imperative and necessary by the Home Authorities. It is simply bewildering to the Petitioners to see that a differentiation should have been made between Asiatics and Asiatics whose case is identical with the Petitioners. For your information it might be stated that the Asiatic clerks of the East African Reg. Corps were also temporarily engaged like the Petitioners and were attested and considered as soldiers and the Chief Paymaster has seen his way to meet his clerks and privileges such as War Bonus and Gratuity have been granted, yet the Acting Director of Military Audit and Director of Military Labour thought fit to deprive their clerks of the relief on the grounds above referred to. A petition was submitted to the Government here for grant of relief on civil scale as recommended by Sir Alfred Lavelle but the reply received from the Chief Secretary to the Government is as follows:-

"I am directed to state that clerks of the Military Audit Department having been engaged at an inclusive scale of salary are not entitled to any payment in respect of war bonus, house allowance, passage to India or leave allowance on account of service in that Department."

The reason for non-payment of concessions asked for entirely different from the reasons given by the staff Captain East African Expeditionary Force and which have been dealt with in the preceding pages. In the opinion of the Chief Secretary the reason that Petitioners were Non-Civil and non-Military and temporary is of

but he considers that salaries were inclusive of War House Allowance and all other items the petitioners asked in consequence none would be granted. It must be clearly stated here that on the date of the Petitioners' appointments in 1914 or subsequent to that year scale of salaries on civil basis ranging from Rs. 50 to Rs. 250/- was arranged. When the War started it was impossible for any one to say how long the war would last and far less to gauge and count the effects of the world-wide war on the Civil or Military service of this country. In view of this fact how the starting salary of say Rs. 75/- to 80/- inclusive of War Bonus, Gratuity, House Allowance, Passage India and Leave Allowance on account of service or other concessions granted to relieve the employes from the acute economic condition ruling in or after 1917. Instances can be suitably cited and it can be proved that the salaries were not inclusive ones. This fact will be driven home by the instance which is given below:-

A certain clerk was employed in March 1916 on salary of Rs. 75/- per mensem subsequently his salary was raised to Rs. 80/- which included Rs. 15/- for Ration Allowance. This termed in official records as consolidated pay. Further increments having been granted every year his salary reached to Rs. 125/- in August 1919. In consideration of the high cost of living a sum of Rs. 30/- as from April 1919 was added to his salary making a total of Rs. 155/- per month. Later on his services were transferred to the Protectorate service and his salary there was Rs. 75/- plus Rs. 45/- for House Allowance Rs. 50/- for War Bonus making a total of Rs. 170/- per month. If this clerk were to join the Protectorate service in 1917 he would have drawn the same amount of Rs. 155/-. This is generally the case with all the petitioners. In the year 1916 a certain allowance of Rs. 15/- or Rs. 20/- in lieu of rations was given and this was added to the salaries of the petitioners and is being termed as consolidated. If the salaries of petitioners were inclusive of everything the petitioners confidently believe that this extra allowance would never have been added to their salaries subsequent to their

engagements. The Petitioners made repeated representa-  
 Civil and Military Authorities and pointed out how they  
 into the depth of distress by pursuance of a policy so ha-  
 the interests of the Petitioners. The General Officer Command-  
 ruled later on by which Petitioners were granted 57 days' wages  
 after three years' completed service that also at the option of  
 the Department Officer and addition of rupees thirty for a month  
 to cover the increased cost of living commencing from April 1919  
 for those who agreed to serve for a year or less as required from  
 that date. The inadequacy of this palliative measure would be  
 obvious to you when it is stated that the Petitioners stood in  
 graver necessity of relief in and after 1917 when they are getting  
 less pay than in April 1918 and the fact Sir Alfred Lescellier  
 would not have recommended higher scale of concessions unless he  
 found grave conditions justifying his doing so. The Highest  
 civil or Military authorities in the country having graver or more  
 important matters pressing upon their attentions hardly find  
 opportunities to go into the details of such matters and a tenden-  
 cy of relying upon the decisions submitted by the Heads of Depart-  
 ments unfortunately arises and in countries like this where there  
 is such profuse growth of colour prejudice matters prove disas-  
 trous to the coloured subordinate staff generally, unless they are  
 really under a very sympathetic officer as is not the case at  
 present of the unfortunate Petitioners. The Petitioners frankly  
 admit that they have been in other matters treated in a fair  
 manner by their officers and it has been a pleasure to work with  
 them for so long a time. All the civil concessions granted so  
 generously by Home authority for relief have been given to the  
 civil servants both Europeans and Asiatics alike. But the  
 great war is over all Europeans both temporary and permanent,  
 combatant or non-combatant have all been paid War Bonus, Gratuity  
 and other allowances, without hesitation but not a single Asiatic  
 save a few Asiatic artisans and mechanics has been favoured with  
 the grant of these military privileges but he is -  
 some reason or other. Not only  
 were granted to the Asiatic etc

are now being recovered as a result of representations made by the Petitioners for grant of these privileges to the General Officer Commanding, East African Expeditionary Force.

Your humble Petitioners therefore beg to bring to your attention the sad disappointment which prevails amongst the large section of the Asiatic Clerks of the Military Audit and Military Labour Corps in this country at the unjust treatment meted out to them on so prejudicial and so obviously unjustifiable grounds and earnestly beseech you that the relief on the lines indicated in the enclosed telegram be granted at an early date to your humble Petitioners.

(Signed)

S. B. Padwalker

For the Petitioners.