

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF 11TH WORLD ANGLO-INDIAN REUNION
2019 ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ANGLO-INDIAN
ASSOCIATIONS AT ST.GEORGE'S ANGLO-INDIAN HR.SEC SCHOOL,
CHENNAI ON 07.01.2019 AT 12.00 NOON**

Anaivarukkum Vanakkam

**Dr. Geoffrey K. Francis,
Ex-MLA**

**Thiru. Gordon Maher,
President, International Anglo-Indian Federation**

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen,
Bishop of Madras**

**Thiru. Harry MacLure,
Reunion Convenor**

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

The Anglo-Indians are a distinct Indian community who have accommodated in their outlook and lifestyle two different ways of living and looking at the world.

Till 1911, 'Anglo-Indian' was the term used by the British to describe themselves, i.e., who spent most of their lives in India in the civil and military services, and who held senior positions in Government Departments, or spent years in the country as merchants and professionals, traders and planters. They were men like Thomas Munro, 'Boy' Malcolm and Charles Metcalfe, on the one hand, and William Jones, Colin Mackenzie and William Lambton, on the other.

It was in the 1911 census that the Government of Lord Hardinge officially termed those of mixed blood, children born of European fathers and Indian mothers and children born of their offspring, as 'Anglo-Indians'.

Historically, the term Anglo-Indian was also used in common parlance in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries era to refer to those people such as Rudyard Kipling, or the hunter-naturalist Jim Corbett, who were of British descent but were born and raised in India.

The Indian constitution guarantees the rights of communities and religious and linguistic minorities,

permits Anglo-Indians to maintain their own schools and to use English as the medium of instruction.

Article 366(2) of the Indian Constitution defines Anglo-Indian to be a person whose father or any of other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein.

The Anglo-Indian community is the only Indian community that has representatives, 2 MPs, nominated to the Lok Sabha. This privilege was obtained by Frank Anthony, a brilliant lawyer who in 1942 took over the leadership from Sir Henry Gidney. Frank Anthony was a member of the

Constituent Assembly and also a nominated Member of Parliament for four decades.

Fourteen states out of twenty-nine states in India; Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal also have a single nominated Anglo-Indian member each in their respective State assemblies.

I am informed that, every three years, Anglo-Indians across the globe meet and celebrate their oneness at an event that has come to be called the World Anglo-Indian Reunion. The Event is held under the auspices of the International Federation of

Anglo-Indian Associations, which is a federation of Anglo-Indian Associations located in different cities and countries of the world. The first Reunion was held in 1989 at London and now the eleventh Reunion is being inaugurated here at Madras (Chennai). I am happy that Anglos In The Wind, edited by Harry MacLure, has been given the privilege of hosting it. It is a fitting tribute to an organization that has, through its quarterly publication, helped connect community members located in different parts of the world.

I am sure that you are all happy to come back to where your roots belong. You have indeed a legacy to feel proud about.

Anglo-Indian contribution in the field of education has been outstanding. A total of 300 Anglo-Indian schools have been set up in the country, out of which a hundred are about a century old. The ICSE Board of Education was set up by the Anglo-Indian educationist A.E.T. Barrow. The community was also responsible for setting up three eminent public schools in the country, the Frank Anthony Public Schools at Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore.

In Tamil Nadu, there are presently about 40 Anglo-Indian schools rendering service to the State. Special mention must be made of St. George's School which is over 300 years old. The Doveton

school in Madras which was started in 1855 also deserves mention as it a school that is wholly owned and managed by Anglo-Indians.

Anglo-Indian women were the pioneers of women's emancipation in India, emerging as the country's first secretaries, nurses and airhostesses.

Beatrix D'Souza was the first woman (and till date the only person) from Madras to represent the community in Parliament. She was nominated to the 12th (1998-1999) and 13th Lok Sabha (1999-2004). She had earlier represented the Anglo-Indians in the Tamil Nadu Assembly (1991-96) and was the first Anglo-Indian Chairperson of the State's Minorities Commission. She was also a member of the State

Commission for Women. But generations of students remember Dr. D'Souza as Professor and Head of the English Department of Presidency College, Madras, one of the first three colleges in India and the nucleus of the University of Madras, where she was recognized as an authority on Commonwealth Literature.

Around 8000 Anglo Indians fought in World War I, and there was even an Anglo-Indian battalion. In the 1965 war with Pakistan, Brig. Desmond Hayde was the architect of the victory at Dogra, the turning point of the war.

Trevor Keelor was the first to shoot down an enemy fighter jet during the 65 war. The feat was

repeated by his brother Denzil a few days later. On retirement, Denzil helped set up the Flight Inspection System for the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Air Marshal M.S.D. Wollen played a pivotal role in the 1971 war conducting daring raids into Pakistan. Denis La Fontaine went on to become Air Chief Marshal, heading the Indian Air Force during 1985-88. Anglo-Indians made similar contributions to the Indian Navy, with Admiral Ronnie Pereira heading the Indian Navy during 1979-82. Even today, there are Anglo-Indian youngsters serving in the armed forces.

Anglo-Indians were known for laying the foundations of and manning the Railways in the

country. Anglo-Indian drivers took pride in bringing their trains in on time, and it was not uncommon to see people at Madras Central setting their watches according to the time the trains rolled in.

In 1921, Mr. Henry Gidney, an ophthalmologist, emerged as leader of the community across the country. He made forceful representations on behalf of the community before the Simon Commission (1928-29) and the three Round Table Conferences (1930-32) and vigorously urged Anglo-Indians to think of themselves as Indians or else be stranded with no clear national identity.

The community has also distinguished itself in sport. Norman Pritchard won the silver medal in

200m in the 1900 Paris Olympics but no one remembers him today. Leslie and Derek Boosey, father and son from Kolar Gold Fields, and Henry Rebello of Mysore were India's top triple jumpers. Henry Rebello was the top contender for gold at the 1948 Olympics but injury put paid to those hopes. Derek went on to represent Britain in the 1968 Mexico Olympics. India's top javelin thrower Ken Bosen of Madras received the Dronacharya award in 2000 for his earlier services as National Coach. Another Dronacharya winner has been Wilson Jones of Pune who was the first Indian to win the World Billiard's Championship in 1958. Paul Gaudoin who played hockey for India in 2 Olympic Games was

from Madras. Nisha Millet, also from Madras, was the first woman to represent India in the Olympics, in swimming. Carlton Chapman of Bangalore captained the Indian football team in the late 90s and In cricket, Roger Binny acquitted himself creditably as a pace bowler for India.

In Government Service, Eric Stracey was the first DGP of Tamil Nadu. His brother Cyril had been a member of Subhash Chandra Bose's INA and later became India's Consul General in San Francisco. A third brother Ralph Stracey was District Magistrate of Howrah and then Collector of Dacca in the 1940s who did an admirable job in handling communal riots.

It is now estimated that over one-third of the community has left the country since Independence. Anglo-Indians have settled not only in the English speaking countries of the world, but also in places like Hawaii, Pharo Islands, Spain and the Netherlands. Indeed, one can truly say that the Anglo-Indian diaspora is a global one.

Today is the day of your reunion. And yours is all the more grand since it an international reunion. Reunions give us the opportunity to see those people who were close to us and re-explore the relationships of the past. They provide us with the treasures that we can keep locked deep within our

souls and open up to keep our hearts warm when the gate of memory swings on its hinges.

I am indeed greatly appreciation of the International Anglo-Indian Federation for having thought of such as lovely idea which they have been pursuing with relentless zeal since 1989. The Reunion convener deserves a special world of prize for the painstaking efforts has been taken to convene this meet in Chennai. I am thankful to all of you for having given me the opportunity to address all of you.

I am sure that wherever you are in the world you will remember that the cause for your greatness is India. This was the nation in which your ancestors

toiled to make a living. This was the place where they raised your families. This is the place which has given you the roots to spread out far and wide with success. May you all work for the greatness of India, the welfare of mankind and the pride of the Anglo-Indian Community.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....