

Phoenix Settlement
March 7th, 1954

MANILAL GANDHI - on welcoming the MRA force

On behalf of my wife and myself and the inmates of this settlement I wish to say how very happy we are to have you all here. I want also to thank my friends because whom I very hurriedly invited because of very short notice that they have taken the trouble to come such far distances. Some could not come. They would very liked to have come.

We have all heard of the wonderful work that the Moral Re-Armament people are doing throughout the world. They stand for principles which are really the fundamental principles of all religions. They are not giving anything new to the world, but they are once again reminding the world of what the world has forgotten. They have a very, very difficult task. They stand for the principles of absolute truth, absolute purity, absolute honesty, and they have a very difficult task in a world in which today there is prevailing the spirit of dishonesty, of untruthfulness and of violence. I am unhappy to have to say this but you will all agree with me that these forces are in India. I have no doubt that everyone that has followed your movement has been very greatly improved and I have nodoubt that those who have come in close touch with you have understood what you stand for and for the work you are doing.

I can only pray for your success and I can assure you that we stand with you whole-heartedly in the great work that you are doing. Once again I want to thank you very, very heartily for having graced this humble abode of ours with your presence and having agreed so kindly to let us hear from you some of the things of your great movement and also some of the achievements you have had in foreign countries and particularly in India. We shall all be very, very delighted to hear these songs and also to make the acquaintance of you all and I feel very highly honoured, both my wife and I, to have in our midst Lady Hardinge, particularly because she reminds us of old days. Lady Hardinge is the daughter-in-law of Lord Hardinge, one of the most popular Viceroy's of India. Father had much dealing with Lord Hardinge and I know that when South Africans and Indians were in great trouble in 1914, it was Lord Hardinge who was very outspoken in condemning the policy of the South African Government. We therefore cherish the memories of old days and particularly of Lord Hardinge and it really is a great delight to us to have Lady Hardinge with us this afternoon. I am very, very happy to have my friend, Dr. Taylor, who I consider is one of our hosts here.

I really have no words to express to you how deeply grateful I am for this afternoon. It has been a great day in our lives and in the life of this settlement. We have not had such occasions often in this settlement, and I do not think I should be wrong in saying that we have never had such an occasion even when my father was here, because we have never had people from almost every part of the world gathered here together, as we have gathered here this afternoon. So it really is a unique occasion in our own hearts and in the life of the settlement. It is a very memorable occasion and one we will never be able to forget.

You have done a great honour by coming here. Not to us - we are just humble people - but you have done a great honour to my father and to all that he stood for. We here are just trying to humbly follow in his footsteps. We are full of weaknesses, and we are greatly honoured today with your visit and with all the affection that you have poured on us this afternoon. We have fed your stomachs but you have given us food for our brains. The food that you have given us is invaluable. What we have done for you is mighty little. It is nothing at all compared with what you have done for us, and I really have no words to adequately express my thanks and my wife's thanks for what you have done.

I value these little tokens immensely. I value them much more than any material wealth. I shall keep them with me. They shall live with me as long as I live.

I know the work that you are doing. I have been following it very closely and you have always had my thoughts and my prayers. It is a wonderful thing that you are doing. Today for the salvation of the world there is no other way but for each one of us to improve our ourselves and not wait for the other person to improve. That is what you stand for and if that is what we all stand for the world will change and it will be a happier place in which to live.

I really cannot express to you how deeply grateful we are to you for having taken so much trouble to come and see us and you have blessed this soil with your presence. I have no doubt that you have enriched it a great deal. It is going to be an everlasting inspiration to us. And Lady Hardinge I really feel highly honoured that you have had the patience to come to South Africa and see us. I never dreamt that a relation of Lord Hardinge would ever grace this place with her presence, and it is a great delight to us and a great honour. And you said that you look forward to the day when I and my wife will be at Caux. We are all living in hopes and we have not given up hope of one day of having the good fortune of being at Caux.

Our prayers are always with you and our hearts will always be with you. I am deeply grateful to you for the trouble you have taken to come this way. My heart is simply full and I cannot adequately express my feeling.