GOVERNMENT AND PRINCES: INDIA 1918-1939.

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This thesis is concerned with the formulation of British policies towards
the Indian Princes, with special reference to the period 1918-1939 when the
Princely Order achieved an unprecedented prominence in British eyes.
Chapter one investigates the changing relationships between successive
British administrations and the Indian States. In discussing the emergence
of an official policy of trust, several of its manifestations are considered:
the initiation of a Chamber of Princes; the transfer of Indian States to
a direct relationship with the Government of India; the provision of legal
safeguards for Princes; the modernisation of Indian States' Forces; the
policy of recognition through honours which also saw the nomination of Princes
as India's representatives at international conferences. Chapter two takes
as its main focus the exercise of control over the affairs of the Princely
States. The character and function of the Foreign and Political Department
of the Government of India are examined. The scope of Paramountoy together
with differing rationales for intervention are investigated in respect of
various circumstances pertaining to criminality, maladministration, the
enforcement of humanitarian edicts, disputes concerning territorial readjustment
and successions, the conflict of economic interest between British Provinces
and Indian India. The origins of the Harcourt Butler Committee of 1928,
together with an account of its progress through India and the content of
its Report, constitute the material discussed in chapter three. Chapter
four traces the emergence of the Federal ideal with particular emphasis on the
proceedings of the First Round Table Conference and the unexpected arrival of
the Princes in the arena of All-India politics. Chapter five is concerned
to establish the central role of the Princes in the framing of the 1935 India
Act. Certain irregular connections made between British diehard interests
and prominent Princes are uncovered. In conclusion, some explanations are
advanced for the despatch of the Indian Federation to a constitutional limbo.
and the eclipse of the Indian Princes as a political force. Some general comment is made on the unimpressive nature of the allegiances struck up between successive British administrators and politicians and the Indian Princes.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification.

[Signature]
Gerard Doula.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first thanks must go to Professor V. G. Kiernan for his longstanding encouragement and support, together with his generosity in reading and commenting upon sections of the text. I am indebted also to the late Dr. J. N. M. Maclean and to Dr. T. Barron for their valued assistance in offering a number of discerning criticisms. At an early stage in the project, Professor J. Gallagher was instrumental in delineating the most fruitful lines of enquiry. Subsequently, Professor Barun De contributed some provocative and stimulating comment.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the staffs of the Library of the University of Edinburgh, and the India Office Library, London, for their unfailing cooperation. Much kindness and prodigality in respect of their time was demonstrated by close colleagues, Drs. Cooper, Kowalski and Porter, who read and criticised a succession of drafts. My thanks are due also to Mrs. J. Griffiths who typed a lengthy manuscript with dedication and skill.

Finally, my thanks go to my wife and two small sons for their patience.
Abbreviations used in the text

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PROLOGUE
NOTE: The States marked in this map are those the Rulers of which are entitled to Membership of the Chamber of Princes in their own right.
On the morning of 25th March, 1946, the three distinguished members of
the Cabinet Mission were ushered into the Viceroy's private conference
room in his Delhi residence. The Political Advisor to the Crown
Representative had arranged for the display of a large map of India in which
the territory of the Indian States was clearly distinguished from British
India. Fethwick-Lawrence and Alexander were astonished, and even
Cripps was surprised by the sheer magnitude of the territorial possessions
of the Indian Princes, some two-fifths of the whole sub-continent. While
the team was 'fully briefed' about British Indian problems, only Cripps
appeared to have anything but the most elementary knowledge of the
Indian States.

The astonishment of the majority of the Cabinet Mission is hardly to
be wondered at. Princely India had for long been imperfectly understood
on the British side. The single historian of major standing to tackle
the subject of the Indian Princes, confronted with

'an apparently multitudinous field of princes and princelings, chieftains
and satraps and functionaries in the various secretariats',

conceived that he might be suspected of

'leanings to the Burritanian school of history, a pleasant region
halfway between history proper and the historical novel'.

Edward Thompson felt his task to be justified since, in the imperfect record
of Indian History,

'Native India and its leaders have made only incidental appearances,
their motives rarely understood or even regarded, their personalities
left shadowy'. (3)

Thompson's outstanding study of the evolution of the Indian Princes in the
early nineteenth century has found no successor, in terms of imaginative
scholarship, to document the decline of the Indian Princes in the twentieth

1. The striking extent of the Indian States is well defined in the map
used to illustrate the Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-9,
see map facing.


The format adopted in discussing Princely India has all too often been that of the travelogue and anecdotal miscellany, supplemented by the often affectionate reminiscences of retired British Political Officers of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India.

While several scholars have taken up themes associated with the Indian Princes in the modern era, no systematic investigation has appeared of the most intriguing feature of their recent history, the emergence of the Princely Order from relative obscurity to play a central role in the making of the Indian constitution in the period between the two World Wars. Little attention has been given to the circumstances behind the promotion of the Indian Princes as a welcome counterweight to the gathering strength of Indian nationalism; to the discrete policies which aimed at establishing the Princes and their nominees as a stabilising element at the centre of an All Indian polity; to the

1. Leading exemplars of this type are Rousselet, L., L'Inde des Rajas, (Paris, 1875); Diver, M., Royal India, (1922); Forbes, R., India of the Princes, (1939); Keyserling, Count H., Travel Diary of a Philosopher, (1925); Pellenc, Baron J., Diamonds and Dust: India through French Eyes, (1936); Tottenham, E. L., Highnesses of Hindustan, (1934); Lord, J., The Maharajas, (1972)

2. Prominent in this genre are Lothian, Sir A., Kingdoms of Yesterday, (1951); Fitze, Sir K., Twilight of the Maharajas, (1956); Lawrence, Sir W. R., The India We Served, (1928); Barton, Sir W., The Princes of India, (1934); Coen, Sir T. C., The Indian Political Service, (1971); Corfield, Sir C., The Princely India I Knew: From Reading to Mountbatten, (Madras, 1975); Trevelvan, H., The India We Left, (1972); Wakefield, Sir E., op. cit.

3. Phadnis, U., Towards the Integration of Indian States 1919-1947, (New Delhi, 1968), is a chronological and severely legalistic account of the processes which resulted in the absorption of the Indian States into the Indian Union. Ramusack, B. N., The Indian Princes as Imperial Politicians 1914-1939, Ph.D. (Partial), (Michigan, 1969) was completed while major sources, Viceregal and Secretary of State correspondence were still closed. Wood, H. D., The Relationship between the Indian Princely States and the Indian Central Government 1921-1936, A.M., (Chicago, 1951), is a slight work culled from secondary sources. A scholarly, if rather narrowly focussed, study of the emergence of the Indian States is set out in Sinh, Maharajkumar R., Indian States and the New Regime, (Bombay, 1938)
aspirations of the Princes themselves in a climate of accelerating political change. These were considerations of the most sensitive character for British agencies of government in both Delhi and Whitehall.

As its principal source, this thesis draws upon the 'private and personal' correspondence between Secretary of State and Viceroy, the channel which controlled policy towards the Indian States 'from the Mutiny to Partition'. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of this correspondence. Montagu, congratulated Reading on the quality of his letters, remarked 'they are like lamps in a London fog'. The comparative isolation of the Viceroy in Delhi gave, on occasion, a personal and intimate character to his correspondence with the Secretary of State. As Reading wrote to Birkenhead:

'I shall particularly welcome the friendly and informal discussions in our private letters, for, as you can well imagine, the Viceroy lives in isolation and cannot indulge in intricacies with officials, however high, even if he had more temptations than are actually presented'.

The confidentiality of this supreme channel of communication was stressed by Benn when he wrote to the Viceroy:

'of course we correspond in the strictest confidence and a good deal goes into these letters which, were you here, would never be put on paper'.

This confidentiality was jealously guarded. When a Parliamentary Under Secretary requested access to the private correspondence between Secretary of State and Viceroy, Linlithgow would only agree that 'selected paragraphs' should be made available.

5. Benn to Irwin, 27th February, 1930, R.P., 6, p. 46.
'It is really astonishing how these feudal old-world enclaves have carried on with so little change right into the middle of the twentieth century. The air is heavy and still there, and the waters move sluggishly, and the newcomer, used to change and movement and a little wary of them perhaps, feels a drowsiness, and a faint charm steals over him. It all seems unreal, like a picture where time stands still and an unchanging scene meets the eye. Almost unconsciously he drifts back to the past and to his childhood's dreams, and visions of belted and armoured knights and brave and fair maidens come to him, and turreted castles and chivalry and quixotic ideas of honour and pride and matchless courage and scorn of death. Especially if he happens to be in Rajputana, that home of romance and of vain and impossible deeds.

But soon the visions fade and a sense of oppression comes; it is stifling and difficult to breathe, and below the still or slowly moving waters there is stagnation and putrefaction. One feels hedged, circumscribed, bound down in mind and body. And one sees the utter backwardness and misery of the people, contrasting vividly with the glaring ostentation of the prince's palace. How much of the wealth of the State flows into that palace for the personal needs and luxuries of the prince, how little goes back to the people in any form of service .......... A veil of mystery surrounds these States.'

'They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the railway and the telegraph on one side, and on the other the days of Harun-al-Raschid.'

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The Princes themselves, and their whole position in the country, are very imperfectly understood. How many people realise that Indian India is not, and never has been, British territory; that thousands of bankers, merchants and financiers in Bombay and Calcutta are subjects of Indian States; that the ubiquitous moneylender is usually a Warari from Jaipur; that one-third of India and a quarter of her peoples belong to Rulers, who are allies by treaty with the British Crown.

1. Diver, W., Royal India, (1942), pp. 2, 3.
Chapter 1

The Princes at their Zenith: Manifestations of the Policy of Trust

| The Formation of the Princely States | 7  |
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| The Transfer of Indian States to Direct Relations with the Government of India | 45 |
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| Princes and Prerogatives: Honours and Salutes | 102 |
The existence of a unity of interest between imperialism and Indian princes stretches back, in the strict sense, to the drafting of a treaty in 1765 between the British and the Nawab Vazir of Oudh. Thereafter, a policy of intervention was pursued in the internal affairs of 'protected' States, particularly in the era of Wellesley and Hastings; this was subsumed within a system of 'alliances of perpetual friendship'. In establishing the policy of 'subsidiary alliances', Wellesley intended 'to place the States in such a degree of dependence on the British Power as may deprive them of the means of prosecuting any measure hazardous to the security of the British Empire'.

From Thompson's scholarly investigation, it is clear that India's political framework was constructed in the twenty years between 1789 and 1819, which saw the destruction of the Muslim dynasty of Mysore and the successful British campaign against the Marathas. As Thompson put it:

'the Indian 'Prince' emerged in 1806, arising like the Puranica Urvashi, (4) from the churning of the ocean by the Gods and Demons, and received his position in India's polity in 1819'. (5)

Far from being an impressive survival from antiquity, the Indian Prince was 'the creation of Lord Wellesley in his half dozen years of demonic activity'. (6)

In a graphic passage, Thompson went on the argue that the representatives of the East India Company,

'set the Princes in their position, lifting them out of the chaos in which they were submerged. Then thus picked up and re-established, 'the Princs' were as completely helpless and derelict as any power since the beginning of the world. Had the British Government not intervened, nothing but extinction lay before the Rajput States, and disintegration before the Maratha States. As for such States as Oudh and the Nizam's dominions, their very existence was bogus; they were kept in a semblance of life, only by means of the breath blown through them by the Protecting Power'. (7)

1. The terms of the treaty required the Nawab to maintain forces for the common defence of Oudh and the British possessions in Bengal. See Sinh, R., op. cit., pp. 7, 8.

2. Ibid., p. 12.


4. The renowned courtesan and dancing nymph of Indra's heaven. See Thompson, J., op. cit., p. 5.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 140.

7. Ibid., p. 270.
Published in 1943, this was a damaging interpretation to the aspirations of those Princes and their British supporters who planned for an independent status with the approaching transfer of power. One reviewer felt that Thompson's governing motive had been to discredit, on a historical basis, the contemporary claims of Indian Princes to virtual independence. Another reviewer, and former Political Officer, urged readers to disregard the origins of the Princes and remember, rather, the loyalty of present-day Princes to the British Crown. A long-standing adviser to the Princes, in his review, held that many of the Ruling Princes were indeed of ancient origin. Representative of the school of thought sympathetic to the Princes, was the review which conceded that their pedigrees had now been shown to be less august than had been imagined; but 'I had rather we altered our treaties with them by negotiation than by fracture'.

Thompson's analysis also attracted a good deal of favourable comment. An organ of the popular press assumed that since it had now been convincingly demonstrated that the so-called 'Native States' were creations of the British and that the Princes owed their continued existence to British protection, there should be no difficulty in adapting their artificial status to bring them within the framework of a Dominion India, 'whether the Princes like it or not'. An especially enthusiastic Indian reviewer recorded of Thompson's analysis, 'he has flung a brick into the hot-house of the Princes'.

1. See Great Britain and the East, 11th September, 1943.
5. See Professor Berriedale Keith in The Observer, 15th August, 1943; The Listener, 26th August, 1943; the Glasgow Herald, 3rd September, 1943.
7. Shahani, R. G. Tomorrow, October, 1943, p. 132.
While the Thompson thesis was correct in identifying Indian States in general as creations of the British, there did remain a small number which dated back to pre-Vogul times; Nehru himself conceded the existence of a thousand year old historical continuity in Travancore.

Commentators favourable to the Princes had a tendency to use the 'thousand-year-old' label in a very general sense. Much was made of Tod's researches into Rajput origins which purported to reveal an antiquity of descent unmatched by the more famed European dynasties. European observers were very ready to enlarge upon the romance attached to the dynastic origins of Indian Princes. W. H. Russell on tour with the Prince of Wales in 1875 was struck by the celestial descent accorded to Udaipur,

'a dynasty which outlived eight centuries of foreign domination ... the oldest pedigree in the world'. (4)

A similar thought struck a French traveller in 1925:

'how paltry do the bearers of our oldest names, the oldest of which only date from yesterday compared with those of India, appear by the side of any Rajput! We are here concerned with the greatest triumph of human breeding that I know of'. (5)

Rousselet reasoned that the Rajputs were the representatives of the last Indo-European invasion of India, their customs and morals were more Scythian and Parthian than akin to the Vedas. Describing her visit to Rajputana in the early 1920s, the Vicereine recorded that

'the atmosphere recalled the Song of Roland and pages from Malory's L'Orfe d'Arthur'. (7)

On occasion, travellers in India would extend the romantic ethos of Rajputana to cover the Indian States generally. Thus a French visitor,

2. See Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 78.
3. Tod, Lt.-Col. James, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India, (1829-32), vol. I, p. 136. Tod knew Rajputana having served as Political Agent there between 1812 and 1817.
in 1936, rejoiced to be leaving 'the grey monotony of British India': on entering Patiala, he 'plunged into the seething many coloured life of an Indian State'.

The rationale behind the retention of quasi independent Indian States, held in the firm grasp of 'subsidiary alliances', was not concerned merely to make permanent a mosaic of romantic and medieval character for the edification of peripatetic Europeans. The case for maintaining the Native States as a form of safety valve was urged forcibly before the Commons Committee on Indian Affairs by the enlightened administrator and scholar Mountstuart Elphinstone in 1932:

'their territories afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue, or depredation make them incapable of remaining quiet in ours'.

Elphinstone felt that the States might serve as a style of cesspit:

'we must have some sink to receive all the corrupt matter that abounds in India'.

Some sixty years on, the Governor of Bombay put up the argument in more or less identical terms: while Indian States existed, potential agitators 'may resort to native courts and capitals, where, though not innocuous, they are not so noxious as they might otherwise have been. Thus, as it were, many acrid humours of the imperial body are drawn off from its vital parts to its remotest members'.

Munro argued that the retention of the Indian States on the grounds that, 'among all the disorders of the Native States, the field is open for every man to raise himself; and hence among them there is a spirit of emulation, of restless enterprise and independence, far preferable to the servility of our Indian subjects'.


The preservationist school of thought did play a part in staying the hand of expansionist Governor Generals, but the dominant influence appears to have been the attitude of the Home Government which stipulated a policy of non-intervention following the financial shock of Wellesley's conquests.

However, in the period which immediately followed Bentinck's term of office, substantial motives appeared for annexationist policies. The evils of irresponsible autocracy, supported by unconditional British guarantees, became more and more apparent. In the view of an Indian historian, himself of princely stock,

'the courts of these Princes became the theatre of the most degraded debauchery and the most horrible misgovernment ...... the revenues of the State were dissipated between the mercenaries of the camp and the minions of the Court'.

It was in Dalhousie's time that Wellesley's system of unconditionally guaranteed protectorates, 'was bearing its last and worst fruits'.

Dalhousie was thus led to regard Native Chiefs as 'mischiefous anomalies, to be abolished by every fair means'.

The convulsions of 1857 required that a re-definition of policy towards the Indian States take place. The essence of multifarious anomaly lay in the Princes' status as de facto dependents though in possession of treaties many of which recognised de jure sovereigns. But since the great majority of Princes had shown up well as imperial allies during the emergency, this was hardly the time to codify political practice as opposed to formal recognition. The mood of the day was

2. Sinh, Maharaj-kumar, R. (Heir-Apparent to Sitamar State), op. cit., p. 27
4. No authority was more enthusiastic than Temple: 'the Native states were watched with anxiety, that they come in, the revolt would have swept the Empire. But only some States, as distinguished from sovereigns, moved out of line .... They rendered a priceless service to the British cause, at the moment of its extreme depression. They deserved then, as they will ever deserve, so be esteemed as bulwarks of imperial stability, and as a conservative element in a country where subversion and explosive forces may at any time break forth'. Temple, Sir R., op. cit., p. 60.
accurately conveyed by the Cambridge History of India:

'at the moment when it was the fashion to describe the Indian States as breakwaters on which the Mutiny had dashed in vain, it would have seemed perhaps unwise, certainly ungracious, to insist on the Princes' formal recognition of the changes that had taken place after the earlier treaties had been made and to define precisely their position and obligations'. (1)

The post-Mutiny transfer of India to the Crown offered the opportunity to reward loyal Princes and allay their anxieties. The Queen's proclamation of 1858 announced that,

'We shall respect the rights, dignity and honours of Native Princes as our own'. (2)

It followed that Canning would underwrite the whole of Indian India with adoption sanads which guaranteed the Princes' ancestral possessions. This was a suggestion initiated by the three Phulkian Princes, Patiala, Jhind and Natha. In the aftermath of the Mutiny, both Canning and the Secretary of State were convinced of the political advantages of securing the co-operation of the Rulers of Indian States. Though Sir Charles Wood favoured the appropriation of some pleasant hill territories, in the end he agreed with Canning that

'to attach the Chiefs permanently to us ...... (was) of far more importance than any possession of small districts fitted for European colonisations'. (3)

With the rendition of Mysore in 1861, the patchwork division of India into British administered provinces and Indian States was altered for the last time, in any substantial way, until the transfer of power in 1947. The extent of the Princes' territories was captured in the

3. Canning gave an assurance to every ruling Prince that on failure of natural heirs, the adoption of a successor would be recognised. See Moore, R. J., Sir Charles Wood's India Policy, (1966), p. 164.
4. The Princes generally were delighted, none more so than the Maharaja of Rewa, a leper with no son. See Roberts, Field-Marshall Lord, Forty-One Years in India, (1898), p. 260.
6. Disputed territories were contested in the twentieth century, see chapter 2 pp. 210-21. No large scale renditions were arranged. In 1936, the Government of India refused to carve out a principality for the Aga Khan from British India. See Ketland to Willingdon, 5th July, 1935, Z.P., 6, p. 58.
picturesque prose of Sir William Barton:

'From the huge mountain mass of the Pamirs and Karakoram in the north, where political India impinges on Central Asia, to Cape Comorin in the south, a distance of nearly two thousand miles, one might travel almost entirely through territory of the Indian princes without touching British India . . . . similarly one may pass from west to east, from the Indus nearly to Calcutta, through country that does not owe direct allegiance to the British Crown'. (1)

In area, the Indian States were admittedly enormous, but in population they were 'westly inferior' to British India. Pressures of invasion and conquest had relegated many States to inhospitable and unproductive regions.

While territorial guarantees represented a practical and effective device for the strengthening of ties between the British and the princes, Canning felt that the entry of the Crown into the governance of India, symbolised by the 1858 Royal Proclamation, could also bind princes to the British cause. Following Palmerston's forecast which spoke of a 'tenfold increase' in princes' allegiance should the Crown replace the Company, Canning impressed on the Secretary of State that the Crown:

'is now for the first time brought face to face with its feudatories. There is a reality in the suzerainty of the Sovereign of England which has never existed before, which is not only felt, but eagerly acknowledged by the Chiefs'. (4)

Thus was evinced a theory of paramountcy and feudal overlordship which required visible manifestation. To this end the Order of the Star of India was instituted which it was supposed would fulfil a dual function

2. In 1907, the area of the Indian States stood at 324,000 sq. miles; their collective populations at around 66,000,000. The arid tracts of Rajputana and Baluchistan were more representative of the States as a whole but some of the fairer portions of India also lay within the States, notably the fertile lands of Mysore with its valuable mineral resources, Hyderabad with its iron and coal, 'Aroda, the 'Garden of Gujerat', Kashmir of outstanding scenic beauty. See Lee-Farmer, Sir W., Imperial Gazetteer of India: the Indian Empire, vol. IV, (1907), p. 61. A full statement of the distribution of Indian States together with particulars as to area, population, revenue and status appears as Appendix 1.
3. Sinh, R., op. cit., p. 33
in cementing relations with the British Crown and associating Princes
with 'British functionaries' as members of the same order in a fraternity
of honour'. The Queen's interest was not in doubt:

'serious questions with Native Princes ..... these are the sort of
things Her Majesty likes to hear about'. (2)

To give formal expression to the status of allegiance required of
Indian Princes, Canning instituted a practice of holding ceremonial
durbars, occasions redolent of pomp and splendour. This was an example
of the sort of miscalculation which marred the relationship with the
Princes in the years to come. It had been assumed that the Princes
would find it 'a source of satisfaction' to pay homage to the Queen of
the Paramount Power. Roberts, however, noticed that some of the
highest of the Rajput Chiefs declined to attend the Agra Durbar:

'they considered it would be derogatory to their dignity to obey
the summons of the representative of a sovereign, of whom they
considered themselves the allies and not the feudatories'. (4)

Closely associated with the Durbar policy, was the formalisation of a
personal relationship between the Indian Rulers and the Queen Empress.
The visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1875, its attendant
(5) ceremonials and its success with the Princes was obvious stimulus
to the institution of a new Royal Title which, as Derby explained to the
Lords,

'will mark more clearly the relation which she holds to the
Native Princes of India'. (6)

But there was good reason to suppose that the proposed Royal Title was
not popular with the Princes, a view strongly put to the Home Government
(7) by Lyall, an administrator, vastly experienced in States' affairs.

2. Knight, L. A., 'The Royal Titles Act and India', Historical Journal,
7. Ibid., p. 493. Sir Alfred Lyall was a Commissioner at 33, Home
Secretary to the Government of India at 38, Agent to the Governor
General in Rajputana at 41. See Woodruff, T., The Men Who Ruled India,
vol. 2, pp. 64-74.
The interests which promoted and passed the Royal Titled Act were bound up with the military and political advantages that would accrue from closer relations with the Princes. Lytton took up the policy, after some initial hesitation, and wrote with confidence to the Queen:

'if we have with us the Princes, we shall have with us the people'.

One of the more curious features of this grand design was Lytton's concept of an Indian feudal nobility: by registering the titles of all Princes, the Viceroy hoped to create an Indian peerage. Central to Lytton's policy was the calculation that by treating with the Princes, he might consolidate the Empire at its frontiers:

'why not make Cashmere, for instance, a Warden of the Marches? The moral effect of employing him and his forces for the permanent defence of the Frontier would be considerable'.(3)

Salisbury was not especially enthusiastic: he correctly saw that the self-interest of the Princes would incline them on the British side anyway.

Lytton's famed Proclamation Durbar, the arrangements for which had been cloaked in secrecy, Lytton being afraid that 'English ridicule would burst the bubble', took place on New Year's Day, 1877. It captivated Lord Roberts:

'the magnificence of the Native Princes' retinues can hardly be described .... never before had Princes and Chiefs of every race and creed come from all parts of Hindustan, vying with each other as to the magnificence of their entourage, and met together with the same object - that of acknowledging, and doing homage to one supreme Ruler'. (6)

1. The leading protagonist of this policy appears to have been C. T. Burne, Lytton's Private Secretary. See Knight, L. A., op. cit., p. 494.
2. Neither Mayo nor Northbrook, his predecessors, had dabbled much in a Princes' policy.
4. Ibid., p. 115.
As a key organiser of the pageant, Roberts was not a disinterested observer and he took away an overblown impression of Princes' loyalty. The attitude of the more astute Rulers remained ambiguous; not all were dazzled by the tinsel of the Durbar policy. As Wolker stiffly informed Lord Derby,

'I am no Brigadier or Commander-in-Chief or Governor General, they are paid servants and consequently such honours and titles become them but not to an independent native prince like myself'. (1)

On the British side, the Royal Titles Act had been pushed through largely because Salisbury thought that it might remove an irritating field of parliamentary interference. Princely India had become the main campaigning ground of the Indian Reform Society. Closely linked to the parliamentary agitators were the Princely agents. Salisbury hoped that inconvenient appeals from the Princes to Parliament and informed public opinion would be checked by the Title Proclamation. (3)

In fact Princes continued to employ representatives of varying integrity in London and to engage, particularly in the first three decades of the twentieth century, expensive British legal counsel several of whom were also parliamentarians. (4)

2. Its founder John Dickinson argued that it was in the Native States that 'through an empire of influence, the insoluble British interest, which made real withdrawal unthinkable, could best be developed'. Ibid., p. 591.
3. Despite regulations to the contrary, the Governor General was regularly circumvented. Wolker corresponded with Derby and the Prince of Wales; the Baroda cause found a dupe in the Duke of Sutherland; the former Baroda Resident, Sir George Yule, was the channel of communication between Queen Victoria and the Nizam. Ibid., p. 502. Earlier, Sir Charles Wood had been disturbed by a petition bearing 7,000 signatures pressing for the rendition of Mysore. A Commons select committee had found that a similar petition for the revival of the Nawabship of the Carnatic had been put together at a cost of one penny per signature. Wood deplored the fashion 'for Englishmen to put themselves at the disposition of Indian Princes etc at high pay to bring pressure on the Home Government'. Moore, R. J., op. cit., p. 175.
4. The activities of Sir Leslie Scott, in particular, are discussed in chapter 3, passim.
The Evolution of the Chamber of Princes
The most politically significant aspect of Lytton's Princes policy was his wish to make 12 of the leading Indian Princes members of an Indian Privy Council. Lytton extolled the merits of his scheme as follows:

'the proposed Council will enable the Viceroy, while making parade of consulting native opinion, to swamp the native members and still secure the prestige of their presence and assent; for the biggest natives in such a consultation (properly briefed beforehand) would always acquiesce in the decision of the Viceroy'. (2)

The proposal was knocked on the head by Salisbury who did not wish to see the Princes given internal functions of this sort, a concession which could lead to similar demands from Anglo-Indian interests, and Salisbury had little regard for the 'bragging fatuity' of resident white populations. (3)

The compromise which followed from the rejection of the Privy Council Scheme conferred the title of 'Councillor of the Empress' on 8 Princes, together with an undertaking by Lytton to summon Princes regularly for collective deliberation. This promise was never honoured, the Counsellors were never summoned, and no further appointments were made to the order after 1877. (4)

The era of Dufferin saw an interlude in which the Princes were treated with consideration; the fort of Gwalior was returned to Scindia. Dufferin assured the Secretary of State, with some perspicacity, that as time passed the Princes would lean increasingly on the British as their sole protection against the flood of advancing democracy. (5)

Closer personal relations with Indian Rulers followed from Dufferin's introduction

4. In all 17 notables were honoured with the title at Lytton's great durbar: the Princes were respectively Bundi, Cashmere, Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur, Jind, Rampur and Travancore. The balance was composed of Governors of Provinces, and high officials. See 'Papers Connected with Reports of the Councils Committee', Part II, (1906), I.P., No 12611, p. 418.
5. 'Report of the Committee appointed to consider reforms in the Indian Councils', (1906), I.P., No 12610, p. 119.
of regular visits to the States, a custom followed by succeeding Viceroy's. In Britain, the importance of the Princely bloc continued to be recognised. In a statement of 1893, Kimberley designated the loyalty and goodwill of the Indian Princes as the first of his three essential bases for the continuance of British supremacy in India. (2)

Dufferin had considered a scheme for the representation of Princes in a Legislative Council, which did not get far. The Princes' Council scheme, however, was kept alive by an influential protagonist in Britain, the Princes of Wales himself.

A more thoroughgoing revival of Lytton's scheme had to await the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon: it came to be considered in connection with the Coronation Durbar of 1903. Curzon was set against the 'incongruous and theatrical' style of the 1877 assemblage:

'I do not think Maharajas or Rajas will be the better or happier for being converted into Dukes, Marquesses, Earls and Barons'. (5)

The scheme for a Princes' Council merited more careful consideration. Curzon's initial rejection was based on strong practical grounds:

'such a body would have nothing to do and could only acquire authority and influence at the expense of the Legislature or the Executive Council; geographical difficulties would prevent it from ever meeting; and it would be impotent for purposes of consultation since the members could not conduct business in the same language'. (6)

Curzon's administration was driven to reconsider its position following a fruitful conference at Ajmer in March 1904, devoted to reform in Chiefs' Colleges and attended by leading Princes and Political Officers. The Government of India surmised that the idea of conference and co-operation was no longer distasteful to leading Princes and that certain groups of States were already in private consultation. It behoved the Government

of India to recognise these tendencies 'and to direct them into a channel that would be honourable, safe and useful'. A further 'Council of Princes' scheme emerged to be laid before the Secretary of State which proposed the convocation of a small body, its members to be selected by Curzon from among those Princes who contributed Indian States' troops for imperial purposes. This was open to the ready objection that such limitations would themselves be regarded with suspicion by the Princes:

'the Council would fall into desuetude and perish of inanition as certainly, if not as speedily, as the scheme of titular Counsellors introduced in 1877'.

Curzon handed over office with His Majesty's Government still undecided but the Government of India had come to recognise the spontaneous impulse to association in evidence in Princely India, and warned that

'it is as well to direct it into the right channels before it becomes uncontrollable. Not only this but it probably also contains the germ that will solve the problem of government of India by Indians, in which the British Indian attempts at self-government, based on Western models seemed so conspicuously to have failed'.

The Princes could anticipate the fullest consideration from Curzon's successor, the 4th Earl of Minto. As the great-grandson of the previous Governor General of India who had established the first formal connections with the States in the Napoleonic era, it was entirely appropriate that Minto should wish to establish a forum for discussing grievances in the main associated with the diminished dignity and status of Princes. It was no coincidence that Minto should have appointed as his Private Secretary, perhaps the outstanding Political Officer of

1. 'Report of the Committee appointed to consider Reforms in the Indian Councils', (1906), M.P., No 12610, p. 120.
2. Ibid.
5. Bikaner to Minto, 29th December, M.P., No 1086, p. 27.
his day. Dunlop Smith was keen to talk about the new standing of
the Ruling Princes; he 'described how they had abandoned their old feelings
of somewhat sullen suspicion and were now a powerful asset'.

The 'Ninto era ushered in a relaxed atmosphere; for the first time Princes
(and indeed Indians) were invited to dine with the Viceroy.

The Reforms Committee, established in 1906, was briefed to consider,
among other items, the thorny question of a Council of Princes. Ninto
himself was quite explicit about his role for the projected Council as
'a possible counterpoise to Congress aims'. The Committee produced
a very cautious recommendation which envisaged a body of Princes to include
a leavening of Indian nobles from British India. The proposed Council
was hedged with restrictions leaving powers of agenda and decision to
publish with the Government of India. It was attended to appease
'a novel and impressive style of Indian Prince now emerged from a
former condition of isolation ...... shrewd and active-minded men
of business ...... most valuable advisors if their advice could be
obtained under conditions which would enable it to be freely and
frankly given'.

It was left to a prominent dissenter within the Committee, Tbbetson,
to pinpoint the real purpose behind the proposed Council;
'the importance of organising and enlisting on the side of the
Government, the conservative element of native society, as a
counterpoise to the advanced party'.

1. Dunlop Smith, Sir James Robert; I.C.S. 1883; Famine Commissioner
Rajputana, 1899-1900; Political Agent to the Phulki States, 1901-4;
Private Secretary to the Viceroy, 1905-10. Dunlop Smith's outstanding
success as a firm and wise guide to the Rajputana Rulers in the famine
of 1899 had brought him to the attention of Curzon. See Gilbert, "...

2. Ibid., p. 216.

3. Lady Minto's recollection, ibid., p. 231. See too Minto,"Very
Countess of India, Minto and Morley, 1905-10), 1934), p. 73.


5. Report of the Committee appointed to consider Reforms in the Indian
Councils, (1906), N.P., 192610, p. 121, 2.

6. Tbbetson, Sir Denis; I.C.S. 1870; Secretary to the Government of
India in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, 1896-8; Chief
Commissioner Central Provinces 1899-1902; Member of the Viceroy's
Council 1902-5; Lieut. Governor Punjab, 1905-8.
Ibbetson was solidly against the possibility of a general combination of Princes. He urged that since administrative arrangements with Native States depended very largely on local conditions, they required individual discussion. It would not do to bring into prominence the character of British relations with the States with an enormous variation in the relative degree of subordination and measure of insistence with which the Government was prepared to enforce its view.

Evidently Ibbetson's reservations attracted a good deal of support. In one analysis, Minto had veered away from the Princes towards the Moslem interest since it seemed to represent a more effective counter to Congress. But the Council of Princes scheme found a powerful advocate in a rising Government of India administrator, Harcourt Butler. Reviewing the case for the institution of a Council, in 1908, Butler consulted a number of Princes with positive results; it was on the British side that the project had come in for 'a good deal of criticism'.

Such an experienced Political Officer as Younghusband had drawn attention to certain traits in the Princes which Minto and his advisers had been inclined to gloss over:

'their intense vanity, their intense respect for power .... if the latter is weakened, the former will assert itself. We must not spoil the Chiefs. They should not be encouraged to think themselves the advisers of the Viceroy'.

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1. W.P., Ms. 12610, p. 122.
3. Butler, Sir Spencer Harcourt; Deputy Commissioner Lucknow; future Foreign Secretary to the Government of India; Izmir—Gov. of Burma 1915-17; Governor of the United Provinces, 1917-23; Governor of Burma 1923-7; Butler's activities as Chairman of the Indian States Committee, 1928, are discussed in chapter 3, passim.
5. View of Sir Francis Younghusband; explorer in Central Asia, 1886-92; Political Agent, Chitral, 1893-4; Resident Indore, 1902-3; Resident in Kashmir, 1906-9. Ibid.
Even more to the point was the bluff caveat issued by an anonymous
Political Officer 'of great experience':

'we all know what Native States rule is and why we should invite
Rulers, whose misgovernment has kept the Foreign Office and Political
Office pretty busy for years, to advise us on our own internal
administration, I really don't know'. (1)

On balance, Butler felt he had to reject the negative stance of the
Younghusband school which ignored:

'the solidarity of interest that is growing up between the Government,
and all holders of power resting on property and privilege, against
a class which is more and more clearly directing its attacks against
power, property and privilege. There is already a question of
authority in Mysore and the Caskwar told me in private conversation
that he sees changes in his own people'. (2)

Butler acknowledged that there would be suspicions of Government intentions
in instituting a Princes' Council, the Princes might be seen as imperial
stooges, they might be held up to ridicule by the Indian Press; but he
concluded that

'there seems a demand and scope for a Council of Chiefs'
and recommended that a start be made 'with as few rules as possible ...
and let the thing grow'. (3)

Vinto's successor was not disposed to initiate a Princes' Council,
though, on a personal level, Hardinge enjoyed affectionate relations with
a number of prominent Princes. Hardinge's ultimate accolade was
reserved for the personification of Rajput chivalry, Sir Pertab Singh
of Jodhpur, 'truly a white man among Indians'. In the terms of a
visiting British dignitary and future Secretary of State, Hardinge
pursued 'an inscrutable and intangible' Princes policy. (4)

1. W.P., Ms. 12612, p. 365.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Bikaner, Scindia and Indore were moved to streaming tears' when
Hardinge embarked from the Apollo Bunder at the end of his term.
6. Montagu's diary entry at Bikaner, 7th January, 1913, cited in Foley,
E. S. Montagu's 1913 tour was notable for the hostility which it engendered in the breasts of Anglo-Indian administrators. It also produced a lengthy memorandum on suggestions for reforming relations with the Indian States in the course of which Montagu argued strongly for a system of Conferences, triennial, biennial, or even annual, of Native Chiefs at Delhi, under the Presidency of the Viceroy, for the discussion of business relating to the Native States. This will bring them into personal touch with the Viceroy, access to whom should I consider be as free as possible. 

Hardinge received very different advice from an experienced author and foreign correspondent, Sir Valentine Chirol, who confessed that Montagu has rather frightened me. Having agreed with the Viceroy about the great importance of retaining the loyal support of the Princes, Chirol moved on a different tack:

'I am afraid I have not got quite so much confidence in them as you have, and just now there seems to be a somewhat dangerous tendency amongst them to exaggerate their status and to take themselves too seriously as reigning Princes, prepared to yield a sort of personal allegiance to the King Emperor, but reluctant to remember that they are not what they are sometimes called Feudatory Princes at all, but in most cases by Treaty and in all cases de facto subordinate to the Government of India'.

In the event, it was Chirol's view which carried the day. On his second tour of India in 1917, Montagu noted that his suggestions for Princes Conferences had not been taken up in the way that he had wished.

Hardinge had convened two gatherings of Princes in March 1913 and March 1914, ostensibly to discuss the question of higher education for Princes.

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These low key affairs excited little comment. The Political Secretary of the day confined himself to remarking that some of the Princoely participants might have had their 'corners rubbed off'.

The Princes' hand was greatly strengthened by the advent of war which provided them with a spectacular opportunity to demonstrate a personal loyalty of the highest order to the British Empire. A striking proof of the Princes standing in the highest quarter was the vehement reaction of the King-Emperor to 'cruel slanders', perpetrated by senior Government of India Officials, concerning the loyalty of Rajput Princes:

"the King is indignant that effusions of this character should be made about Princes of whose loyalty he has no doubts. Ever since H.M. first went to India he has been impressed with the feeling that upon the loyalty of the Ruling Princes and Chief our rule must greatly depend, and that they would be our great standby in case of any formidable internal troubles in India'. (2)

George V took the lead in pressing for the closer association of Princes with the Viceroy and the Government of India, and it was in response to royal representations that Chelmsford made concessions, though of show rather than substance:

'I have laid down that Chiefs with salutes of 17 guns take precedence over ordinary members of Council at all social functions; Kolkar has just been my guest; the Maharajas of Bikaner, Patiala, Scindia, Jodhpur and the Jam Sahib follow in close succession; at the end of October I have an informal Conference of Ruling Princes and Chief's at Delhi to consider certain matters concerning the Native States'. (3)

This last arrangement of Chelmsford's, however, came to be recognised as 'the first regular Conference of Princes'. (4)

2. Stamfordham to Chelmsford, 22nd August, 1916, Ch.F., 1, p. 5. The King had a longstanding interest in the fortunes of the Princes dating back to his winter visits to India in 1905/6. 'Why not a Council of Chiefs,' wrote the then Prince on his return, 'presided over by the Viceroy which would bring them together and enable them to know each others view'. Nicholson, R., King George V., (1967), p. 228.
an interpretation which would have appealed to Chelmsford, who was not keen to set a precedent. But in Chamberlain, the Viceroy was dealing with a Secretary of State fully alive to the political possibilities presented by the Princes:

'I wish I saw my way to a somewhat closer permanent association of the Ruling Chiefs with the Government of India. If that were possible they might be a great conservative force and afford a valuable counterpoise to the pseudo democratic movement'. (2)

Chamberlain awaited an assessment of the 1916 Conference with interest and the Viceroy, while noting that it had turned out well in a general sense, found that the noble participants had not been uniformly impressive:

'some of them found the work very arduous; I doubt whether many of them have ever put in such continuous hard work in their lives. It is a weird assembly ranging in ideas from the twentieth to the sixteenth century. I have seen each one of the Chiefs personally and shall not be sorry when my entertainment of them is at an end'. (3)

The guarded nature of the Viceroy's response was taken a good deal farther in a Political Department memorandum and, in transmitting this document to the Secretary of State, Chelmsford gloomily concluded that 'I am afraid your pundits may say - these are the consequences of having a Chief's Conference. It raises difficult questions which might otherwise have slept'. (5)

4. The memorandum appeared under the signature of the Conference Chairman, the Political Secretary, Sir John Wood. While it did not expressly rule out the future development of the Conference into a Council of Princes, at the moment this would be 'premature .... official guidance is necessary in order to maintain and improve the tone of the assemblage'. See the enclosure with Chelmsford to Chamberlain, 10th November, 1916, Ch.1.2, p. 416.
5. Ibid., p. 408.
As the war progressed, with the Princes staunchly heading the imperial van, the question of their eventual reward placed Chelmsford and his Government 'in a great quandary'. One gesture, which had a definite bearing on the question of a Princes' Council, was the nomination by Chelmsford in 1917 of Bikaner to consultations in London with the War Cabinet and to participate in the Imperial War Conference. Even the Nizam, normally aloof, was impressed by this public tribute to the consultative capacity in the Princely order. Once in London, Bikaner approached the Secretary of State with a request that Chiefs Conferences became a regular part of the system. Chamberlain's sympathy was tempered by the potential of a collective body of Princes to interfere in British Indian affairs and he pressed the Viceroy, in the event of future Princes Conferences, to retain absolute power over agendas. Chelmsford, with no great enthusiasm, undertook the arrangement of a Princes' Conference for November 1917 influenced, in the main, by the consideration that failure to repeat the Conference would cause great disappointment. In guarded vein, the Viceroy appraised the new Secretary of State, Montagu, of his feelings about the Conferences,

"I cannot I think yet foresee what may evolve .... but they do, to my mind, serve a useful purpose and offer an opportunity of discussing matters with the Chiefs". (6)

In fact nothing of any particular moment emerged from the 1917 Conference beyond two procedural advances: the Viceroy presided over all sittings, and rules for the conduct of business were drafted.

3. Nizam to Hardinge, 29th December, 1917, Har., 35 f. 266.
The protagonists of the Council of Princes scheme could take great heart from Montagu's support. The conclusion of the 1917 Conference coincided with the arrival of the peripatetic Secretary of State at Bombay; in a remarkably short space of time, Montagu was convinced of his role as tribune for the Princes:

'I have only been here two days; all the Indian Chiefs have called on me and talked to me as a friend and I have got far more out of them than the Viceroy got in ten days of Conference ... they talk to me as they never dare talk to any one else'. (1)

A major obstacle to the establishment of a Council remained the antipathy of several major Princes, headed by the Nizam, who feared for the lifting of that discretionary veil which traditionally shrouded States' affairs. As the Nizam reminded Harding, the Government of India had decided that no question should be put in the Legislative Assemblies of British India about the Indian States. The Nizam wanted no public discussion of any question affecting his State by Ruling Princes or anyone else. (2) The Nizam was satisfied that he had free access to the Viceroy. In a flight of fancy, the Nizam supposed that

'I can approach him through the Resident, who corresponds generally with the King's Ambassador at the Court of a European Sovereign'. (3)

Montagu, never lacking in determination, persisted in his plans to establish a regular forum of Princely opinion. In the course of a very hostile critique of a lukewarm Political Department memorandum on the subject, Montagu pressed for the adoption of a

'Chamber of Princes ..... every objection that has been used to the word 'Council' on the grounds that it denotes subordination in comparison with the Viceroy's other Councils would be justified by Wood's drafting ..... it ought to be put that the Princes may ask the Viceroy to summon it when they would like it to meet, and that they should have power to suggest an agenda and to suggest alterations in the Rules of Business'. (4)

The dominance which the Princes' case had assumed in Montagu's planning was reflected in his final exhortation to the Viceroy:

'I need not remind you that, after all, we owe a greater - or at any rate as great - a debt to the Princes than to British India, and it is equally incumbent upon us to try and satisfy them'. (1)

Added to Montagu's exertions were the initiatives of the Princes themselves. One consequence of the 1917 Chiefs' Conference was the appointment of a select committee, comprising Mikaner, Alwar, Nawana and Patiala, to draw up a scheme of improved relations between the Government and the Indian States. (2) Given the notorious rivalries known to exist within the Princely order, it is not surprising that Patiala found it

'a very difficult and delicate task for the committee to frame its proposals in consonance with the views and opinions expressed by the individual Princes'. (3)

In essence, the Patiala Scheme called for the establishment of a 'Chamber of Ruling Princes' as a permanent body recognised by the Crown; the institution of 'Judicial Tribunals' to sit in disputes between Princes and the Government of India and the establishment of 'Commissions of Enquiry' to investigate allegations against Princes; it called for the placing of all Indian States in direct relations with the Government of India and the representation of the Princes on the Imperial Cabinet and on Imperial Conferences'.

It is an index of the raised status of the Princes that the Montford Report, published in May 1918, incorporated several of Patiala's leading proposals. The Report recommended the establishment of a (5)

'Chamber of Princes'; it supported the institution of 'Commissions of Inquiry' into disputes and 'Judicial Tribunals' into cases of misconduct:

1. Ibid., p. 140.
3. Ibid.
it recommended

'as a general principal ... that all important States should be placed in direct relations with the Central Government'. (1)

Montagu felt that the Report had been well received in influential British quarters. In a very explicit sense, the Report reinforced the concept of the 'Two Indias', a vital demarcation if the States were to be effectively maintained as a counterpoise to Indian nationalism. The doctrine of 'mutual abstention' was stressed, which ruled out British Indian interference in the Native States and vice versa:

'on either hand, we believe, there is no desire to cross the frontier. Rulers and politicians alike recognise that they are best employed in attending to their own progress'. (3)

Such sentiments were prominent on the floor of the House of Commons on the very few occasions when the States were mentioned, during the debates on Indian Reforms. In the Lords, a good deal more was made of the Princes' alleged opposition to constitutional reforms.

With a major constitutional hurdle overcome, there remained difficulties of a severely practical nature, before a Chamber of Princes could be launched with promise of success. Two Conferences of Princes were summoned in January and November, 1919. In the January session, discussions centred on the Montford Report proposals and at once criteria for membership of the proposed Chamber emerged as a sticking point; Chelmsford determined 'that the smaller States should not be oppressed by the Greater'. The Conference appointed a committee to resolve this sensitive area under the chairmanship of the Political Secretary; it made little progress. The limitations of the Chiefs' Conference made

1. Ibid., pp. 245, 6, 7, 8.
6. Chelmsford to Montagu, 22nd January, 1919, Ch.P., pp. 13, 14. Typical of the difficulties was Scindia's refusal to sit at the same Council with his feudatories, Sitamau and Sailana. Ibid.
themselves very apparent to Chelmsford:

'we are not yet dealing with a body, who are all interested in, or in fact in favour of, the Conference. When you have Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Udaipur and Holkar, five not inconsiderable States, holding aloof and only 37 attending the Conference, it is necessary to move cautiously'.

On a personal and social level, the Viceroy found the Conference a 'very tiring experience ..... big dinners every night for the Chiefs'. For his part, Montagu resolved to keep the issue of the Princes' Chamber to the forefront. He pressed Delhi for action even to the extent of suggesting that victory in the war had tempered the Government of India's attitude to the Reforms connected with the Indian States, an insinuation vehemently denied by Chelmsford. The Viceroy put the delays down to disagreement among the Princes on criteria for representation in the Chamber.

The November 1919, Chiefs' Conference made much more tangible progress. Chelmsford appeared more optimistic:

'we are then really in a position to go forward with the actual setting up of a Chamber of Princes'.

He felt that the inauguration of the new Chamber ought to be made an affair of State granted prestige by a royal proclamation, a proposition which Montagu warmly supported. The two outstanding features of the Conference had been 'the very genuine satisfaction' which

1. Chelmsford to Montagu, 29th January, 1919, ibid., p. 17. Chelmsford's animus focussed on Alwar in particular, a house guest and Princely confidant of the Secretary of State: 'your friend Alwar who was the moving spirit at the conference throughout disgusted me'. ibid.
2. Montagu appointed his own informal committee on States affairs drawn from the India Council. Montagu to Chelmsford, 25th June, 1919, ibid., p. 76.
3. Chelmsford to Montagu, 18th June, 1919, ibid., pp. 175, 6.
5. Montagu to Chelmsford, 29th November, 1919, ibid., p. 162.
greeted the proclamation that the Chamber would be established as a matter of policy; and the interim report of a joint committee of Princes and officials,

'a proof that when we discuss over a table with the Princes their grievances, we are able to meet them without any sacrifice of principle'. (1)

This was an over-sanguine appreciation. Out of the list of 23 grievances submitted by the Princes for the consideration of the committee, only four had been dealt with by the end of the year.

Chelmsford was on firmer ground when he hesitated to take the post of Governor of Bombay backslappings at face value:

'I never build too much on these expressions which may be dictated by their wish to please'. (3)

While a measure of Princely approbation had been secured for the establishment of the Chamber, there remained considerable and influential pockets of resistance to the policy. The determined stance of the Governor of Bombay baffled Chelmsford:

'he is most emphatic in his denunciation of the Chamber of Princes, I cannot think where he has got his ideas from, because he really does not know very much about the Princes nor about the very strong desire which many of the most influential of them expressed to have a Chamber which might fit into the general constitutional reform in India'. (4)

The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab together with certain senior Political Officers held that an

'assemblage of the Princes was not the proper machinery for co-operation between the Viceroy and the Ruling Princes'. (5)

2. Sinh, i., op. cit., pp. 73, 4.
3. Chelmsford to Montagu, 13th November, 1919, Ch. 5., 5, p. 372.
Perhaps the most sustained attack on the Chamber policy came from a curious quarter, Hardinge's personal doctor in India, Sir John Roberts, a witness, according to the ex-Viceroy, 'in the confidence of a large number of the Ruling Chiefs'. Roberts charged that the Chamber was the promotion of the 'Rajput Party' fuelled by the political influence built up by Sikander in Britain supported by the canvassing of Alwar and the Jam Sahib. Naturally, the prospect of a Rajput majority was resented by the Maharatta and Muslim States. This echoed Chirol's remarks about Princely fears of schemes for promoting Rajput ascendency.

Roberts' last shot referred to the coercion implicit in having a royal personage at Delhi to inaugurate the Chamber; a refusal to attend might be interpreted as an act of disloyalty to the throne.

Roberts' testimony alarmed both Secretary of State and Viceroy. Montagu observed to Hardinge, with some asperity, that 'the Chamber of Princes must now be taken as a settled fact'. In his reply, Chelmsford felt bound to concede that Roberts' damming assertions were not without foundation especially with regard to the very serious gaps in Princely support among the bigger Princes:

'the Nizam, Mysore, Udaipur, Holkar, these regard the Chamber from the point of view of their iizzat, and they are afraid lest they will sacrifice some of their position vis-a-vis the other Princes by rubbing shoulders with them in the Chamber'.

Chelmsford sought to explain away the contradiction between the two versions of the Princes' political aspirations by reference to the Princes' notorious inconsistency:

'one must remember that all these Princes will say one thing to you and another to a non-official like Roberts'.

1. Hardinge to Montagu, 20th April, 1920, Ch., 6, p. 33.
2. Roberts to Hardinge, 4th April, 1920, Ch., 6, p. 34.
4. Roberts to Hardinge, 4th April, 1920, Ch., 6, p. 36.
Chelmsford recommended that only very gradual development of the Chamber be contemplated; the isolation of the big Princes 'will be corrected by the flux of time'. Montagu, outraged by the tenor of Roberts' criticism, accepted the explanation founded in the Princes' talent for dissimulation:

'perhaps it is just as well for us to see what they say to people outside ourselves'. (2)

The formal inauguration of the Chamber of Princes was arranged for 8th February, 1921; in the interpretation of a leading Indian journalist, a new status was thus accorded to the Princes 'as the third side of the Indian power triangle'. The scene for the inauguration and future annual convocations of Princes was the Princely Hall of Debate in the Council House at New Delhi. Chelmsford felt that the opening ceremony 'was exceedingly effective. The setting of the old fort and palace gave a wonderful background to the proceedings'.

The Duke of Connaught had been specifically deputed to attend and in an 'admirably delivered' speech, he relayed the proclamation of the King-Emperor designed to inflate the prestige of the new institution:

'my Vicereiy will take its counsel freely in matters relating to the territories of the Indian States generally, and in matters which affect those territories jointly with British India, or with the rest of my Empire'. (6)

Thus the Chamber was established as an advisory and consultative body with no executive powers. Its membership, to say the least, was incomplete consisting of 109 Ruling Princes as permanent members together with 12 representatives elected by the Rulers of 127 lesser States. The remaining 327 States were not represented and they were by no means all minor estates or Jagirs: the key States, Hyderabad, Ysore, Beroda and Indore were to take no part in the deliberations of the Chamber. The

5. Chelmsford to Montagu, 9th February, 1921, Ch. E., 6, pp. 312, 3.
7. Ibid., pp. 27, 8; see too Sinha, R., op. cit., p. 75.
absence of the foremost Princes had the natural effect of lowering greatly the prestige and influence of such a Council. However much the Chamber was spoken of as a prestigious body, the sole organisation of the Princes and platform for their interests, it will be clear that it was not representative of the States at large. Roberts' suspicions about the prominence of Bikaner and his 'Rajput party' together with some of the Sikh Princes were given substance by the election and consistent re-election of Bikaner to the office of Chancellor of the Chamber. His supercession in 1926 by Patiala came as a relief to Reading who had expressed concern at the lack of opportunity for other Princes to stand. Patiala subsequently gave way to the Jam Sahib from 1931 to 1933. It has been plausibly suggested that the high office of Chancellor itself became the golden apple of discord among the Princes.

The function of the Chamber was severely constrained by restrictive provisions later described by a Princes' spokesman as 'conditions which deprived it of initiative and rendered it merely the shadow of a name'. The Royal Proclamation ruled out discussions of the affairs of individual States. Very considerable powers were vested in the Viceroy as Presiding Officer of the Chamber. He decided all points of order, the agenda itself which fast assumed a very stereotyped character, timing of adjournment, membership of select committees. The Standing Committee, instituted by the Chamber to function as its administrative organ, suffered from the same marked degree of dissension which characterised the proceedings of the whole Chamber, perpetual difference between middle-sized States and smaller States.

2. Reading to Birkenhead, 28th January, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 211.
3. Sinh, N., op. cit., p. 82.
6. In 1933 Travancore and Kashmir withdrew from the Standing Committee: other prestigious States declined to be represented on it preserving an attitude of 'watchful neutrality'. See Phadnis, N., op. cit., p. 33.
The proceedings of the Chamber were held in camera until 1929. Thereafter the galleries were opened; however, business of a sensitive nature could then be conducted through the meetings of the Standing Committee. Even propagandists for the Princes conceded that it was in the Standing Committee that the 'real work' was done. Undoubtedly this insistence on secrecy drew down suspicion on the institution: after 1921, the practice of publishing the opening speech by the Viceroy was abandoned. When a Prince moved a resolution in 1924 to permit the publication, in excerpts, of proceedings, Reading quashed the proposal 'by drawing a harrowing picture of the consequences of publication to the frightened and over-sensitive minds of the Indian Princes'.

The Chamber sessions were generally admitted to be 'ineffective, there were few lively debates'. Language difficulties may well have inhibited the Chamber's capacity to join issue.

On the Princes' side it was urged that the unimpressive style of Chamber proceedings was in great part due to despotic Viceregal attitudes, notably on the part of Reading. In fact Viceroy generally were consistent in their criticism of these glittering assemblies which caught the eye for spectacle rather than for content. As the session of November, 1921, Reading, 'though very busy and could ill afford the time', himself presided throughout the deliberations. There was nothing of

1. Gauke, E., R.H. or the Pathology of Princes, (Lahore, 1930), p. 44.


3. During the Fifth Session in 1926, the Hindustan Times complained that the Chamber still sat in darkness: 'a few approved members of the public can alone attend under an implied promise of silence. The world must remain unaware even to the advice tendered to the Princes of India by the representative of England's King in this country'. Cited in Abhyankar, C. H., op. cit., p. 255.


6. At the 1924 Conference 'a distinguished Indian Prince' was rumoured to have appealed to the Viceroy to let the proposition be put to the Chamber in Hindi. See Abhyankar, C. H., op. cit., pp. 280, 2.

moment to record; like Chelmsford before him, Reading was wary of voluble expressions of satisfaction from the Princes. There is no indication that Reading considered his constant presence to have been inhibiting. At the 1923 session, Reading, though hard pressed in other quarters, again chose to preside throughout. There was no evidence of 'work of real importance'.

Reviewing the proceedings, Reading noted 'some slight danger of the meetings developing into a debating society where the principal and more competent speakers spread themselves to the admiration and sometimes the envy of the others'.

The implication in Reading's report was that the unproductive nature of the proceedings was not necessarily a bad thing. The single item of importance to be considered, a resolution on the Fiscal Commission, had produced 'a report innocuous for the time being'.

With the passage of time, Reading became even more alive to the limitations of the Chamber. He advised Birkenhead to cancel the session scheduled for November 1923 on the grounds that 'there is already quite enough difficulty in finding sufficiently important subjects for discussion'.

In introducing Birkenhead to the work of the Chamber, Reading bewailed the absence of the biggest Princes, especially Hyderabad and Mysore:

'the chief danger that threatens it is that most of the speeches are made by Mikaner and the others I have mentioned (Alwar, Patiala, Gwalior and the Jam Sahib) who speak English remarkably well and have a capacity for affairs'.

Reading's most consistent complaint concerned the inordinate social demands made on him during the Chamber week. Some changes in the structure of the Chamber followed from the election of Patiala as Chancellor in 1926.

1. Reading to Montagu, 11th November, 1921, R.P., 3, p. 163.
2. Reading to Peel, 8th February, 1923, R.P., 6, pp. 17,18.
3. Reading to Peel, 19th February, 1923, R.P., pp. 22, 3.
4. Reading to Peel, 30th August, 1923, R.P., p. 192.
6. Patiala was elected by an overwhelming majority with Alwar second and the Jam Sahib third. See Reading to Birkenhead, 28th January, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 211.
Funds were now voted for a secretariat to be attached to the Chancellorship and Patiali, Reading noted with satisfaction, could now fall back on the services of his European Foreign Minister, Bushbrook Williams,

'as otherwise it would be difficult indeed for Patiali, who is not disposed to overwork himself, and who certainly is not capable of framing the resolutions and generally supervising the business of the Chamber without expert assistance'. (1)

The Prince expected to enjoy a more relaxed relationship with Irwin; thus, at his first Chamber session, Irwin encountered a record attendance of something like 57 and I am glad to say that I have been successful in getting 4 or 5 of the young ones to make their maiden speeches'.

Irwin was initially buoyed up with some enthusiasm for the Chamber:

'I hope to succeed in getting the debates a little more lively and in getting them a little bit out of the small clique that has hitherto, through the modesty of the Prince, rather monopolised them'. (2)

Irwin's first speech to the Chamber attempted to strike a reassuring and personal tone in stressing the determination of the Government of India to uphold a non-interference policy in internal States' affairs and in reminding the assembly that it was the new Viceroy's grandfather who had approved Canning's sanads. But by 1928, Irwin's confidence that he could do something to resuscitate the Chamber had ebbed. The Viceroy's opening speech much regretted the 'falling-off in attendance'.

As Irwin reviewed the 1928 session for Birkenhead:

'I spent a good part of each day last week presiding over the Prince in their Chamber and wasted an inordinate amount of time doing it. They are the worst offenders in the matter of long speeches I have ever met and are wholly devoid of any capacity for compression'. (5)

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 26th January, 1926, [x.P.], 8, p. 211.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 24th November, 1926, [x.P.], 2, pp. 162, 3.
3. Patiali had done his best to insinuate himself into the Irwin's good graces and had endeared himself to Lady Irwin through his possession of 83 dogs, and by breeding elk hounds, one of which he presented to her; it was named Dehra Dun. See Birkenhead, Lord, Halifax, 1865, p. 183.
4. Ibid., p. 149.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th February, [x.P.], pp. 31, 2.
The Chamber's reputation in this respect was widely known. That same year Rampur assured Sir Harcourt Butler that he himself avoided the Chamber of Princes lest he be classed as 'one with wind in his head'.

For Irwin, the Chamber had its occasional uses. It served as a vehicle in 1929 for a stage-managed warning, inspired by the Viceroy, ostensibly from Indian Princes to British Indian politicians deploiring the tendency towards complete independence. However, the Princes were constant in their complaints about the restrictions on the functions of the Chamber, notably Viceregal control of the agenda. A disenchanted Irwin, by the end of his term, was ready to believe that the tedium of the Chamber was in great part due to the character of the participants rather than the governing rubric. Attendance here was

'the worst of all Viceregal chores. They prepare all the business beforehand, selected orators deliver set speeches, everything down to the voting moves according to a pre-arranged plan, and of the uncertainties of debate there is no trace. I often speculate what may be the future of the Chamber if and when Federation comes'. (4)

Irwin and to some extent Reading had considered initially that something might be made of the Chamber. To Willingdon, the institution had appeared as a spent force from very early on. In 1933, he confirmed the distaste for the Chamber among

'the greater number of Princes owing to the fact that the Standing Committee has for long years been a very close corporation, largely controlled by Bikaner, Bhopal and Patiala. This was certainly shown at our Conference'. (5)

2. See chapter 4, p. 345.
3. Patiala, Bhupinder Singh, 'The Indian Princes and the British Empire', Nineteenth Century, February, 1929, p. 198. Some advances had been made in 1928 when the Standing Committee had been given power to frame agendas, but the Viceregal veto remained. See Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 86.
5. Ibid., pp. 191, 2.
Willingdon was quite explicit in his own condemnation of the assembly:

'I should like to say to you quite definitely that to my mind the Chamber of Princes is a most useless and ineffective institution.

It is merely an exaggerated debating society, which gives opportunity for Bikaner, Bhongul and others to blow off steam in long speeches and pass resolutions which no state need ratify, for the whole of their discussions, as you know, are advisory.

And it is most unfortunate that the whole of the Chamber of Princes and its procedures has been dominated by these few Princes, for this has created a very bad feeling among the Princes as a whole'. (1)

Willingdon's experiences at the 1933 session of the Chamber seemed to him to confirm his strictures:

'they asked me to adjourn it after I had opened it ....., they really are a hopeless lot to try to get down to business .... we must always recognize and remember that what happens in the Chamber doesn't by any means represent the whole body of the Princes, for there is a very strong feeling against the Chamber at the moment'. (2)

When in 1934 a scheduled meeting of the Chamber was cancelled, Willingdon believed that this was due to a recognition by the Standing Committee that it had little hope of securing a quorum; he attributed this to the steady decline of the Chamber over the years. One or two of the more realistic Princes were considering a reconstitution of the Chamber but, predictably, 'there is as yet no agreement as to what form it should take'.

In London, the Secretary of State was fully aware that

'the Chamber has now in effect ceased to be the sounding-board of Princely opinion, if it ever was'.

Hoare undertook to acquaint confidentially the Joint Select Committee, currently considering the India Bill, with the unfitness of the Chamber to pronounce on constitutional issues. The Secretary of State realistically defined an effective Chamber as one in which the Devans and greater Princes would be represented and given weightage against minor Princes of eleven guns.

(3)


(2) Willingdon to Hoare, 26th March, 1933, ibid., pp. 286, 7.


Early in 1935, Willingdon felt that the Chamber was on the verge of extinction. He had the greatest difficulty in whipping up the necessary quorum of 30 Princes. Under the chairmanship of Patiala,

'the Chamber is fast becoming a derelict organisation .... as a debating assembly it will disappear before very long'.

The real necessity for the future lay in 'some form of Council of Ministers'.
At most, Willingdon was prepared to stage

'occasional durbars and gather the Princes together and hear their particular wants but really this Chamber business is a most unsatisfactory affair'. (1)

In the event, the move to establish a 'Council of Ministers' was hamstrung by an allied proposal, emanating from Bhopal and Bikaner, for a 'Council of Princes' limited to 26 Members. As a despairing Viceroy stated, this would nullify the unifying intention of the 'Council of Ministers'.

Rather surprisingly, the Chamber limped on through Linlithgow's term, the last of the Viceroy to preside in the interwar years. Shortly after his arrival, Linlithgow had an opportunity to view the Chamber in session. He found it to be in such 'miserable shape' that he contemplated convoking his own Durbar. In anticipation of a meeting with the Standing Committee, now leavened with Ministers more competent to discuss the constitutional proposals in the air, Linlithgow steeled himself to expect 'a certain amount of obduracy and attempted blackmail'.

The Viceroy readily accepted the Hyderabad Dewan's observation on the unfortunate role of the Chamber in grossly inflating the importance of certain middle-sized States in relation to the affairs of the Princely order, since the major States had not co-operated with the Chamber in the past. A further manifestation of the unreality which characterised

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 10th February, 1935, ibid., p. 647.
3. Linlithgow to Zetland, 1st June, 1936, ibid., 13, p. 61.
5. Confidential Note of an interview between Linlithgow and Hydari, 3rd September, 1936, ibid., p. 164.
the Chamber, was its persistence in thinking about itself as a
representative body and it fell to Linlithgow, at the 1937 session, to
fling out a resolution which assumed that 'the Chamber as at present
constituted is qualified to speak for the whole of the Princes'.

From the Princes themselves Linlithgow heard that the Chamber was racked
by dissenasion, and that the Viceroy would be required to give a definite
lead. At their convocation in Bombay in the summer of 1939, the
established svengalis of the Chamber, Bikaner and Bhopal, ran true to
form in collaring the discussion and running it as a demonstration to
suit their political aims of the day. With the urgency behind the
constitutional question removed by the outbreak of war, Linlithgow took
the opportunity to reflect on the perplexities which hampered negotiations
with the Princes:

'the Chamber of Princes, split by personal jealousies, is a broken
reed, though we must use it, in the absence of anything better,
to such extent as conditions render possible .... in the States
we have no one with whom we can do business on any real scale'. (4)

Thus the absence of a representative and prestigious body to stand
out for the Princes' interest was as apparent in 1940 as in 1920. Some
surprising claims have been made for the Chamber as the vehicle for
'an atmosphere of solidarity and unity among the princely order', as
'a force with which the British Government as well as Indian Statesman had
to reckon'. There are not assessments corroborated by confidential
Viceregal correspondence over two decades. Those Princes who persisted
with the Chamber did so, in many cases, in order to make something of a
splash in a glittering company. Every Prince attending the Chamber at
Delhi was entitled, by Government of India directive, to his gun salute.

In the recollection of a former Political Officer,

1. Linlithgow to Setland, 26th February, 1937, T.L., 14, p. 47.
2. Enquiries from Linlithgow failed to elicit precisely what form this
initiative should take. See Linlithgow to Setland, 5th July, 1937,
L.T., 8, p. 117.
'at the beginning and end of Chamber sessions, Delhi resounded to
the incessant booming of cannon of an intensity which can hardly
have been surpassed during the famous storming of the city by the
heroic Nicholson'. (1)

The Chamber, in the view of a hostile though not unfair critic,
'afforded to all its members the opportunity to display their
diamonds and ride their polo ponies in the Metropolis of India ...
when the Chamber of Princes is in session, the display of royal
cars which awaits their owners rivals that at the New York
Automobile Show'. (2)

The Chamber had few friends inside the Government of India. The
Political Department had little liking for this gaudy affair which
maintained in Delhi, at enormous expense and under the personal direction
of its elected 'Chancellor', a secretariat by which grievances of all
sorts and any suspected encroachments upon the rights and privileges of
the States were eagerly scanned and forwarded for the consideration of the
Political authority. This agency 'was not universally trusted' by
the Government of India. Minor irritants, such as having to turn
out at Delhi station in 'undress' uniform to meet a Ruler on Chamber
business, were noted.

In the larger matters of policy, touching on the place of the Indian
States in the All India polity of the future, the contribution of the
Chamber was sadly deficient, a far cry from the productive and vibrant
assembly planned by Lytton, Beresford Butler and Montagu. The supporters
of the Chamber policy had failed to grasp that the Princes' interests were
far too diverse to permit the sort of fruitful combination envisaged.
The essence of Princely division was well captured by a sometime Political
Officer, and later diplomat, Lord Trevelyan:
'there was no link between a prosperous tract with a harbour on the
West coast, a jungle fortress on the Burmese border, a few villages
in the hills, the teeming millions of Travancore. The
Chamber never came alive'. (6)

2. There were cars to be seen of every conceivable design and colour,
upholstered in satins, velvets and brocades; 'one has mounted on its roof
a search-light as large as those used on destroyers; another is fitted with
steel shutters, presumably to save its owner from assassination, a third has
on its running-board a small pipe organ on which an attendant played
his master's favourite airs. Gauba, K., op. cit., p. 45.
5. Trevelyan, Lord, op. cit., p. 158.
6. Ibid., p. 233.
The Transfer of Indian States to Direct Relations with the Government of India
While the most publicised provision of the Montford Report had been the recommendation for the establishment of a Chamber of Princes, the joint authors had also endorsed the introduction of direct political relations between the Government of India and all important States. This could be seen as a further manifestation of the policy of trust; it appeared to meet the demands of the middle-sized States which had been so active in pressing for a Chamber and who stood to gain in terms of prestige from a direct relationship with the Viceroy. As the position stood in 1918, only four of the largest States, Hyderabad, Baroda, Mysore and Kashmir, together with one other, were in direct connection with the Government through their Residents. The remaining States had to communicate with Delhi through intermediaries, or to deal with a Provincial Government.

It had been plausibly represented to Montagu, by his Princely confidants, that some streamlining of the procedures which governed relations between the Indian States and central Government was long overdue; certainly, on the British side, the manifest benefits of political centralisation had been very apparent to Curzon who stated, at an early stage in his Viceroyslty:

'decentralisation is all very well, but it appears to me in the case of Bombay and Madras to have been carried to a point in which the supreme Government is nowhere and in which the petty kings of these dominions are even unconscious that responsibility attaches to anyone but themselves'.

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2. Ibid.
3. The three Agencies under Agents to the Governor General were respectively the Central States Agency with responsibility for 150 States, the Rajputana Agency for around 20 States and the Baluchistan Agency for 2 States. Ibid.
4. Madras looked after 5 states; Bombay supervised over 250; Bengal was in relations with 2; the United Provinces with 3; the Punjab with 34; Burma with 52; Bihar and Orissa with 26; the Central Provinces with 15; and Assam with 6. Ibid.
5. Cited in Ronaldshay, the Earl of, op. cit., p. 57.
When the level of degeneracy evident in a substantial number of States in the care of Provincial Governments became apparent to Curzon, he did not mince words. He deplored the misconduct so apparent in the Madras States, the hopeless Rulers in Bengal. He was particularly alarmed about conditions in leading Punjab States where the Princes, with the exception of aged Nabha, were uniformly unimpressive: Patiala, he felt to be 'prey of English jockeys and jimpas'. Inevitably such depressing spectacles led Curzon to question the capacity of Provincial Governments to guide their States. Of the Bombay Political Department, Curzon caustically remarked:

'a small and narrow Political Service, almost entirely recruited from young and stupid Subalterns in the Army'. (4)

On account of the marked degree of maladministration that had been manifest in the Phulkian States, Curzon pressed for their incorporation under a new Political Agency. Such was the fierce opposition of the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, whose jurisdiction was affected, that Curzon had to reluctantly agree to the placing of the new Agent under the Provincial Government pro tem. That a Vicerey of Curzon's mettle should have been deflected in his purpose, is a striking instance of the determination of Provincial Governments to retain responsibility for their States.

2. Ibid., p. 120. Kapurthala, Mandi, Suket, Fataudi, Bakhshah, Keonthal and Sawaiyalpur, all Punjab supervised Rulers, all showed signs of going down the drain. Ibid., p. 116.
5. Sir Mackworth Young, later estranged from Curzon following the latter's establishment of the N.W.F.P. See Ronaldshay, Earl of, op. cit., chapter viii, passim.
When Montagu and Chelmsford in their turn strove to detach States from their Provinces, they encountered a similar degree of rooted opposition. Montagu's intentions were clear:

'I think it essential that we commit ourselves to removing any political concerns from the Provinces, even though some Princes may not like it, or even though some Satraps may not like it. It is of the essence of our scheme'. (1)

Chelmsford was inclined to be more circumspect being that much more exposed to the wrath of the Provincial Governors. He saw real difficulties of a practical nature as in the Punjab where the administration of irrigation problems of both the Province and the States was very closely connected. Chelmsford was also concerned that the Princes were not consistent in their demands for direct relations. Nevertheless, Chapter X of the Montford Report clearly obliged the Government of India to implement the transfer of the States. The Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was later to argue that the Provincial Governments in Bombay, Madras and the Punjab had not been consulted and that their subsequent protests had been disregarded. His allegations ignored the important point of political expediency which lay behind the proposed adjustment. While much prominence was given to administrative convenience as the reason for transfer, the joint authors were also quietly explicit in referring to the need to remove control of the States from Provincial Governments which might become popularly elected in the future.

The incoming Viceroy, Reading, of sterner stuff than Chelmsford, determined to force through the transfer of States against the most bitter opposition from Governor Lloyd in Bombay:

'I pointed out that it had all been settled by my predecessor in Council and that I must follow the decision'. (5)

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3. Chelmsford to Montagu, 19th February, 1919, ibid., p. 27.
Reading was stiffened in his resolve through both the representations of theJam Sahib and the Bombay Princes 'pressing upon me their desire to be taken under the Government of India', and gathering doubts about the competence of the Bombay Political Department, following his perusal of a virtual diktat to the Bombay Princes written by the Political Agent at Bombay. Progress with the implementation of transfer arrangements in the Madras Presidency and in the Punjab added weight to Reading's determination to act in Bombay and honour the pledge that Chelmsford had earlier given to a deputation of Bombay Princes.

By August 1923, Reading could emphasise the isolation of Bombay:

'in the Punjab there is now a separate Agent to the Governor General who deals with all the salute States in the Province .... in Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces, the Governors had accepted the position of Agent; in Madras the 5 states formerly in political relations with the local Government will shortly be taken over by a separate Agent to the Governor General'.

Given that the position in Bombay was especially complicated, with the local Government 'in political contact with approximately 350 States many of which are very small', Reading proposed a solution which envisaged transfer by stages; the immediate transfer of the three whole agencies of Cutch, Kathiawar and Palanpur, leaving with Bombay for the moment the more scattered units.

Lloyd's obstruction took the form of delaying tactics. He capitalised on the Princes' natural tendency towards vacillation declaring that very few of his Princes really desired a transfer. Reading had to

1. Reading to Montagu, 11th November, 1921, R.P., 4, p. 25.
2. Reading to Peel, 16th January, 1923, R.P., 6, pp. 7, 8.
3. Reading to Peel, 16th August, 1923, ibid., pp. 175-83.
4. Ibid.
5. At a time when the Bombay Princes were pressing Reading strongly for implementation, the Governor departed for a holiday in Kashmir. Reading to Montagu, 23rd February, 1922, R.P., 4, p. 25.
Lloyd's visit to Kashmir took place in the teeth of opposition from the old Maharaja, whose State had had to finance two previous gubernatorial sojourns. Unsuccessful attempts to put Lloyd off led to a confusion over cypher codes and an unpleasant wire from the Viceroy to the Resident. See Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., pp. 62-4.
confess that

't it was true that it is not easy to find out what a particular Prince really wants, as they do not express identical views to all authorities'. (1)

Lloyd's final shot took the form of a memorandum which set out to prove that the Montford policy on transfer was

'historically incorrect, administratively inconvenient and reactionary in tendency'. (2)

Behind Lloyd's manoeuvres was his wish to be in a position to insist that while he has Governor he prevented the transfer of the Bombay States. Peel, as Secretary of State, objected strongly to this calculation which would ensure that the loss of prestige would fall on Lloyd's successor;

'Wilson's weakness would be contrasted with Lloyd's vigour and personality'. (5)

The implications of the struggle over the Bombay States went beyond the sphere of States' affairs. These were grasped by Reading when he argued that:

'a most unfortunate feature of the case has been that an impression has been created that the Governor has been successful in delaying, by one means or another, the execution of a policy which was determined by H.M.G. and accepted by the Government of India and the fulfillment of which is eagerly awaited by a considerable section of the Ruling Princes'. (5)

Reading's scheme ultimately took effect in 1924; the Government of India began its progressive take-over of Bombay States with the obstacle of an intransigent Governor removed. In the other two sensitive areas involving transfer, the Madras Government's formal superintendence ceased in 1923; the Punjab States were ultimately brought under the Indian Political Service in 1927.

1. Reading to Peel, 16th August, 1923, R.P., 6, pp. 175-83.
2. Reading to Peel, 17th August, 1923, R.P., 17, Telegram No. 329. The burden of Lloyd's argument elaborated on the instances of dislocation likely to ensue in police, excise, irrigation, famine relief, miscellaneous revenue and other activities of the Bombay Government. Ibid.
3. Reading to Peel, 2nd August, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 163.
4. Peel to Reading, 17th October, 1923, ibid., p. 162.
5. Reading to Peel, 1st August, 1923, R.P., 17, Telegram No. 309.
The Nontford Report's undertaking to implement direct relations
between the States and the Central Government also ran into heavy weather
on the proposed abolition of the Agent to the Governor General, Rajputana,
a pledge allegedly given by Chelmsford. Reading found the Princes
'equally divided on the question'; there were also certain practical
difficulties to be met in retaining the A.G.G. and eliminating local
Residents, or vice versa. Bikaner and Alwar were the prime movers
behind this scheme which would ensure direct relations with Delhi.
In attempting to find a solution, Reading was confronted by two opposed
viewpoints. Both Bikaner and Alwar strongly pressed for the establishment
of direct relations with Delhi, and while Reading assured them that he had
yet to uncover a definitive promise in Chelmsford's papers, privately,
the Viceroy admitted to Birkenhead that 'I was much impressed by the
Princes' representations'. The Political Secretary, no doubt with his
eye on the possible loss of a prestigious appointment to his service, had
taken up a strong contrary line. Holland was opposed even to the
Viceroy's proposal of 'limited change', an experimental grouping of
everal Eastern States to bring them into direct relations. This was
a solution agreed to by Bikaner who would become a member of the proposed
Eastern States Agency. Birkenhead shrewdly suspected the existence
of divisions within the Princely Order:

'It seems essential to consult all Princes concerned before we
initiate the experimental measure proposed'. (5)

The Secretary of State's misgivings were justified when the Maharaja of
Bharatpur raised strong objections to the siting of the Resident's
headquarters for the new States Agency in Bharatpur. In the absence of

1. Reading to Peel, 18th June, 1924, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 216.
2. Reading to Peel, 8th July, 1924, ibid., Telegram No. 216.
3. Reading to Birkenhead, 1st February, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 3.
4. Reading to Birkenhead, 17th September, 1925, ibid., p. 120. For
fuller details of the proposed Rajputana States Agency see Reading
to Birkenhead, 18th September, 1925, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 208.
Princely unanimity, Reading was prepared to drop the scheme. He
duly informed the Princes concerned that their dissensions had scuttled
the scheme, existing arrangements would remain in force. Birkenhead
agreed.

The squabble over the transfer of the Bombay States and the attempted
abolition of the A.G.C. Rajputana post highlighted a major difficulty
which permanently frustrated negotiations with Princes, the near
impossibility of eliciting a consensus of opinion from the Rulers to which
they would adhere. Viewed in retrospect, the transfer policy had in
general appeased some of the more vocal Princes associated with the
Chamber movement. It is much less certain that the more scrupulous
supervision of States, which Curzon had anticipated would follow from
centralisation, ever materialised. There are strong indications that
the reverse took place. Sir Terence Keyes, who ultimately held the
highest post in the Political Department, argued that the Bombay Government
was generally far more interventionist in States' affairs than was the
Political Department later on. A specialist study of the Bombay
Political Department in its hey day has depicted the service functioning
as a positive and parallel centre of authority alongside that of the
Rulers.

Provincial Governors were strong in their belief that transfer had
led directly to deterioration in States' administration. O'Dwyer felt
that a bad Ruler could now carry tyranny to almost any lengths and he
instanced the scandals exposed by the Nahha case, a State formerly
within the purview of the Punjab Government. Lord Sydenham conceded

2. Reading to Birkenhead, 13th February, 1926, ibid., Telegram No. 432.
3. Birkenhead to Reading, 18th February, 1926, ibid., Telegram No. 404.
6. The Nahha case is discussed in chapter 2.
7. O'Dwyer, Sir M., op. cit., p. 156.
that an added prestige had accrued to some Princes as a result of transfer,

'but the effect must be that their affairs will fall into the hands of minor officials of the Secretariat, as the Viceroy cannot give them the individual care which Governors of Bombay delighted in bestowing upon them'. (1)

Another Governor to argue in the same vein was Sir Frederick Sykes, the end of whose term in Bombay, in 1933, coincided with the final stage of transfer of the Bombay Princes. Sykes supposed that the Political Department could never deal satisfactorily with the individual problems of 562 States and he deplored the ending of the Governor's power

'to ameliorate the lot of a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of the Presidency of the exercise of his powers of persuasion ..... social contact with the Chiefs was sensibly diminished'. (2)

This last tendency was endorsed by Sykes' successor at Bombay and he wrote directly to the Secretary of State about the dangers which followed where the degree of contact between Prince and Governor came to be regulated by the Agent to the Governor General, especially where the attitude of the Political Officer was 'very definitely to keep the Princes away from here'. Brabourne maintained that A.G.G.s should be instructed

'to make every possible effort to prevent a permanent wedge being driven between the States and the local Governments'. (3)

This growing remoteness between Durbar and Provincial Government was also observable in the Punjab from where the Lieutenant-Governor commented to the Viceroy that

'although I am personally acquainted with nearly all the Rulers of the Punjab States, they now very seldom visit Lahore, and I naturally have fewer opportunities of coming to personal contact with them than my predecessors in the past have had. This is, I think, a somewhat unfortunate effect of the recent changes under which all States have ceased to have any direct political relations with the head of the Provincial Government'. (4)

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There was little enthusiasm within the Political Department itself for the centralisation of relations with the States. An apparent increase in the responsibilities of the Department was more than balanced by the general scaling down of Political appointments. As a senior member of the Political Service put it:

'many Political Officers question the wisdom of the policy of direct relations, as it is very doubtful if it is wanted by the Ruling Princes in general, or will be to the interests of the States, and it will undoubtedly make the Political Department much more difficult to work by eliminating almost all the posts in which they receive adequate training for the high ranks'. (1)

As maladministration in the Indian States came to attract increasing publicity, notably with direct Congress intervention in some of the blacker spots in the later 1930s, Linlithgow was left to reflect ruefully on the embarrassments produced by the relaxation of supervision over individual Princes since Curzon's day,

'a tendency inevitably encouraged by the transfer of control from Provinces to the Centre'. (2)

No doubt Patiala and his associates in the Chambor would rejoice in the institution of direct political relations with Delhi, a clear manifestation of the policy of trust. Their subjects could take no comfort in a development which had weakened the curb on misrule.

1. Resident Baroda to Lt.-Col. Wilberforce Bell, 7th December, 1932, File No. 59-5, C.R.R., R/1/29/1689, p. 3.
2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21st February, 1939, E.P. 17, pp. 71, 2.
The Provision of Legal Safeguards for Princes
In one of Kipling's best short stories, the reader is introduced to
two bogus correspondents of The Backwoodsman who have been taking
through the Central Indian States for scandals. The narrator reflects on
'men personating correspondents of newspapers and bleeding small
Native States with threats of exposures ...... they lead a hard life,
and generally die with great suddenness. The Native States have
a wholesome horror of English newspapers which may throw light on
their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke
correspondents with champaign, or drive them out of their mind
with four-in-hand barouches'. (1)

It was entirely in the spirit of trust towards Princes, so evident in the
provisions of the Montford Reforms, that steps should be taken to protect,
by statute, Their Highnesses from published attack whether well-founded
or not.

Relations between Princes and the Indian Press were of an ambivalent
caracter. When Minto chose to consult Princes on the subject of
appropriate measures to deal with sedition in 1910, the Amrita Bazar Patrika
expressed alarm about the proposed suppression of 'seditious newspapers':

'the Indian Ruler cannot take a more suicidal step than leading an
indiscriminate crusade against Indian newspapers, many of which are
their best friends'. (2)

Some, of course, were not and the Governor of Bombay recalled, before the
first world war, that blackmailing of Princes by papers published in
British India

'was a notorious evil in my time, and some of them complained
bitterly to me; but it was the most difficult thing to prevent'. (3)

Chirol, too, noted that the Princes were frequently denounced in the
'extremist press' as an obstacle to the democratic evolution of Swaraj. (4)

p. 43.
Measures did exist to block the importation of literature hostile to the Princes. Within their own States, the Princes had little to fear from the press:

'there is not a single newspaper worth the name (except the Karnataka of Bangalore) ventilating the grievances of the people in any State'. (2)

The opportunity to institute protective legislation, which would eliminate the blackmailing of Princes, came in 1921 with the mooted repeal of the Indian Press Act, a device which Montagu classed as 'repressive' and Reading opposed on doctrinal grounds. As Reading delineated the position for the benefit of the Secretary of State, the protection which had been hitherto afforded to the Princes by the outgoing Press Act would have to be maintained by the enactment of a new section to the Indian Penal Code. In late May 1921, a Press Laws Committee met to consider this proposal. To the discomfort of Reading, its proceedings did not work out well for the Princes' interest:

'the position of the Princes was not well handled by my Political Secretary who gave evidence before it. Selected Princes of importance and likely to carry weight had been consulted; but they were extraordinarily supine in the matter and did not exert themselves to give specific instances or to set forth their case in a convincing manner'. (4)

News of this leaked and it was popularly alleged that not only had the Indian Princes declined to place evidence before the Committee but that Sir John Wood demanded that his examination before the Committee extending to 20 pages of foolscap be suppressed from publication. Reading had to communicate to the Secretary of State the Committee's decision to reject the introduction into the ordinary Penal Code of a measure for protecting Princes.

1. "Orders to Prohibit Importation of 'Choose O Indian Princes'," 1910, M.P., Ms 12609.
4. Reading to Peel, 26th April, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 174.
6. Reading to Peel, 26th April, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 174.
A possible way forward lay in Montagu's proposal that a diluted clause providing protection might find favour with the Legislative Assembly and Reading undertook to discuss the question of protection with the Chamber. Montagu waxed insistent that discontent and suspicion in the minds of the Princes should be allayed. He pressed Reading strongly:

'I do sincerely hope that you have been able to find a way of helping the Princes on the Press Act. It is going to be a very urgent problem'. (2)

Urgency was not the leit-motif of the Chamber of Princes. While it passed the required resolution on protection during the November session, 1921, Reading noted that

'a considerable time elapsed as it usual in the case of this body, before they confirmed their proceedings'.

Not till the end of February, 1922, could Agents to the Governor General, Residents, Local Governments, be sent the proceedings and consult Durbars on the advisability of taking action to protect the Princes against Press attacks. The replies were still incomplete by April.

By July, 1922, Reading was resolved to press an enactment for the Protection of Princes on a Legislature none too friendly to the Ruling Princes. The situation required 'delicate handling'; Reading planned to advocate the measure

'on the ground that it is too late to discuss the policy of giving this protection for we are in honour bound to the Princes to effect the similar protection to that enjoyed under the Press Act'. (4)

Not without some difficulty, especially from Sapru, Reading pushed the proposal through his Executive Council. The enactment safeguarded Princes from attacks in the press providing for a maximum penalty of imprisonment of 5 years. The Viceroy was prepared to face the unpleasant revelations

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1. Montagu to Reading, 27th September, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 836.
3. Reading to Peel, 26th April, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 174.
4. Reading to Peel, 5th February, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 253.
about alleged oppression in the States, certain to emerge in the debate, and undertook to certify the Bill if necessary. Peel 'entirely approved' of the action proposed.

The Legislative Assembly duly refused leave to introduce the Bill by a margin of 45 votes to 41. Government spokesmen had set out an elaborate case based on considerations of honour, the terms of the King's Proclamation, hallowed treaties and documents of constitutional importance, all of which enjoined the maintenance of Princely protection.

Reading felt that the reason for rejection was, 'the strong democratic sentiment against autocratic rule assisted by various stories circulated accusing several Princes of oppression and of particularly despotic dealings with women'.

The obduracy of the Legislative Assembly was not wholly unwelcome to Reading. The Princes Protection issue could be used to remind the recalcitrant Assemblymen of the formidable powers vested in the Viceroy under the Reforms:

'the L.A. has forced the position upon me of using the special powers of the Viceroy .... we are in a strong position and the lesson will not be unavailing to a Legislature in which the Government has no majority'.

The Viceroy having certified the Princes Protection Act in the Legislative Assembly, it duly passed through the Council of State on 26th July, 1922, only one Member voting against.

This first use of the Viceroy's special powers of certification was bound to provoke interest in London and Peel acknowledged that the Act would have to be laid before Parliament and subsequently before the Privy Council. The Secretary of State was an enthusiastic as Reading

1. Reading to Peel, 12th August, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 301.
2. Peel to Reading, 27th September, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 311.
3. Reading to Peel, 26th September, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 345.
4. Reading to Peel, 26th September, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 346.
5. Reading to Peel, 26th September, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 349.
6. Peel to Reading, 30th September, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 318.
about the positive merits of the certification device:

'the effects have been very wholesome. The Assembly seem to have
realised the folly of their proceedings and the exercise of your
powers may have a very useful deterrent action in the future'. (1)

Hulling over the affair, Reading remained puzzled by what he took to be
a tactical error on the part of the L.A. in refusing leave to introduce
the Bill; they might have urged with profit comprehensive amendments
later on:

'from the explanation given there was no doubt that they quite
hurriedly determined to oppose the Bill being largely influenced
thereto by stories against the Princels and by the prejudice
the House felt against them'.

Where Reading had erred was in not anticipating the volume of
'considerable criticism' in the Indian press, 'not only extremist but
(2)
also liberal'. Indeed feeling against the Act ran very high through-
out India. (3) Reading was little troubled by such criticism even when
mounted on a national scale. He had been presented with what he took
to be powerful ammunition against the prestige of the L.A. with the
appearance of a petition on behalf of the Maharaja of Darbhanga which
(4) coincided with the Act. Reading, on comparing the list of
signatories with the Division List relating to the Princes' Protection
Bill found that

'ten days before we asked for leave to introduce the Bill, two
thirds of those who refused to give us leave to do so voted for
the conversion of a considerable area of British territory, which
now enjoys the benefits of Reforms, into an Indian State'.

Peel was invited to use these figures if pressed hard in Parliament though
the Viceroy preferred that this card be left with him to be played
(5)
'with more telling effect' in India. Peel despatched a cynical

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2. Reading to Peel, 28th September, 1922, ibid., pp. 143-5.
4. The petition called for this wealthy Rani in Bihar to be given the
powers of a Ruling Prince. It was signed by 58 Members of the
Legislative Assembly. See Reading to Peel, 2nd November, 1922,
R.P., 5, pp. 159, 60.
5. Ibid.
rejoinder:

'the contrast in the attitude of these gentlemen regarding the P.P.A. is most entertaining'. (1)

The Parliamentary debate on the P.P.A., however, was a source of some anxiety to Reading. He disliked the Prime Minister's decision to postpone the debate, a move which could be contrasted with

'the rapidity of my action as compared with that of H.M. Government .... it may be suggested that I acted from pique or anger at the I.A. refusing leave to introduce'. (2)

In the course of his briefing to Peel, the Viceroy revealed the underlying circumstances which necessitated formal protection of Princes:

'for dialectical purposes it is often urged against the Bill that a Prince was not prevented from bringing in a libel suit, but it is not an honest argument, for no Ruling Prince would care to submit himself to the kind of cross-examination that would take place especially in this country if he sought to put the personal law in force ...... the truth is that the Bill will act as a deterrent against the blackmailers and extreme agitators who misrepresent for their own purposes'. (3)

Peel thought that the Parliamentary Debate on the P.P.A., in which the Government had secured the largest majority of the Session, had

'passed off successfully, though I very much regret that there should have been a division at all'. (4)

The ground had been well prepared; the Speaker had agreed in advance to rule out personal attacks on the Viceroy and two former Indian Civil Servants had been briefed to support the Government from the Liberal side. Apart from Saklatavala's 'usual rodonontades against imperialism' the only particularly disagreeable speech had emanated from Colonel Wedgewood:

'he even went so far as to suggest that the Ruling Princes had shown a lack of courage during the war by complaining that none of them had ever been wounded'.

1. Peel to Reading, 22nd November, 1922, L.P., 5, p. 121.
2. Reading to Peel, 14th December, 1922, ibid., p. 207.
3. Reading to Peel, 14th December, 1922, ibid., pp. 207, 8.
4. Peel to Reading, 28th February, 1923, L.P., 6, p. 23.
5. Saklatavala, Shapurja, (Communist, Battersea North division).
Predictably, this opened the door to a torrent of testimony, on the other side, to the wartime services of the Princes. On balance, Peel supposed that

'the debate has certainly done us good on the Government side of the House where the impression prevails that you and I are far too ready to accept the desires of the Assembly'. (1)

While a number of 'extremist' Indian papers had taken up passages of Wedderburn's speech, the Viceroy pronounced himself to be satisfied especially with the size of the Government majority.

Thus the Princes Protection Act passed onto the Statute Book in the teeth of public opposition and resentment in India. In nationalist circles, the Act was viewed as a manifestation of the new 'unholy alliance' between the British and the Indian Princes which had germinated during the Prince of Wales' tour and taken more detailed shape with the subsequent tour of the Under Secretary of State, Winterton. Winterton had figured as a prominent speaker for the Princes during the Parliamentary Debate on the P.P.A. It was argued that this certified measure would remain a dead letter:

'it has been universally considered that it was discreditable to the Indian Princes .... Scindia openly stated in the Chamber that he considered it derogatory to his honour to seek such protection'. (5)

On the British side there followed the gloomy recognition that, as one experienced Political Officer put it, the Act had not been 'altogether effective'. Princes were afraid to use it for fear of attracting further calumny'. That the Act became a dead letter is confirmed by a survey, prepared a decade later, of action taken under the P.P.A.

1. Peel to Reading, 26th February, 1923, E.R., 6, p. 23.
2. Reading to Peel, 1st March, 1923, ibid., pp. 36, 40.
7. 'Action taken under the Indian States (Protection against disaffection) Act, 1922, E.R., R/1/29/1355. Of the 16 cases cited, the States 'malignes' were respectively Patiala (6 times), Kashmir (5), Bhopal (3), Gwalior (2), Bundi, Jaipur, Valerktola, Jind, (1).
Only 11 cases for prosecution were considered and in only 2 cases did the Government undertake to prosecute. This was exceptional as the Act required the Durbar to initiate proceedings. In 5 other cases sanction to prosecute was given; but in 3 the Durbar either took no action or preferred to administer a warning. In only one case was the Durbar known to have prosecuted. It was tacitly acknowledged within the Government of India that the P.P.A., 1922, had been condemned as useless. 'Prosecutions .... give a gratuitous advertisement to the offensive article and owing to the practice of having dummy editors, they do not attack the right person'.

The manifest failure of the P.P.A. drove the Princes' spokesmen to press for effective governmental action. K. N. Haksar, senior Minister at Gwalior, deplored the fact that, "the still-born Princes 'Protection Act' apart", the Government of India had failed to take any measure to prevent the gutter-Press of India from adopting a very vituperative tone towards the Princes. The abuse that used to be heaped upon the Princes and the language that was employed was an outrage to decency". (3)

In an interview with the Secretary of State in 1927, Haksar bewailed the fact that 'the Press of India, doubtless irresponsible, denounced the States daily; and not a word of comfort was forthcoming from any quarter'. (4)

In these circumstances, the general policy followed by the Princes was to subsidise heavily newspapers and journals in British India. This did bring some relief to Princes: as Jawaharlal Nehru put it, 'they see to it that they get their moneys worth'. India offered opportunities

1. This last was the case of the attack on Bhopal by the Eiyyasat of Delhi in 1929. The Editor was sentenced to 3 years rigorous imprisonment but this was not enforced pending appeal. Ibid.
2. Note by M. C. Hallet, Secretary to the Government of India (Home Department), 7th December, 1932, C.R.R., R/1/29/1355.
3. Haksar to Edward Thompson, 20th November, 1934, E.T.P.
aplenty for this sort of investment. O'Dwyer testified to the effect that

'there is no country in the world where the Press can be so easily bought as in India'. (1)

Critics of the Princes deplored the practice:

'lakhs of rupees are paid every year to maintain the reputation of moral delinquents and medieval autocrats'. (2)

The circumstances which inclined the Government of India to consider new protective legislation for Princes were not directly linked to the shortcomings of the 1922 Act but rather to the incidence of agitation, originating in British India, against States' administrations. In 1932, the Political Secretary, B. J. Glancy, argued that since the Princes acted promptly to suppress within their own territories agitation directed against the Government of India, a measure of reciprocity was due to them. In November 1932, 5 members of the Princes' Standing Committee, Alwar, Bhopal, Patiala, Dholpur and Jhalawar, met at Viceroy's House to air their anxieties about British Indian based agitation visiting their States and to press for 'some permanent method of controlling such nefarious activities.' This request placed the Government of India in some difficulty. When the possibility of such legislation had been raised in 1908, the powerful objection had been raised that

'it would undoubtedly be interpreted, and the case could be stated in such a way as to create a deep impression on popular opinion as indicating a hostile disposition on our part towards the desire of subjects of Indian States to participate in the general political progress of the country'. (6)

2. Gauba, K., op. cit., p. 50.
4. Note by B. J. Glancy, 16th April, 1932, ibid.
6. Note by M. C. Mallet, (Home Department), 7th December, 1932, ibid.
In 1932, the Home Department was still against such legislation which 'would be very difficult to defend'. The case of the recent disturbance in Alwar was cited where the agitation had originated in British India, 'but it is based on a genuine grievance which the tenants of the State have difficulty in voicing by other means'. (1)

These sensible reservations were disregarded and, with the Political Department taking the lead, the Government of India moved towards the composition of protective legislation. Following an interview with the Dewan of Hyderabad and Bikaner, the Secretary of State lent his support for legal protection: 'I feel we ought to go as far as we can to meet the claim'. (2)

At the next meeting of the Standing Committee, at which successive members petitioned for permanent protection under the evolving Federal constitution, the Political Secretary disclosed that a Protection Bill 'of an extremely confidential nature' was being drafted'.

By June, 1933, a text of the draft Indian States (Protection) Act had been circulated to Political Officers and Local Governments for observations. The responses were generally favourable ranging from 'adequate' (Gwalior) to 'welcome relief' (A.C.G. Central India).

The Bill did not set out to eradicate all public criticism of Indian States. In 'strongly supporting' the draft Bill, the A.C.G. Rajputana pointed out that

'the Indian Press frequently publish criticisms against States which though they may be distasteful to the Princes concerned, nevertheless are true in the main. Such criticism is a healthy check on certain States and there is nothing to be said against it. The Press clause of the Bill will not stifle fair criticism'. (6)

1. Ibid. The Alwar disorders are discussed in chapter 2, pp. 158-63.
3. 'Summary of Proceedings of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes', C.R.R., R/1/29/1355, 27th February, 1933. Clancy was later to condemn the action of the Chamber in publicising the intention of the Government regarding the Bill, after the necessity for secrecy had been so strictly enjoined. See Confidential Note by E. J. Clancy, 31st January, 1933, ibid.
5. 'Residents' Comments on Proposed Legislation', Ibid., p. 11.
6. Ibid., p. 12.
As the Bill took shape in the Viceroy's Council one or two teeth were
drawn. The Political Secretary fought tooth and nail against an
amendment which excluded from the Bill attacks on the personal character
of a Prince on the ground that it would be difficult to discriminate
between the Ruler and his administration. However Clancy had to bow
to 'the unanimous feeling of the Council' which held that

'no such protection was given to the heads of administrations and
Governments in British India and to discriminate in favour of the
Princes in this respect would evoke a storm of criticism which it
would be difficult to meet successfully'. (2)

As had been anticipated, the Princes Protection Bill provoked some
lively exchanges in the Assembly Chamber. Much pointed criticism was
levelled at States' administrations; perhaps the most unlikely comment
emanated from N. B. Das:

'It is Hitlerism minus the democratic spirit that controls
Hitler'. (3)

Many of the contributions followed along similar lines. On the matter
of Princes and reciprocity, N. M. Joshi reckoned that

'the only matter in which they are willing to have reciprocity
is to tighten the ropes round the necks of Indian citizens'. (4)

But the Princes had a number of vocal supporters in the Chamber and their
case was aided by the interpenetration of many of the attacks published against
them. N. N. Dumasi, sub-editor of The Times of India, quoted from the
notorious essay:

'a majority of the Ruling Princes of the present generation are by
blood descended of low and mean persons such as washerwomen, water-
carriers, barbers etc. and they have either been purchased from their
real parents on account of childlessness or have been brought forth
by the Maharuns and Begums by means of Neog (adultery) owing to the
impotence of Ruling Princes'. (5)

2. Clancy reluctantly came to accept the view of the Council that unless
the Bill was thus modified it would be difficult to keep discussion in
the Assembly within bounds: 'All kind of aspirations are likely to be cast in the course of the debate on the character of the Princes, and in this way there is reason to fear that the remedy proposed may be worse than the disease'. Ibid.
3. 'Extracts from the Legislative Assembly Debates', vol. vi, No. 4,
ibid., p. 1.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
Sir Muhammed Yakub protested against the

'many newspapers in British India who live entirely upon blackmailing the Indian States, and large sums of money are passed on to them from Indian States to stop the mouths of these barking dogs whose business is blackmail and nothing else'. (1)

In his central speech calling for the adoption of the Bill, Clancy was careful to emphasise the pernicious activities of the blackmailers and to relegate to the end of an impressive address one or two references to the repercussions of the Bill in British India. Clancy coupled with the rather large admission, that

'from time to time many Indian States have fallen sadly short of the ideal',

some reflections on conditions in a well-conducted Indian State:

'a good Indian Ruler excites in the mind of his subjects a degree of affection or devotion which is difficult sometimes for a westerner to realise'.

The Political Secretary took care to differentiate between the responsible Press and the sensational section whose editors

'are not always interested in whether the State subject can afford to feed himself; what really matters is whether he can afford to feed the editor. (laughter)'. (2)

Clancy's most serious allegation charged the irresponsible Press with imparting a communal tinge to State controversies:

'the truth is that India can no longer afford to support this particular form of piracy. The price to be paid is too high. The price involves the peace of India'. (3)

Of the second part of the Bill, which empowered British Indian authorities to suppress organisations intent on demonstrating in the Indian States, Clancy explained that the desire of the Government of India was simply to ensure fair play. The Governments of States had always been ready to reciprocate. (4)

2. Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. 1, No. 8, 5th February, 1934, ibid., p. 25.
4. ibid., p. 27.
The Bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly and received the assent of the Governor General on 20th April, 1934, under the full title 'an Act to protect the Administrations of States in India which are under the suzerainty of His Majesty from activities which tend to subvert, or to excite disaffection towards, or to obstruct such administration'.

Thus the Indian Princes could take comfort from the legislative protection instituted on their behalf by the Government of India. In the following year, His Majesty's Government made a related contribution when the Solicitor General, during the Third Reading of the India Bill, inserted a clause to safeguard 'the rights and dignities of the Rulers' in addition to 'the rights of the States'. The House agreed despite an isolated flurry from Attlee who demanded to know:

'are the Princes all going to be hedged about with some sanctity as if they are all kings?' (2)

What seemed to be a final loophole was sealed in 1937 with the passing of an amendment to Legislative Assembly Rules: from 1st of April,

'no question shall be asked of any matter connected with any Indian State save with the consent of the Governor General in his discretion'. (3)

The most elaborate protective legislation could not eradicate the blackmailing of Princes. While it was no longer possible to publicise maladministration in the Indian States on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, other channels remained open. Diwan Singh Waftoon, the editor of the notorious Riyasat which had continued to function, became associated with a project to set up an information bureau in London.

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1. Act No. XI of 1934, ibid.
ostensibly to expose maladministration in Indian States. He published an article in Rivesat inviting contributions. It was assumed in the Intelligence Service that

'the bureau, if started, will prove a paying concern ... there are certain Rani who would like questions being asked about the conduct of their husbands'. (2)

The Assistant Superintendent of Police, appreciating Naftoon's considerable reputation as a blackmailer of Princes, correctly saw the scheme as 'preparatory to further efforts in that direction'. It was beyond the capacity of the more disreputable Princes to reform and, as Glancy pointed out,

'the Princes' practice of espousing and attempting to espouse the cause of those who bring discredit on their Order has unfortunately hardened feeling in British India against them'. (4)

It was beyond the legislative powers either of the Government of India or His Majesty's Government to buttress the collective reputation of Princes against this slide.

2. Note by N. Masshar, 17th September, 1936, ibid.
3. Note by W. F. A. Hamilton (Home Department), 16th September, 1936, ibid.
The Modernisation of Indian States' Forces
In a recently published survey of Anglo-Indian fiction, it is suggested that one of the most striking developments following the Montford Reforms was the emergence in literature of 'the loyal Indian Prince'. For Rulers basking in the glow of literary approbation, a most satisfying manifestation of the official policy of trust would be Government of India permission to modernise Indian States Forces. This topic made an early appearance in the deliberations of the Chamber of Princes. The Princes' request had to contend with long-established prejudice on the British side. The surprisingly protracted nature of the negotiations stand as an interesting proof of the discreet limitations of the policy of trust.

Reviewing the condition of Indian States forces in 1880, Sir Richard Temple expressed himself as uneasy regarding the Princes' policy on military expenditure:

'they sometimes maintain forces at a strength which might, under some conceivable circumstances, prove embarrassing to their own States as well as to the paramount power .... the armament of the Native States is a matter needing watchfulness, but is a very delicate subject for the paramount power to approach'. (3)

Fears of this sort were exaggerated. A sensible survey of the Princely armies in the post Mutiny era acknowledged that such forces were nominally considerable, amounting in all to nearly 40,000 infantry, 13,000 cavalry and no less than 539 guns but,

'except in Gwalior, the troops were ill armed and miserably drilled, and the guns were more or less unserviceable'. (4)

Nevertheless, the prevailing view followed Temple. The import of arms into the States and the existence of the capacity to manufacture guns and powder, notably at Indore, disturbed Salisbury and he warned Northbrook

to keep

'a careful watch over Holkar's gun manufactory ... the supply of guns through Cashmere is an awkward matter and I cannot help thinking that a good deal of that sort of work is going on'.

Both Salisbury and the Queen are concerned about the military power of the Nizam. Scindia, too, was seen as a threat. The birth of a son came as 'a disappointment' to Salisbury who had hoped to arrange the succession and in doing so divide the State.

The policy of utilising the armies of the Native States as an auxiliary force for the service of the Empire had sensitive political and military implications. Lytton, as the major architect of conciliation towards the Princes, set up a committee to consider the question. However the majority of its members, like Lord Roberts, doubted

'the wisdom of encouraging a high state of efficiency amongst the troops of independent States'.

Salisbury was not averse to the development of small effective units in the Indian States if it led to the diminution of States' armies.

But he intended to move in this matter with the utmost caution. It was to be expected that following the advent of conciliation, the Princes might begin to indulge in vain dreams,

'it happens almost invariably, when after treating people badly, you begin to treat them properly'.

2. Salisbury to Northbrook, 13th November, 1874, ibid.
5. Knight, L. A., op. cit., p. 498. Salisbury, in his dry way, looked kindly upon Imperial Assemblages as occasions for marches past and friendly rivalry between forces from British India and the Indian States. Princes might thus be detached from domestic interference in the Empire: 'better a meeting of Eton schoolboys convened to decide how to beat Harrow at cricket than to frame new flogging regulations'.

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But the absolute test of conciliation concerned the arming of States' troops and here Salisbury was adamant:

'I doubt whether arms of precision ought to be given in any case, except if, and while, the native force is brigaded, and is being manoeuvred with a British force. The manoeuvres over, the arms of precision ought to be left behind in a British arsenal'.

Lytton's vision was not taken up and the era of suspicion lingered on.

According to the Commission of 1879, the Indian Army had three main duties: the maintenance of internal security, protection from external danger, and the watching and overawing of the armies of the Indian Princes, particularly of Scindia and the Nizam. In 1884 an alarming, though in the event spurious, communication from Kabul reached the Secretary of the Foreign Department; the Amir of Afghanistan asserted that most Indian Princes were corresponding with the Russian Government and that Kashmir had reached a secret understanding with the Russians.

The move to disinter Lytton's plans for the Princes' forces came in the final year of Dufferin's Vicereignty. As Lord Roberts recalled, the partial change of heart was prompted by

'the unmistakeable spirit of loyalty displayed by the Native Rulers when war with Russia was imminent in 1885'.

Accordingly, the Imperial Service Troops were formed in 1889, an army maintained by the Indian Princes and placed at the disposal of the Government. This 'delicate and complex' development had been treated 'with the greatest caution'. Roberts was well satisfied 'to find how cordially the Chiefs responded to Lord Dufferin's proposals', and to note 'the steady improvement in their armies under the guidance of carefully selected British officers'. In the first decade of their existence,

the Princes' troops had achieved substantial results:

'valueable help having been afforded to the Chitral expedition by
the transport trains organised by the Maharajas of Gwalior
and Jaipur, and by the gallantry of the Indian States Troops
belonging to His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir at Hunza Naga'. (1)

Other British Officers endorsed Roberts' comments and spoke warmly of
their associations with Indian States' troops.

Yet the Government of India retained an ambivalent attitude to
Indian States' forces. Publically much was said about gallantry,
loyalty and the will to cooperate. Privately, the requests of the
Durbars for weapons were dealt with in summary fashion according to
principles laid down by the British Government in 1891, limiting
'the supply of smooth-bore guns in numbers not exceeding
reasonable requirements for saluting purposes'. (3)

Some relaxation in this policy took place in 1904 when it was decided
that bored-out Martini Henry rifles might in future be allowed, and rifles
lent to States where, owing to the prevalence of organised crime, this
was considered to be necessary for the restoration of order. Previous
policy had debarred the local forces of the States from the use of any
but the most obsolete muzzle-loading firearms.

A concomitant to military contributions by Princes was military
ambition and the desire of Princes to achieve substantive military rank
in the forces of the Crown. Such requests were a source of embarrassment
to the British. A long-standing palliative was the practice of granting
honorary commissions to Princes, often on material grounds, as in the case

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1. Roberts, Field Marshal Lord, op. cit., p. 524. See also the generous
appreciation of the Bahawalpur contribution, The Times, 11th December,
1891; plaudits for the Patiala contingent, The Times, 8th June, 1895;
congratulations to the Kashmir Indian States Troops, The Times,
9th June, 1895.
2. Birdwood, a future Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, 'thoroughly
enjoyed' his command of the Jindh and Nabha Lancers in 1893. See
An exception was made in the case of the Kashmir mountain batteries
which were authorised to guarantee the frontier.
of the appointment of Kashmir as Honorary Colonel, 37th Dogras, to
ensure more recruits. The more astute Princes, maintaining
Imperial Service Troops, pressed for substantive rank. Cooch Behar
wanted his son to compete for Sandhurst in 1897. With the Government
of India lukewarm, the initiative was blocked by the War Office. A
widespread belief circulated that British soldiers would not obey Indian
officers in a crisis. Salisbury regretted this conservatism and
warned of the dangers

'in not paying sufficient attention to the feelings of Indians
and especially of Indian Princes'. (3)

Curzon devised a solution of sorts in the shape of his Imperial
Cadet Corps, a small body of 20 to 30 scions of princely houses.
But this institution did not represent a pathway to full commissions.
It was open to the young graduates to become officers in the Imperial
Service Forces. In 1905, a special form of King's Commission was
instituted for graduates of the I.C.C. but its holders 'had no effective
military career open to them'. An enthusiast felt that the Corps
had not received the attention it deserved. But a more penetrating
observation noted that Curzon had laid down rules which would not
appeal to masterful Raj Kumars; 'strict discipline was against the
popularity of the scheme'. In part, it was this relatively spartan
style which ensured the rapid demise of the Corps. It was 'common talk'

5. Report of a Sandhurst Committee (1929), cited in Singh, H. L.,
op. cit., p. 176. The Cadets were only eligible, on leaving the
Corps, for staff or other extra-regimental military appointments.
See Ronaldshay, Lord, op. cit., p. 127.
6. Fraser, L., op. cit., p. 222.
in 1910, as the Commander-in-Chief of the day recalled,

'that the Imperial Cadet Corps was used by the Political Department as a penal settlement'.

Creagh disliked

'an expensive and showy uniform and the practice of taking the cadets to be a species of Viceroyal bodyguard further emphasised the idea that it was a 'look see' affair worked by the Political Department for some reason of their own and unconnected with the Army'. (1)

The major reason for the short life of the I.C.C. remained the absence of suitable openings for alumni. As Creagh put it,

'there is no doubt that Curson's promise of a military career being available to a certain number of Cadets can scarcely be said to have been kept'. (2)

The decline of the Imperial Cadet Corps did worry Hardinge and he put it to the Secretary of State that if,

'we were to give openings to young Princes to obtain King's Commissions in the Native Army, we should remove a slur on our good faith, we should give immense satisfaction to the Ruling Chiefs, and the risk we run would be infinitesimal'.

Hardinge could not envisage many Rajkumars going beyond captain,

'it is not in the nature of young Princes to put up for an indefinite period with stern discipline..... they will want to return to their homes and to spend a life of indulgence such as they have seen their fathers and relations spend before them'. (3)

Against the wishes of the Viceroy, the issue was dropped following a Conference convened in Calcutta in January 1912. Smith Dorrien of the War Office insisted on a Sandhurst training. Colonel Maxwell, the Military Secretary of the Government of India, disputed whether the demand for commissions was from Princes, 'and even if it is, it can, with political safety, be ignored'. The case of Bikaner's son had been

1. General Sir O'Moore Creagh to Hardinge, 30th November, 1910, Har., 85/1/7a.
mentioned most but Maxwell questioned whether it mattered:

'will his loyalty diminish in any degree through the refusal of what is to him and his class a sentimental concession ... it is not the military career that the mah raja desires for his son, but merely the social kudos and distinction it may confer'. (1)

Just as there was a reluctance to accept the Rajkumars as the right men for full-blooded King's Commissions, so doubts circulated about the standards of Indian States' troops. Curzon had despatched Imperial Service troops to help quell the Boxers in China and to campaign in Somaliland in the wars of 1902,3. These exploits attracted a good deal of favourable publicity but shrewder commentators noted that Dufferin's provisions for Imperial Service troops, still in service, laid down that each unit remained a purely state force preventing the necessary concentration in larger garrisons essential to a full preparation for the requirements of modern war. There were conspicuous omissions in the ranks of the important States which maintained Imperial Service troops, notably Baroda. There was good reason to suppose that the Princes were not uniformly enthusiastic about the provision of Imperial Service contingents.

In 1905, the authorised strength of the Imperial Service troops stood at a little over 13,000. This was not an impressive figure.

3. Fraser, L., op. cit., p. 219.
4. The Aga Khan had suggested at the Legislative Council in 1903 that Imperial Service troops should be placed under the control of the Commander-in-Chief with a system of recruiting in proportion to the population and size of States. A considerable number of Princes privately urged that this was subversive of the basis of the original scheme. They wanted to contribute on a voluntary basis and to see their troops in their own capitals. The Aga Khan's proposal was dropped. Ibid., p. 221.
5. This broke down into cavalry 7,000, subscribed by Gwalior, Hyderabad, Jodhpur, Mysore, Patiala and Alwar; artillery 4,311, Kashmir two mountain batteries; sappers 520, furnished by Simur, Faridkot, and Maler Kotla; infantry 9,324 from Kashmir, the Punjab States, Alwar, Bharatpur and Gwalior; Camel Corps from Bikaner together with six transport corps and two signalling units. Imperial Gazetteer, op. cit., pp. 49, 50.
given the resources of the larger States. Reports to the Government of India were made annually on the Imperial Service troops with a watchful eye on their command: three 'unsatisfactory' Commanding Officers noted in 1908 were rapidly replaced. British 'advisers' did not always have the most promising material with which to work. When Colonel Neville Chamberlain took command of Kashmir forces, they had not been paid for three years. The States also maintained other military forces numbering some 93,000 men but these were troops kept for purposes of internal order or ceremony and had 'little military value'. A sharp eyed visitor noted how symbolic of mistrust the antediluvian armaments were:

'It is in the spirit of interested trustees for idiot children that the paternal government allows the Ruler of a Native State toy artillery to play with, and arms his handful of troops with muzzle-loaders which I had despaired of ever seeing again'.

Little in the way of hard evidence emerged to point to the Princes as a security risk, though speculation did take place. It may have been a mischievous ploy of the German Consul-General to relay to Minto information from a 'thoroughly reliable' source to the effect that the Native Chiefs were disloyal. Minto considered them loyal friends

'but that there is a dangerous movement going on I have not the shadow of a doubt'.

Another straw in the wind was the request received by Hardinge in 1912 from Count Metternich, one time German ambassador in London,

'to provide him with every sort of facility for travelling about India and visiting native princes with a view to ascertaining their attitude and loyalty towards the British Government'.

1. A hint of Princely parsimony is conveyed by the arrangement which saw the cost of the Imperial Service troops borne by the States but the charge for the British inspecting staff fell on British Indian revenues. Ibid.


The outbreak of the first world war offered an unprecedented opportunity for the Princes to vie with one another in affirmations of loyalty and statements of readiness to render personal service at the front. One of the more romantic accounts of the Princes’ response runs,

'spontaneously they flung themselves, their troops, their money, into the war against Germany. No effort, no cost seemed too great. Contingents of Imperial State troops, serving with the British Army, helped to hold the Suez Canal, to keep watch on Sinai, and proved their mettle in General Allenby's campaigns'. (2)

Much was written about the exploits of the Jodhpur Lancers who took Haifa at the gallop. Perhaps the most notable single gesture made by a Prince was Scindia's gift of the hospital ship 'Loyalty' which carried over 15,000 patients. While public appreciations of the Princes' contributions abounded, behind the scenes in the Government of India speculation about their trustworthiness was not eradicated. Given that 'a fine spun web of German intrigue' functioned within India during the war, it was not surprising that some German efforts were directed towards the Princes; these took the form of inflammatory letters from Berlin. The Government of India intercepted communications from Bethmann Hollweg and decided against their publication, partly because of the annoyance which the Princes would show if the interception were revealed to them, and partly since 'all would undoubtedly be flattered by the receipt of so magnificent a communication from the German Chancellor in the Kaiser's name. Their sense of self-importance would be increased in some cases to a dangerous extent. It is not impossible that some, carried away by vanity, might seek secretly to send a courteous answer to the Chancellor's letter ... if the war was seriously prolonged and our fortunes for a time were on the wane, it is not impossible that these letters might suggest to some the desirability of 'hedging'. (7)

2. Diver, W., op. cit., p. 15.
3. They were under the command of the legendary Regent of Jodhpur, Sir Pertab Singh, who was alleged to have expostulated to the surviving Lancers in 1918, 'Why are you not dead'. See Forbes, R., op. cit., pp. 115, 6.
4. See The Times, 18th January, 1919.
7. Chelmsford to Chamberlain, 14th June, 1917, Ch.F., 3, p. 184.
With the war successfully concluded, the Government of India had less need to question any wavering of loyalty on the part of the Princes. Rather, Chelmsford’s staff came forward with proposals for developing Imperial Service troops into a fighting adjunct to the Indian Army in accordance with the new standards enforced by the Great War. Montagu pessimistically assumed that

'...the Rulers are not likely to face this principle and its application with any degree of alacrity'. (1)

However Chelmsford was close to the sentiments of the Chamber Princes on this matter and he argued that the Prince recognised that

'...if their Imperial Service troops are to be of any value, their military efficiency must be improved'. (3)

In response to the stated desires of certain Princes, notably Bikaner, Patiala, Indore, Gwalior and Bharatpur, for modern artillery, with Hyderabad, Vysore and Rampur waiting in the wings, the Government of India drew up a despatch supporting the Princes’ aspirations. It was not supposed that the scheme to reorganise Indian States’ troops was without risk:

'...it is clear that by increasing the efficiency of the States’ Forces we increase their potentialities for evil as well as good'. (4)

The despatch discussed the risks involved under three heads: as to the disturbance of the ratio, the proposed increased strength of Indian States’ Troops from 23,000 to an estimated 30,000 would still leave the proportion of British to Indian personnel at a healthy 1 : 2.6; as to ‘creeping Bolshevism’, the despatch countered fears here on the sensible grounds that the Princes were

'...bound to the British Government by self-interest if by nothing else, while Bolshevism is radically opposed to the autocracy for which they stand'.

1. Montagu to Chelmsford, 17th October, 1919, Ch.P., 5, p. 112.
4. Letter from the Government of India, No. 54, Foreign and Political, to the Secretary of State, 14th July, 1921, Cab., 2L/140, p. 3.
Only under the last head, the grant of artillery to Indian States, did the despatch concede that

'risks must be faced. We shall have to give artillery to the Indian Army before long, and we cannot refuse it to the States'.

The advantages to the Government were assumed to be three-fold; financial in that with the States supplying efficient troops for imperial defence, the numbers of British troops could be correspondingly reduced; of a military nature, 'as we obtain a valuable reserve of strength for emergencies'; political, in that strong States could suppress internal agitation without British assistance, and 'we avoid the odium of having to interfere'.

Reading, having consulted the Commander-in-Chief, aligned himself very firmly with the import of the despatch,

'disappointment would be caused should the proposals not be sanctioned'.

The most elaborate safeguards related to the grant of artillery were set out and Reading stressed that

'we have definitely committed ourselves to a policy of trust and a blank refusal to allow artillery would be regarded as a sign that we are going back on our word'.

Initially, Cabinet discussions seemed to take a favourable turn when Churchill described States' Forces as

'loyal and efficient and it was significant that the Native States has at the present time a more encouraging aspect than the Provinces'.

Churchill concluded that States forces were more likely to be loyal to their Maharaja than British Indian troops to their Legislative Assembly.

1. Ibid., pp. 4, 5, 6.
2. Only certified units would be eligible which would reduce the initial commitment to 10 batteries; the supply of ammunition would be kept in British hands. See Reading to Montagu, 1st March, 1922, R.F., 16, Telegram No. 84.
3. Ibid.
Yet when the proposal to grant artillery to the States came before the Defence Committee, Churchill was one of several members very hostile to the idea. Peel himself showed a curious inconsistency in his objectives. At first he wondered if

"we are showing too great a preference for those who are either reactionary or not sympathetic to constitutional reforms". (1)

Later, the Secretary of State's objections took on a more strategic colouring with doubts about the wisdom of supplying machine guns.

Reading was at a loss to understand the Defence Committee's opposition since the grant of artillery would in no sense raise the States to a position of equality should hostilities occur.

In March 1923, the Cabinet unequivocally rejected the artillery proposal:

'in particular they were influenced by the consideration that the grant of this privilege to the Native Princes would be followed by a claim for the equipment of the Indian Army (consisting of Indian troops) with similar artillery - a claim which it would be difficult to resist'. (4)

Reading continued to press the matter and in June the Cabinet gave permission for discussions to reopen on a more limited range of weaponry. (5)

The limited grant was approved but not before all the old objections had been aired about issuing arms not included in the Indian Army to States. Peel suggested that the Viceroy might use the qualified Cabinet permission for the grant of 2.75 inch guns as a palliative for 

| 1. Peel to Reading, 11th May, 1922, R.F., 5, p. 11. |
| 2. Peel to Reading, 8th June, 1922, ibid., p. 21. |
| 3. Reading to Peel, 1st June, 1922, ibid., p. 57. |
| 5. Detailed as 'a limited number of (i) machine-gun sections transported in Ford Cars, and (ii) of pack batteries of 2.75 inch mountain guns. See Cabinet 21/23, 13th June, 1923, Cab.P., 23/46, p. 35. |
| 8. Peel to Reading, 9th July, 1923, ibid., Telegram No. 291. |
In a manner of speaking, Reading struck to his guns and refused to let the matter drop:

'the Princes are very quick to discern doubts of their loyalty and are very sensitive about it ..... in present conditions, I cannot but think that it is important to keep the Princes, particularly the big Princes, and those whose loyalty is quite beyond discussion, satisfied with their relations with Government.' (1)

The Viceroy's view had received welcome reinforcement from the King's interest. His Majesty proposed that a way round the apparent anomaly, where Indian Princes had efficient guns whilst no Indian artillery was permitted, would be to emphasise the inflexibility of the War Office 'acting Jorjins to our Spenlow'.

Pressure from Reading and the King brought the issue back before the Cabinet in December, 1924. The recommendation of the Committee of Imperial Defence to allow Scindia and Bikaner 15-pounder guns ran into a tremendous storm. Churchill drew an alarming picture of the certain consequences: the demand that the Artillery Services in the Indian Army should be Indianised; the concession of aeroplanes, without the use of which for 'spotting' purposes, the guns would be useless. Curzon and Salisbury followed, less frantically, in the same vein and, in the circumstances, the Secretary of State for India, Birkenhead, felt obliged to refer the matter back. To Reading, the intransigence of the Cabinet seemed bizarre in the extreme; old recollections of the Mutiny were playing 'a ridiculously large part in the discussions'. The Viceroy warned Birkenhead that

'the Princes are undoubtedly hurt at our want of confidence in them ... the vast majority of them either have no inclination or have not the means to run artillery. But they will all be affected by the refusal. It cannot be our policy to chill the Princes'.

1. Reading to Olivier, 3rd July, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 139.
2. Peel to Reading, 16th July, 1923, R.P., 17, Telegram No. 300.
3. Olivier to Reading, 9th October, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 162.
Reading ridiculed the suggestions at home that the States would maintain batteries and regiments of artillery and organise air forces as if they were a foreign power. No such danger existed:

"when I ask the military authorities their opinion as to possible consequences, even envisaging the worst, they only laugh". (1)

Reading pressed Birkenhead hard to persist with the artillery issue. At this point the intervention of the King proved decisive. His Majesty made the case privately to the Secretary of State for the granting of 15 pounders to Princes 'with a degree of vigour and insistence unusual in him'. The King's weight tipped the scales in Cabinet where, despite another rodomontade from Churchill, Curzon the President of the Committee of Imperial Defence, having made an alarmist speech himself, declined to hold out against the King, the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief.

With the decision in favour of the Princes there ended a protracted and at times fantastical debate which graphically illustrated the ambivalent attitudes held towards Indian Princes on the part of the Home Government. Birkenhead, in particular, continued to keep a watchful eye on States' armaments. In 1927 he affected great surprise and discomfort on learning through a Kabul agency that Alwar possessed 'military photographing aeroplanes'. The Viceroy was asked to ascertain

"how he came by them and whether it is your Government's policy to permit the States to possess aeroplanes for other than military purposes". (5)

5. Birkenhead to Irwin, 9th June, 1927, Hx.1., 3, pp. 62, 3. This sensitivity is explained to some degree by the meagre resources of the R.A.F. in India: they never had more than 8 squadrons of 12 planes each. See Coen, Sir T. F., op. cit., p. 218.
Once again this proved to be a case of exaggerated fear in London without justification. The aircraft in question were three old De Havillands, presented to the Alwar Durbar by the Government in 1921, now in a dilapidated condition and disposed of by public auction.

Irwin made it quite clear:

'that the Government of India is opposed to permitting States to maintain military aircraft'. (1)

The rumoured purchase by Afghanistan had not taken place, the Afghan agent declined to purchase, and the Viceroy gave an assurance that the Alwar Durbar would not sell the remaining parts of the aircraft to a foreign power without the prior sanction of the Government of India.

The level of armaments and general efficiency of States' forces did not become a contentious issue again until the eve of war in 1939.

An isolated request from Bhopal, made in 1931, for the now more or less obsolete 15 pounders to replace the muzzle-loaders presented to his ancestors for Mutiny service, was viewed sympathetically by Hoare: but he stood opposed to demands for the Government of India to subsidise Bhopal's military establishment. (3) When a general review of India's military preparedness in 1939 took place, it became apparent that the States, far from being a source of strength, had become a positive burden in respect of their vulnerability to internal disorder with Congress inspired agitation in evidence. The Commander-in-Chief, General Cassels, warned the Viceroy of the important military implications of a breakdown (5)

in the States. Cassel's recommendations to the investigating

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2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 28th June, 1928, Hx. F., 4, p. 115. Civil aviation in the States was cleared as legitimate. Jodhpur aerodrome had the largest landing ground in India at one time. Dholpur, too, boasted on an airstrip. See Waddington, C. W., op. cit., pp. 80, 115.
Chatfield Committee called for only two Indian States Forces infantry battalions. (1) The Chatfield Report itself made no reference to the aspirations of Princes for their forces. Chatfield, however, in Cabinet referred to the grievances of the Princes that they were not allowed to have sufficient arms to equip their troops. A ready response from the Secretary of State declared that it was not right to supply arms to the Princes if their forces were not capable of making proper use of them. (2) Zetland pronounced the Princes' complaints in this connection to be 'a question of less importance'.

The indifference towards Princely military ambitions in 1939 contrasts strongly with the policy of warm association which had summoned Bikaner to the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917. (3) A constitutional advisor to the Viceroy later noted how

'the absence, indeed the highest improbability of such a gesture in the Second World War was a sign of how much attitudes towards the States had changed in the intervening years'. (5)

With the outbreak of war, both the Commander-in-Chief and the Political Secretary agreed that in the absence of any suitable quasi military or military roles, the best place for the Princes was in their States.

When Zetland asked if some military niche could be found for keen Rulers, Linlithgow held out no hope. Only Kashmir was instanced as a Prince who had hitherto been 'generous (and efficient) with his troops'.

In an attempt to secure a place for Princes as liaison officers, Cassels consulted C.O.C. Middle East but nothing materialised. (6)

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2. Admiral of the Fleet A. E. W. Chatfield, Captain 1909; Jutland 1916; 4th Sea Lord 1919; Vice Admiral 1926; Admiral 1930; Admiral of the Fleet 1935; Chairman of the Expert Committee on Indian Defence, 1938, *ibid*.
popular level, the stock of Princes had sunk low. A peripatetic journalist with an ear for gossip was informed that the Political Department had to know

'everything about every Maharaja. Several might well be Fifth Columnists in the event of a Japanese invasion of India'. (1)

Despite the ambitions of Curzon and the good offices of Reading, States troops generally had failed to make the grade. Reviewing their status in 1932, the Hyderabad Resident found that

'however good single units might become, they would never make a force which could keep the field for more than one month's campaigning and could never be free from speculation and intrigue unless they had a regular organisation and a regular staff'. (2)

This confirmed the forebodings of Creagh, who noted a number of shortcomings in the Imperial Service Corps of his day; poor payment for officers, promotion by favouritism, were features of the Corps which induced able States' subjects to prefer service in the British Indian Army.

British soldiers generally held contrasting attitudes to Princes.

The imperial adventurer, Meinertzhagen, had a confused recollection of a stout Tommy who refused to abase himself before a Prince. More tangible evidence is supplied by the statement of a British private taken at Secunderabad which referred to the Misam as a 'coolie'. Senior commissioned ranks were more drawn to Indian aristocracy as was case with Arnold Bennett's confident encountered in a Swiss hotel in 1908.

3. Creagh, General Sir C'm., op. cit., p. 280. Creagh's view is substantiated by the outstanding career in the British Indian Army of a States' subject and nephew to the Jam Sahib, Captain Himatsinhji, whom Peel hoped might return to work in his own State. See Peel to Irwin, 24th January, 1929, Ha.P., 5, pp. 10, 9. Himatsinhji stayed in the Indian Army and held the rank of Colonel at the outbreak of war. See Yeats-Brown, F., op. cit., p. 133.
In an impressive study of race relations it is revealed that 'some British officers were slightly obsequious to Maharajas'. Certainly where senior British officers were accustomed to take their leave in States, feelings of mutual respect and friendship were now uncommon. But the value of Indian States troops was assumed to be for the most part ceremonial: 'they looked grand'. Should a Maharaja attempt to change his status from host to brother officer, there was much less receptivity. Jaipur, 'genuinely keen to be a real soldier', was given a commission in the Life Guards and attached to the Scots Greys at Gaza in 1939. Their inclination to regard him as a playboy mortified Jaipur. He returned to command State troops. It might have been supposed that the military ambitions of Indian Princes would have acted to the benefit of all Indians in forcing the barriers of prejudice and opening up the way to the highest substantive ranks in the Indian Army. But it remained true that no Indian rose above the rank of Brigadier until the transfer of power in 1947.

The Princes as the Representatives of India
One mark of trust which would be bestowed on Princes by the British Government without undue cause for concern was the formal admission of Maharajas to a share in the Councils of Empire and their nomination as representatives of India at the internal gatherings of the inter-war years. From the British viewpoint, the gesture was not an unqualified success; its comparatively short duration was due to the limitations of the Princely candidates and the general decline in the standing of their Order in the later 'thirties.

In April, 1917, Bikaner became the first Indian Prince to be summoned to the Imperial War Conference where he cut something of a figure: 'a magnificent specimen of the manhood of his great country', recalled Lloyd George. At the luncheon given by the King to the delegates, together with members of the Government, Bikaner was given the highest rank and sat on the Queen's right. The King's Secretary pointed out the irony in Bikaner's distinction to the Viceroy:

'he and Sinha have been made honorary members of all the best clubs and yet in India they would not be admitted to a white mans' club'.

A Princely representative of India was also invited to the 1918 Imperial Conference. Sinha continued to represent British India but the gamble of putting up another Prince failed drastically with the substitution of Patiala for Bikaner. In the Secretary of State's highly critical view, Patiala had

'contributed nothing. He has not opened his mouth at any Conference, and Sinha just trots him around and refers to him as his colleague who represents the great fighting tradition of the Sikhs .... I did not hesitate even to the extent of violence in expressing to you my regret at Patiala's selection'.

1. Lloyd George, D., War Memoirs, vol. 1, (1938), p. 1034. Bikaner had built up some credentials through service on the staff of Sir John French when C.-in-C. The Bikaner Camel Corps was talked about as one of the most famed martial spectacles of India. See Diver, W., op. cit., p. 77.
2. Stamfordham to Chelmsford, 4th April, 1917, Ch.D., 1, p. 13.
3. Montagu to Chelmsford, 26th July, 1918, Ch.D., 4, p. 64.
Bikaner was, far and away, the safest and most respectable of the princely candidates and, in the move to represent India through maharajas at international gatherings beyond the specifically imperial context, the invitation went to Bikaner to join the Empire Delegation at the 1919 Peace Conference. Here, the Maharaja made a positive contribution in vigorously supporting Montagu and Sinha in denouncing the proposals for the partition of Turkey. On his return to India, Bikaner stressed the symbolism of his participation at the Peace Conference: 'it placed India on the same footing as the Dominions and other Countries'. His enthusiasm for India's inclusion in the League of Nations could be taken as an indication that Princes would attend at Geneva. This was borne out by the appointment of the Jam Sahib to represent India at the League Assembly in 1920. Given the jealousy endemic in the Princely Order, Montagu should not have been surprised to receive a letter of complaint from Ranji professing 'disappointment' when not reappointed in 1921. Montagu's reply implied that talent in a Maharaja was not a first essential for selection: 'we must give every Prince a turn'.

At the 1921 Imperial Conference, a minor Ruler, Cutch, represented the Princes and, in Montagu's recollection, made no impact as opposed to Sastri's 'impressive performance' in a debate which held much importance for Indians generally being concerned with Smut's unsavoury treatment of Indians in South Africa. An acute poverty of choice

2. The Times, 29th July, 1919.
3. Montagu to Reading, 8th June, 1921, E.F., 3, p. 87.
4. Montagu to Reading, 14th July, 1921, ibid., pp. 142, 3, 159. See too Montagu to Reading, 3rd August, 1921, ibid., p. 164.
appeared to constrain both Reading and the Secretary of State when
deciding upon a Prince for the League of Nations in 1921. Montagu was
(1) clear that 'Cutch is of very little good in any Conference'. Yet
Cutch was agreed to, presumably since Patiils was the alternative.
Reading concurred since a decision for Patiils might be taken as 'an
appearance of dissatisfaction with Cutch'. (2) It is an index of the
unreality of the selection proceedings, that the wretched previous
record of both Princes at international conferences did not enter the
final deliberations.

For the 1923 Conferences, the Secretary of State preferred the
Jam Sahib for the League of Nations and Alwar for the Imperial Conference.
(3) Reading confirmed these suggestions. It was Alwar's conduct which
came to attract much unfavourable comment in both Europe and India.

His behaviour in London became a nightmare for Peel. Initially, Peel
(4) was annoyed by Alwar's premature announcement of his selection.
Once in London, Alwar's absorbing preoccupation was with precedence, in
particular the demand that he should be given precedence over the Prime
Ministers of the Empire. In some embarrassment, Peel had to recognise
that,

'it has hitherto been the rule at Court that a Prince of his status
should be given precedence next to ambassadors';

in consequence, Alwar was seated above the Dominion Prime Ministers at one
dinner, though the King himself ruled that the Prime Ministers should
(5) come first at the Royal Dinner. Alwar's notions of self-importance

1. Montagu to Reading, 21st July, 1921, R.F., 10, Telegram No. 517.
2. Montagu to Reading, 26th July, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 553.
3. Reading to Montagu, 26th July, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 557.
4. Peel to Reading, 13th June, 1923, R.F., 17, Telegram No. 246. See
too Peel to Reading, 15th June, 1923, ibid., Telegram No. 253.
5. Reading to Peel, 11th June, 1923, ibid., Telegram No. 233.
6. Peel to Reading, 16th July, 1923, R.F., 6, p. 123.
7. Peel to Reading, 10th October, 1923, ibid., p. 158. Another
outrageous manifestation of Alwar's inflated sense of precedence was
his complaint in connection with the official Conference photograph.
He maintained that he should have been seated beside either the
Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister. See Peel to Reading,
21st October, 1923, ibid., p. 167.
knew no bounds and he missed no opportunity to present himself as an independent sovereign. Even when set in the purely social sphere, Alwar was a disturbing companion. But Peel's major basis for condemnation referred to Alwar's capacity for political intrigue:

'I trust Alwar will not represent us again at the Imperial Conference. He has made some excellent speeches and his choice of English and delivery are very good. Further, his picturesque appearance and costume have made a considerable impression on the public here . . . . in spite of all this, he is a double-dealer and a consummate liar. In his speeches and also in his conversation with me he has always expressed his strong imperialist sentiments. All the time I know from other information that he was posing as a strong nationalist and anti-imperialist with many of the Indians in London'.

In the face of this blanket condemnation of Alwar's conduct, Reading initially urged consideration for the Princes' sensitivity to protocol. As the Viceroy became conversant with the full import of Alwar's high flown speeches, he acknowledged that certain ill-considered observations, notably the rash praise for Smuts, would turn Indian popular sentiment against Alwar and possibly the Princes generally. Reading was also disturbed by an unusual demand from Alwar for a formal reception at Bombay on his return, red carpets, Guard of Honour and Salutes, but it was a privilege which had to be granted. In casting around for suitable Princely representatives, it seemed that the British were faced

1. Peel to Reading, 17th October, 1923, ibid., p. 164.
2. While weekending in Hampshire, Alwar disputed the order of entry and exit at dinner, hid mah-jong bricks in a pot-pourri basin, and almost shot Peel when a hare ran between them. See Peel to Reading, 6th November, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 174.
3. Ibid. Alwar was quite capable of putting up a scheme to Peel for the placing of British India under the rule of Princes, and later reproducing the conversation for the benefit of the Under Secretary with the important difference that the scheme was attributed to Peel.
4. Reading to Peel, 31st October, 1923, ibid., pp. 219, 220; See too Reading to Peel, 8th November, 1923, ibid., p. 227.
5. Reading to Peel, 22nd November, 1923, ibid., p. 249.
6. Reading to Peel, 29th November, 1923, ibid., p. 254.
with two extremes, non-contributors in the style of Patiala and Cutch, or a chronic self-advertiser in the shape of Alwar.

For the representative Prince at the 1924 session of the League, the selectors returned to perhaps their only safe man, Bikaner. Despite the relatively poor showing of Princes, a suggestion originated within the Council of State likely to further enhance the status of Princes, a proposal for an all Indian delegation of three which Reading through Bikaner could lead as 'quite a good man of affairs'. This proposal ran into solid opposition from the Labour Secretary of State, the first to raise what was a glaring absurdity in the representative status of Princes. Initially, Olivier only objected to the leadership of a Prince on the grounds of establishing an inconvenient precedent. On further thought, the Secretary of State was struck by disturbing anomalies:

'we must remember that the Native States do not consider themselves bound by any action taken by India as a Member of the League. In fact it is an anomaly (however harmless) that a Prince should be included in the Delegation as a Member. It would be much more than an anomaly to select a Prince as leader who was under no obligation to carry out commitments of the League in his own State and could not even if he wished enforce them in other States'.

Reading had little alternative but to fall in with these patently sensible objections, and the Viceroy reverted to the formula for selection hitherto employed: selection of one delegate from each of three classes: ex-Viceroy or high officials; the order of Indian Princes: Indian politicians and public men. 

Bikaner duly carried out his duties at Geneva in 1924, to the Viceroy's satisfaction and reinforced his position:

'he always strikes me as a very good specimen of the Rajput Prince',

reflected Reading,

'he looks a warrior as he is by caste, but he is better educated and more subtle-minded than most Rajput aristocrats'.

1. Reading to Olivier, 22nd April, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 39; see too Reading to Olivier, 7th May, 1924, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 153.
3. Olivier to Reading, 20th May, 1924, ibid., Telegram No. 195.
4. Reading to Olivier, 21st May, 1924, ibid., Telegram No. 192.
5. Reading to Olivier, 2nd September, 1924, ibid., Telegram No. 311.
With the installation of Birkenhead's essentially legalistic mind at the India Office, a further examination of the anomalous position of Princes at the League took place.

'It is not always easy to convince either the Chief concerned, or the representatives of other nations', commented Birkenhead,

'that he does not constitutionally represent the States, and indeed cannot since they have no internal status'.

Birkenhead was also concerned about the difficulty of finding suitable Princes outside 'a very narrow circle' and the 'enormous' expense incurred through their employment. Birkenhead felt that the presence of a Prince might add to Indian prestige but he thought it better not to stereotype the practice too deeply,

'I should be inclined to welcome an occasional departure from it'.(1)

In 1926 the inflated aspirations of Princes were evident in the resurrection of the idea, by Patiala, that the League of Nations delegation should be headed by an Indian Ruler. Reading firmly explained that the practice of sending a Prince

'was out of compliment to them and the assistance they had given during the War'.

A Prince was not the representative of his order but a Member of the Indian Delegation. Patiala's last throw suggested separate representation for the Princes at Geneva citing the example of Luxembourg, inferior in population and resources to many Indian States. Reading 'disposed very quickly of this idea'.

By the end of his term, Reading had come to entertain serious doubts about the suitability of Princes to be India's representatives, a condition of mind brought on by an application from Alwar to serve again:

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 26th February, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 22.
'it is for consideration whether we really want a Prince at all'. Given that much economic deliberation was anticipated at the Imperial Conference, 'no Prince will be of much value'. The choice for the League lay between Kapurthala and Baroda. Despite, or because of, Baroda's 'undoubted ability', Reading hesitated:

'I am not quite certain whether he would be steady enough and whether he could be trusted not to take an inconvenient line'. Kapurthala's candour carried no such danger; his strengths were in the required department, 'he will carry out the social side well'.

In his turn, Irwin was subjected to the embarrassment which followed from Indian aspirations to lead Indian delegations. More sympathetic than Reading, Irwin thought that the difficulty might be got round by varying the practice,

'one year having an Indian leader, the following year someone of the Komalshe type'.

Birkenhead shrewdly saw that the Princes' sensitivity might be used to delay Indian leadership:

'until a Ruling Prince is prepared to serve under a British Indian, it seems to me clear that the leader must be an Englishman, for I do not think that it could seriously be suggested that he should be a Ruling Prince'.

Kapurthala's selection for the League gave a welcome opportunity to Birkenhead to redefine for the Maharaja the constitutional position of the Princes at Geneva:

'the Indian States, being precluded from foreign relations, have no status at the League of Nations separate from that of the Indian Delegation'.

It followed that a Prince 'cannot formally express on behalf of the States an opinion differing from that of the Delegation as a whole'.

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1. No Prince was invited to the 1926 Imperial Conference. Irwin explained to the Chamber of Princes that the agenda had been dominated by questions of commerce. See Halifax, Lord, Indian Problems: Speeches, (1932), p. 145.

2. Reading to Birkenhead, 31st March, 1926, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 496. Also cited in Kapurthala's favour was his cosmopolitan background; he owned one of the few houses in the Bois de Boulogne. See Lord, J., The Maharajas, (1972), p. 156.

3. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th May, 1926, R.P., 2, pp. 15, 16.


5. Birkenhead to Kapurthala, 28th August, 1926, ibid., p. 86.
Predictably, Kapurthala went on to raise difficulties of a social rather than a political nature. He encountered at Geneva

'a failure to recognise in social entertainments his peculiar position as a Ruling Prince'. (1)

Birkenhead was manifestly unimpressed:

'there can be no question of agreeing to accord a special position to Chiefs at Geneva .... I do not think that anyone - except perhaps the Princes themselves - would be the losers if the ultimate result was their exclusion from future Indian Delegations'. (2)

Irwin felt more inclined towards conciliation:

'I am not sure, however, that the very peculiar position of Indian Princes might not justify concessions in their favour - not of course in official precedence as delegates, but simply for the purpose of social functions'. (3)

The inflated social pretensions of the Princes and their indifferent contributions to political discussions at Geneva, were bound to lead towards the consideration of able States' ministers as India's representatives, Birkenhead's suggestion. As a stepping-stone towards this, Irwin thought about approaching the Yuvaraj of Nysore, brother of the Maharaja and outside the charmed circle of Chamber Princes. This sensible move came to nothing and the choice fell again on the precedence-obsessed Maharaja of Kapurthala 'as he is on the spot'. (4)

1. To some extent Alwar was behind this since he had written privately to Kapurthala insisting that service on the Delegation was incompatible with the dignity of a Ruling Prince. It was pointed out to Kapurthala, without success, that three quarters of the Assembly were republicans and many noblemen with social pretensions at home were serving below the rank of First Delegates. Patrick (Secretary to the Indian Delegation) to Hirtzel (India Office), 19th September, 1926, ibid., pp. 90-2.

2. Birkenhead to Irwin, 23rd September, 1926, ibid., p. 89.


4. Irwin to Birkenhead, 31st March, 1927, Hx.* , 8, p. 103.

5. Birkenhead to Irwin, 3rd June, 1927, Hx.* , 3, p. 176. In view of Kapurthala's chronic record of absenteeism, it was with more than a touch of irony that Irwin reminded Birkenhead of the inconsistency in condemning Kapurthala for leaving his State 'when two years in succession we have invited him to be a delegate to the League'. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 31st August, 1927, Hx.* , 3, pp. 104, 5.
The scarcity of talent became more acute; as a candidate for the 1928 session of the League, Irwin fell back on Kashmir, a Prince with a past, who had been the central figure, as 'Mr. A', in a scandal attracting international publicity in 1928. Birkenhead opposed this proposal:

'Geneva is a hotbed of gossip and he would be at the mercy of caricaturists for suppression of whose productions he would probably have to pay considerable sums as even Patiala did. This kind of thing would do no good to the Indian Delegation'.

Birkenhead pressed for the appointment of a minor Muslim Prince, Palanpur, Irwin capitulated, and Palanpur was successfully approached.

With the passage of time, the social precedence issue at Geneva diminished in importance and in 1929, an India Office official could report that no real difficulty had emerged in the last three years. It is not surprising that Kapurthala pronounced himself satisfied since he sat above everyone at Geneva except the President of the Swiss Republic. The successful formula required that the leaders of Indian delegations, as an act of grace, made way for the Princes at entertainments and parties.

The financial arrangements for Princes were more than generous:

'the Princes get a handsome allowance; out of this they give entertainments on a considerably larger scale than the Delegation can give officially. At these quasi private entertainments, they are of course the principal figures, and they get a great deal of social eclat out of them at the expense of British India'.

In 1929, Irwin sounded the Chamber Princes about the possibility of a British Indian leader at Geneva. Any hopes that such an arrangement might induce Princes to delegate League duties to their ministers were dashed when the Princes turned out to be receptive, provided their social precedence was safeguarded. All the Princes consulted thought they

1. The 'Mr A' case is discussed in chapter 2, p. 244.
3. Irwin to Birkenhead, 27th March, 1928, ibid., p. 94.
4. Irwin to Peel, 12th March, 1929, H.R., 10, Telegram No, 98.
5. Peel to Irwin, 11th April, 1929, H.R., 9, p. 76.
should continue to serve. Thus in 1929 an Indian leader,
Sir Muhammad Habibullah was appointed. For Irwin, the interesting
side of the Council of State debate was the apparent readiness of Indian
members to see a Prince as leader. In accepting the invitation to
serve as a Delegate in 1929 at Geneva, Kapurthala made it very plain
that he wished to be considered for the leadership in 1930 in the
expectation that an alternating arrangement would operate between a
British Indian and a Prince. Peel would not be drawn on this supposition.
When a decision was reached in consultation between Irwin and Peel that a
Prince should lead at Geneva, naturally the choice fell on the safe
and relatively respectable Bikaner, for whose candidature Irwin had
pressed very strongly. Having led at Geneva, Irwin hoped that
Bikaner would 'take on' the 1930 Imperial Conference. This arrangement
worked out very well and Benn reported favourably on the performance of
the Indian Delegation at the Imperial Conference:

'we have adjusted everything so that the Maharaja is our
ceremonial figure'.

The elevation of Bikaner as formal leader of a delegation representing
India was something of a hollow triumph involving only a narrow circle
of Princes of the Chamber set. Not till 1936 did a Prince of the first
rank, Baroda, accept an invitation to represent India, on this occasion
at the 1937 Imperial Conference. Baroda had refused a nomination in 1927,
Scindia in 1924. In accordance with the Princes' declining status,

1. Irwin to Peel, 12th March, 1929, Hx.P., 10, Telegram No. 98.
2. Irwin to Peel, 21st March, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 57.
3. Peel to Irwin, 23rd May, 1929, ibid., p. 111.
4. See Irwin to Benn, 26th December, 1929, ibid., p. 188.
5. Irwin to Benn, 9th January, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 9.
6. Benn to Irwin, 10th October, 1930, ibid., p. 215.
8. See Birkenhead to Irwin, 3rd June, 1927, Hx.P., 8, p. 176; Reading to
   Olivier, 18th April, 1924, R.P., 18, Telegram No. 122.
the Political Secretary in 1939, sifting through possible candidates for the League Delegation, did not consider an Indian Prince. A minister from Jodhpur was suggested for Geneva in 1939; once again, no consideration was given to a Prince. Then the ultimate pinnacle of fame at Geneva was surmounted by an Indian, it fell to the Aga Khan who was elected to the Presidency of the League in 1937, not to a territorial Prince.

In retrospect, the British policy which staffed Indian delegations to international conferences with Indian Princes through the 'twenties and well into the 'thirties, may have had a positive effect in reminding the international community of Britain's cordial and intimate relationship with 'Indian India'. Princes well practised in the social graces, Bikaner, Kapurthala, Alwar, would make their mark though the largely republican gathering at Geneva may have wondered at times at their pretensions. But Indian critics of the Princes were as alive to the artificiality of their situation at Geneva as were Olivier and Birkenhead:

'how grotesque and incongruous is the sight of an Indian autocrat who is only a feudatory of the British Government and who is permitted there by the sufferance of the Imperial Government to sit along with the chosen representatives of the self-governing countries of the world'.

In the strictly legal sense the Princes had no locus standi at Geneva and there is little indication that the narrow circle of Chamber Princes from whom the international representatives were regularly drawn ever profited from direct experience of the Assembly devoted to the highest ideals of moral and material uplift. It is some indication of the indifference with which the Chamber viewed humanitarian initiatives from Geneva that

2. This was Khan Bahadur Mohammad Din: see Linlithgow to Setland, 23rd June, 1939, L.P., 17, p. 275.
3. Memoirs of the Aga Khan, p. 268. Linlithgow viewed the Aga Khan's elevation in very cynical light; it did not strike him as entirely desirable .... I am sure that his lavish hospitality at the Assembly has not been without its object'. See Linlithgow to Setland, 27th November, 1936, L.P., 15, p. 231.
it was only in 1930 that its members expressed a theoretical readiness to cooperate with Delhi in implementing the obligations undertaken by the Government of India under the International Convention of 1921 for the suppression of traffic in women and children.

Princes and Prerogatives: Honour and Salutes
The presence of Princes at international conferences publicised in an external sense the allegedly strengthening bond between their order and the British Empire. A variant of this policy sought to strengthen the standing of the Princes inside India through a policy of public recognition. It was anticipated that the bestowal of honours and the raising of formal salutes would cement the closest relations with Princes. So closely was the polity of an Indian State bound up with ceremonial Durbars, that the Indian populace at large had ample opportunity to appreciate the rising stock of Princes as demonstrated by a growing accumulation of decorations and salutes. Not all the Princes were deceived by such a transparent policy, as instance Holkar's resistance to Lytton's schemes for the promotion of a native aristocracy with armourial bearings. But in a general sense, an experienced Political Officer whose career spanned the last decades of the Indian States felt able to testify to the astonishing love of the Indian Princes for titles, honours and ceremonials.

The granting of titles direct by the British, rather than through the pageant court at Delhi, began under Hastings in the early part of the nineteenth century and continued under Amherst and Bentinck. Canning ensured in 1859 that all grants of titles should be made by the Viceroy. The honours policy struck that shrewd observer of the Princes and their ambitions, Lord Salisbury, as well worth pursuing and he advised the Viceroy accordingly:

'these Native Princes must submit in the inevitable course of things to constant retrenchments of power at our hands and therefore I should be inclined to be the more cautious not to diminish the ceremonial observances to which they have been accustomed. They care most about the show: we care most about the power'. (3)

1. Trevelyan, H., op. cit., p. 156; see also Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 71.
2. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 71.
The honours policy also had its strategic merits as providing
(1) opportunity to fan inbred enmity between Princely houses by its
selective operation and thus undermine any potentially dangerous
combination. The standard reference work on titles and salutes, drawn
up in 1895, stressed that

'care should be taken to avoid too much system. Much is left
to the unfettered discretion of the Representative of the Queen'. (2)

Though Curzon saw through the artificiality of the policy which
sought to dress up Princes as a quasi European aristocracy, he could do
little to diminish the obsession which Princes generally held about
precedence. Scenes bordering on the farcical took place on the arrival
of the Duke of Connaught for the 1903 Durbar. With the great Princes
drawn up in order of precedence to meet the Queen's son, Holkar plunged
forward out of sequence. The situation was saved by the lightning
intervention of the Indore Resident who seized Holkar's coat-tails.

On the one hand a traditional seniority did exist among Princes which
acted as a guide to placings at, say, the Connaught reception. But
Viceroy's followed no consistent policy in honouring individual Princes.
The most outspoken critic of the erratic conduct of the honours policy
was O'Moore Creagh who thought it 'deplorable' and the cause of

'much ill feeling when the Governor General selects one or two
Chiefs as his special friends and accepts them as the exponents
of the views of 'my brother Chiefs' and showers honours on
them'. (4)

1. As expressed by a sometime Commander-in-Chief, 'age long years of war
carried on with the greatest treachery have left their mark,.... most
ruling dynasties have hereditary feuds with one another'. See
Creagh, Sir O'M., op. cit., p. 217.

Cited in Fitte, Sir K., op. cit., p. 72. For a full list of salutes
due to individual States, see Appendix 1.


In Creagh's strongly expressed view, the Government's honours system, through its careless distribution, had kept old emnities alive.

Traditionally, only the heads of great Rajput clans had held the title of Maharaja: when it was officially bestowed on Alwar and Bikaner, 'deep offence', was taken, a condition intensified by Bikaner's selection for the Imperial Conference in 1917.

The Princes' much publicised show of imperial solidarity during the Great War brought into prominence the prospect of enhanced honours. But Sir Michael O'Dwyer, with the experience of 18 years service in the Indian States, urged Hardinge in 1915 not to raise the status of the Princely order any further since he felt that their rights and privileges had already received much fuller recognition than in the previous decade: their services to the Empire, after all, had varied enormously. O'Dwyer's sensible observations were discounted with the issue of a Victory Honours List which bestowed a gratuitous number of titles and adjusted salutes. It marked, according to Trevelyan,

'a period of inflation ... as result of which quite unimportant Rulers had grand titles and a liberal allowance of guns'. (3)

At the head of the List stood the Nizam in his new title, 'His Exhausted Highness', a style which caused,

'enormous discontent and bitter jealousy among the other Princes which had Montagu foreseen, he would never have agreed to the title'.(4)

3. The awards were the work of a 'War Rewards Committee' whose recommendations were monitored by Montagu. Not all were accepted. Montagu intervened to stop the grant of a 19 gun permanent dynastic salute to Patiala on the sensible grounds that a similar increase would have to be given to Jaipur, Jodhpur, and possibly to Bikaner and Bundi which would in turn have necessitated raising Udaipur to 21 guns, a manifestly undeserved reward. See Reading to Montagu, 25th October, 1921, R.P., 3, p. 153.
One immediate consequence of the honours inflation was to further confuse the situation regarding Princes' order of precedence. Chelmsford felt that the situation should be left fluid. A very real difficulty was that in some cases, the thirst for honours was unquenchable. This was certainly true of Patiala and the claims which he thrust upon Chelmsford. In refusing him, the Viceroy could point to the very considerable rewards that had already come his way:

'Your Highness has been gazetted as a Honorary Major General, the G.C.S.I., the G.C.I.E. and the G.B.E. have been conferred on Your Highness. Your Highness has also received the high honour of a personal salute of 19 guns'. (2)

For his part, Montagu became increasingly critical of the operation of the discretionary honours system as a means of control. Referring to the Princes' endless demands, he advised the incoming Viceroy

'that you will never satisfy them as regards honours, until you have given them all a maximum of possible salutes instead of grading salutes as a method of reward ..... the King of Montenegro gets the same salute as the King of Italy, why not equalise all the Princes and get rid of the question of relative salutes'. (3)

Reading, however, drew back from such a radical proposition which would deny to his Government a means to steer Princes:

'the whole question of salutes is one of extreme difficulty and delicacy'.

But he stood firm on the salute list of 1921 as representing the final recognition of war services.

The relentless quest for titles continued notwithstanding. Bikaner expressed severe disappointment that his heir had secured only a C.V.O. for services as A.D.C. to the Prince of Wales on tour; the heir to Kashmir had netted a K.C.V.O. Reading declined to intervene and argued that the bestowal of the Victoria Order was personal to the King. (5) In theory,

2. Chelmsford to Peel, 26th March, 1921, ibid., p. 103.
5. Reading to Peel, 11th May, 1922, R.P., 5, p. 48.
the manipulation of the precedence issue could be expected to keep avaricious Princes up to the mark. In practice, a price had to be paid in terms of incessant demands made on the Viceroy. Reading complained,

'I rarely get a visit from a Ruling Prince who doesn't either suggest additional guns or some changes in the salute he gets to aid his prestige'. (1)

Reading was conscious, too, of the ever-present risk of offering some social affront:

'the question of social precedence among the Princes is a terribly difficult one, and involves constant trouble. I do not believe that any dinner at Viceregal Lodge ever takes place at which a number of Princes are present without some difficulty being raised'. (2)

Peel shrank from offering positive help and concurred with the 'insolubility' of deciding precedence particularly between Princes with the same salute.

Hoare, to whom it fell as Secretary of State to guide the progress of the mammoth India Bill, gave some thought to the grant of honours as a means to secure Princely cooperation in the framing of the new constitution. He considered

'a G.C.B. for the Nizam if he is inclined to play over Federation'. (4)

On the Princes' side, the Nizam in particular regarded the official drive to secure the Princes' adherence to the India Bill as providing a useful opportunity to bargain over titles and honours. (5) At one point Willingdon proposed that the salute list might be revised as an incentive for Princes to accept the Reforms, but Hoare drew back from this hornet's nest. The Secretary of State did countenance the grant of a title for the Nizam's second son: 'if it will really bring the Nizam into Federation'. This could not be absolutely guaranteed and Hydari,

1. Reading to Peel, 3rd August, 1922, I.P., 5, p. 113.
2. Reading to Peel, 26th September, 1922, ibid., p. 150.
3. Peel to Reading, 2nd November, 1922, ibid., p. 117.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 12th December, 1933, T.P. (1), 6, p. 245.
the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, was still pressing for the award in 1937. The Secretary of State was assured, 'we could obtain anything we wanted out of the Nizam if we were willing to grant the title of His Highness to his second son'. (1) The honours carrot was used to keep Hydari steady during the final stages of the India Bill; he received a Privy Councillorship in the New Year's Honours List of 1936. (2)

While most Princes were enthusiastic about honours and decorations, none surpassed the vigour with which the Maharaja of Kapurthala canvassed for foreign decorations. This practice disturbed Birkenhead who thought the Maharaja showed himself to be 'both pertinacious and entirely devoid of scruple'. In 1927 the Foreign Office stepped in to block the award of a Roumanian decoration, said to have the backing of the King of Roumania himself. Only three weeks before, the Greek Government had applied to the Foreign Office to confer a high Greek decoration on the Maharaja. Birkenhead commented sourly:

'seeing that in September last, the Foreign Office issued a circular to all their representatives abroad discouraging the bestowal of such things on Indian Rulers, the matter is assuming the form of a trial of strength between the British Government and the Maharaja'. (3)

Birkenhead concluded that to date the Maharaja was ahead. Irwin took an altogether more sympathetic view of Kapurthala's obsession and felt initially that since the State was said to be well administered, a G.C.V.O. might be in order. Kapurthala desired a G.C.B. to celebrate his jubilee which was 'out of the question'. Birkenhead's response

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2. See chapter 5, p. 537.
4. Irwin to Birkenhead, 16th June, 1927, H.P., 3, p. 137.
was illuminating in that it indicated what would pass for permissible in the funding of foreign tours:

'I appreciate that his State is better administered than most, and that it is at the cost of his estates in British India and not of his own subjects that he is able to pay these expensive annual visits to Europe'.

Nevertheless, the honour was opposed by the King who had been offended by Kapurthala at Ascot. In the event, Kapurthala still secured a G.B.E. which gave him 'quite inordinate pleasure' and was added to a large stock of decorations and personal presents 'received from every Crowned Head and cosmopolitan celebrity'. In the matter of honours, Kapurthala was a difficult man to beat, as the protocol-obsessed Resident of the Punjab States found to his cost. Kapurthala did not relinquish the trail of the G.C.V.O. He laid siege to the new Secretary of State, Benn, and eventually secured both his sympathy and the King's approval. This time the award was vetoed by Irwin who had woken up to the Maharaja's pretensions:

'really, the man has been so shameless that it offends my sense of decency that all the walls of Jericho should fall flat at the blast of his trumpet'. (4)

It is an indication of the falling stock of the Princes that, in the era of Linlithgow, the Government of India came to exercise a more rigorous check on not only the distribution of British and foreign orders among the Princes, but also the Princes' establishment of their own orders. Mysore conferred the decoration of the Ganda iherunda, or double-headed eagle; the Nizam had permission to give the title of Nawab Maharaja or Raja. When Travencore instituted, in 1936, two new orders, the Political Secretary was instructed to intervene forthwith.

2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 1st December, 1927, ibid., p. 253.
3. Wilberforce-Bell sought to castigate the Maharaja for his use of an arched crown which 'impinged on the Royal prerogative'. Kapurthala sent a courteous reply from the George V Hotel in Paris: at the top of the hotel notepaper was a gigantic arched crown. See Wakefield, Sir W., op. cit., p. 157.
was upset by the spectacle of Patiala, who came near to Kapurthala as a decoration collector, decked out with no fewer than 16 stars on his breast, not unlike an old-fashioned swimming instructor when he had them all on. The Viceroy found it difficult to keep track of Patiala's decorations from Foreign States:

'I am sure that when he got his Greek Order of the Redeemer he was given only restricted permission to wear it'. (2)

The Secretary of State was not keen to approach the Palace with Linlithgow's suggestion: that the King should make it clear that Princes required his permission both for the acceptance and wearing of foreign decorations. (3) Leloland took refuge behind the Princes' allegation that hitherto no objection had been taken. Linlithgow was unimpressed by the reluctance at the India Office and the Palace to face the issue which 'is one of importance'. Hydari had been awarded the Legion of Honour, 'no doubt in recognition of some donation or the presentation of some Nis'; the Viceroy felt that he could not very well bar Hydari from wearing his sash and turn a blind eye to the 'hangers on of Patiala and Kapurthala'. (4) Under pressure, the King agreed to act though his Secretary jibbed at the suggestion of a general directive from the Palace on the somewhat specious ground

'that it would be rather hard to ask him so early in his reign to take a step which was likely to be highly unpopular with Princes'. (5)

1. Trevelyan, G., op. cit., p. 156. In order to fit them all on his breast, Patiala had his decorations specially reproduced in three-quarter size.
2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 5th March, 1937, L.P., 14, pp. 61, 2. Linlithgow was distressed not only by Patiala's parade of medals but by the presence of his Yuvraj, at a large Viceregal dinner for Princes, 'decorated with two stars, the broad riband of a Roumanian order and some six or eight Foreign Decorations'.
However, a Palace command was issued which 'wholly met' Linlithgow's point.

Predictably, Linlithgow's final embarrassment in the matter of honours concerned the irrepressible Maharaja of Kapurthala who in 1937 pressed for promotion to Honorary Major-General. Linlithgow's investigations into the background of the case revealed that the once vaunted administrative excellence of the Kapurthala State was a transient condition if it ever existed. The original proposal in 1934 to promote Kapurthala and Jind (despite the fact that Jind was stone deaf) had been objected to by Hoare on the grounds that internal conditions in Kapurthala were far from satisfactory. Linlithgow remained vigorously opposed to the promotion recommendations though Willingdon had favoured them in 1936. Zetland reflected whimsically on Willingdon's capacity to make promises 'which are apt to prove embarrassing to others - e.g. to you and me'.

Under the firm Viceroyalty of Linlithgow, the honours policy ran out of steam. That it had hitherto enjoyed a degree of prominence was in part due to the Princeps' notorious absorption in questions of protocol. However such petty ambition and obsession with precedence dovetailed well with like-minded inclinations within the Government of India, in particular the enthusiasms of Political Officers of a certain stamp. A symbolic figure here was the preposterous Resident of the Punjab States, Sir Harold Wilberforce-Bell, who frequently studied Princes' coats of arms with a magnifying glass to see whether they transgressed his strictly enforced rule. For a Political Officer who, however momentarily, lost his sense of occasion, the result could be fatal in every sense.

2. Ibid., pp. 199, 200.
5. Crump, the Acting Resident at Mysore, confidently tipped for the top appointment at Hyderabad, danced too energetically on the rear platform of his train following a bibulous send-off. Hyderabad was assigned to another officer and Crump, at home on leave, did not survive the blow. See Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., pp. 89, 90.
Some general conclusions may be drawn from these several manifestations of the policy of trust; the institution of a Chamber of Princes, the transfer of States to direct relationship with the Government of India, the provision of legal safeguards, the modernization of Indian States Forces, the appointment of Princes as representatives of India, the bestowal of salutes and honours on Ruling houses. For the most part, they were associated with the aftermath of the Great War and the more enlightened atmosphere which brought forth the Montford Reforms. In no particular case, were the expectations of either the Princes concerned or the British architects of the policies met. The Chamber of Princes, flawed from the beginning with critical gaps in its membership, was consigned to failure at an early stage. The centralisation of political relations with States resulted in increased scope for misrule and to that extent shortened the probability of survival. The provision of legal safeguards did not halt blackmailing or ultimately preserve States from Congress intervention. The niggardly concessions on States' Forces armaments only exacerbated the Princes' instinct that their status was of necessity decorative whatever was said in public about their potentially dominant role in an all India policy. Only in the spheres of international conferences and acquisition of honours had the Princes seemed to have made any tangible gains, and these were shows of tinsel rather than substance. The Princes were not secured to the British Raj by impressive links of positive and unambiguous mutual trust. Rather, the Princes were preserved as 'allies' of the Paramount Power through the unilateral exercise of an elaborate mechanism of control which functioned as the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India.
Chapter 2

Prodigal Allies: the Framing of States' Policy

The Political Department

Administrative Standards in the Indian States: British attitudes to responsibility and styles of supervision

Grounds for Intervention: cases of deposition or 'abdication'

Grounds for Intervention: cases of administrative and financial breakdown

Grounds for Intervention: moral and humanitarian considerations

The Exercise of Paramountcy: disputed territories

The Exercise of Paramountcy: disputed successions

The Exercise of Paramountcy: the conflict of economic interest

The Exercise of Paramountcy: the incultation of educational standards; restrictions on foreign leave
In 1875, Lord Salisbury intimated to the Viceroy the future path of the Indian States:

'The Native Princes can only in the long run, co-exist with us in India, on the terms of their becoming - gradually and almost insensibly if you will - our deputies for the Government of the people as much as Lieutenant Governors are, in avowedly British territory; working in forms and surrounded with dignities, more suitable to the traditions of the people: but in substance governing according to our sense of right'.

The task of guiding the Princes towards Salisbury's goal fell to the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India; in India the term 'Political' being a synonym for 'Diplomatic' as Macaulay spotted in 1841. At various times this division of the Government of India, which was responsible for relations with foreign territories adjacent to India as well as relations with Rulers of Indian States, changed its designation. From 1784-1842, the Department operated under three distinct headings, 'secret', 'political', and 'foreign'; from 1843 to 1914 it stood as the 'Foreign Department'; from 1914 to 1937 it acted as the Foreign and Political Department with the creation of a Political Secretary to supervise the States. From 1937 the Viceroy assumed a new designation for his relations with the Durbaras, the 'Crown Representative' and a fresh post of 'Political Advisor' was created with the right to attend the Viceroy's Executive Council. This was in belated recognition of a longstanding and legitimate grievance of Princes; that their interests had not been represented at the highest level when critical decisions were made with political or economic implications for the States.

In the riproaring early days of the Company, the post of Resident was prized by those best at shaking the Pagoda tree. When Hickey's friend Bob Pott was appointed Resident at the Durbar of the Nawab of Bengal,

2. Wakefield, Sir W., op. cit., p. ix.
he rejoiced since

'the whole stipend allowed by Government to the Nawab passes through the Resident's hands, in which channels a considerable portion of it always sticks to his fingers'. (1)

In Hickey's day the anxious and meticulous hospitality of Indian Princes was taken for granted by the Europeans. With the passage of time the tendency was for Residents to become more overbearing. A study of the Rajputana Residents of the early nineteenth century reveals that they 'were often guided by personal prejudice and predilection and mostly betrayed gross ignorance of the local customs, manners and traditions. Moreover many of them held exaggerated notions about the duties, rights, and obligations of the British Government in its newly acquired role as the paramount power of India and consequently tried to interpose their authority and influence on matters of internal administration'. (3)

The energetic and uncompromising style of Sir David Ochterlony, the first Agent to the Governor General in Rajputana, was cited as a classic example of this tendency.

Political Officers in the early days could and did distinguish themselves, notably Sir John Malcolm, a legendary linguist and Persian scholar, and Sir Charles Metcalfe for his sense of justice and general probity. Such men had to contend with colleagues in the direct tradition of Bob Potts. When Metcalfe was offered the Residency at Hyderabad in 1820, he found the State sunk in corruption, the Nizam a puppet, and the Eurasian banking house of William Palmer, the source of corruption, operating from the grounds of the Residency, with the Resident

2. Ibid., pp. 115, 6.
4. The colourful lifestyle of Ochterlony is discussed in Edwardes, W., Glorious Sahibs, (1968), p. 22. See also Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., p. 106.
6. See Thompson, E., op. cit., pp. 39, 40; Edwardes, W., op. cit., p. 43.
on its board. Allegations of corruption in Hyderabad, at European instigation, were difficult to eradicate. In 1888 the Nizam offered 3 lakhs to satisfy the 60 year old claim of Messrs Palmer and Rumbold; the vernacular press saw the hidden hand of the Residency here. Even the Secretary of State was drawn to the conclusion that the Europeans were 'the worst spoilers in Hyderabad'.

While the aftermath of the Mutiny ostensibly ushered in enlightened attitudes to Princes, there is good reason to believe thatchterlony's style persisted. Northcote wrote to Lawrence in 1867 on the subject of the Viceroy's correspondence with the Nizam:

'I sometimes wonder how he takes your plain speaking; but I suppose what would hardly do with a European potentate answers with an Asiatic'. (3)

In the testimony of a young English administrator bound for Bengal, the new Haileybury generation had learned nothing in advance about India or its customs. Those who passed into the Political Service failed, for the most part, to impress one of its most senior officers:

'with the exception of a few of the highest in the calling, the British Political Agents who spend their days and NIGHTS at native courts, cut off from the association of their countrymen, have not been types of which we can be proud'. (4)

In a collection of satirical essays of the 1880s on the Anglo Indian community, by an author who knew the Princes well, perhaps the most mordant prose is reserved for the Political Agent who

'cannot be taken home. The purple bloom fades in the scornful climate of England; the paralytic swagger passes into sheer imbecility; the nineteen-gun tall talk reverberates in jeering echoes'. (5)

1. Edwards, W., op. cit., pp. 210-17. Rumbold, the outgoing Resident subsequently made trouble for Metcalfe at India House. Metcalfe found the Governor General, Hastings, markedly unsympathetic to the uncovering of layers of corruption.
Kipling, too, had his doubts about the stock of the Political Service. Mrs. Hawksbee, scanning the Civil List with a favour to do Tarrion, thought him 'too good' for the Political Department.

In the popular mind, 'Politics' had become associated with an arrogant and overbearing style. Disturbing complaints along these lines reached Lord Salisbury who was advised of a protest by the Prince of Wales, following his visit to India, which brought out

'in strong terms the painful impression produced upon him by what he saw of the manners of the Residents of the Native Princes at Bombay'.

Salisbury found this disheartening, the Prince being a singularly good judge of manners:

'the Residents are picked men - and if their conduct, on a state occasion, excited such strong feelings in a fresh observer, what must the subordinated be like'.

The reputation of the Political Department in the later nineteenth century was not enhanced by a fondness in the Indian press for publishing tales of oppression perpetrated by Residents. In 1886 the Amrita Bazar Patrika published 'incriminating letters', secret minutes purporting to expose an official plot engineered by the Kashmir Resident, Sir Lepel Griffin, to depose the Maharaja. Perhaps the most celebrated affair was the Manipur Rising of 1891, when it was widely alleged in the Indian press that through a whim of Grimwood, the Resident, a palace revolution had been instigated to remove a high official of the State who had demonstrated independence of judgement. Even the Anglo-Indian Pioneer condemned Grimwood for his exercise of arbitrary authority.
Rajputana Gazette published the following code of conduct for a Prince:

'a Raja to get on properly with his Political Agent should go to his house every day to 'salaam' him, on occasions he should drink 2 or 3 bottles of brandy with him. He should give him two days 'shikar' a week and place a good riding horse at his disposal'. (1)

Numerous Residents had their names coupled with enormities, the redoubtable Griffin more than most. In the Bhupal case of 1889 he was accused by Annie Besant among others of 'shameless interference' and immoral conduct with the Begum's daughter.

With the advent of the twentieth century and the evolution of a general policy which sought to elevate the prestige of the Princes while binding them closer to the imperial interest, clearly it was a matter of high importance that the Political Department should be overhauled. Curzon gave his special attention to recruitment,

'never making any first appointment until he had personally satisfied himself of the suitability of the officer chosen'.

His Simla speech of 1905 was intended to boost Departmental morale:

'there is no more varied and responsible a service in the world than the Political Department of the Government of India .... and I hope the time may never arise when it will cease to draw to its own the best abilities and the finest characters that the services in India can produce'. (3)

A logical first step was to improve the pay and prospects for the Political Department and bring them more into line with other Civil Service Departments. Sir Walter Lawrence recalled how he lost pay by entering the Political Department. The complicating factor was the traditional recruiting pattern of the Political Department which drew two thirds of its cadre from the Indian Army, a less remunerative branch of the services than

2. Ibid., p. 221. Dufferin's refusal to allow Griffin to prosecute the native press was gleefully taken by native journals to be a substantiation of the charges.
4. Lawrence, Sir W., op. cit., p. 57.
the civilian. Even with Curzon's adjustments, the differential in pay between the Political Department and their I.C.S. colleagues persisted. In 1921, Montagu had been particularly keen to raise the pay of the military 'politics' to that of civilians and Peel, too, entirely agreed. But the discrepancy lingered on till its abolition by the Lee Commission on the Indian Services in 1925.

It is difficult to eradicate the impression that the status of the Political Department was lower than that of the I.C.S. generally; that the Department attracted more than its share of 'bad bargains'. Humphrey Trevelyan, a veteran 'Political', conceded that some feeling existed between the I.C.S. proper and the Political Department:

"the 'civilians' in the Government of India considered that the future of government depended on them, that the 'politics' consisted of 'civilians' who shirked hard work and soldiers who did not get on in their regiments". (5)

Unquestionably, influence played a part in recruitment: as the Political Department's own historian stated, 'a moderate dose of nepotism never did a cadre any harm'. Brighter entrants to the I.C.S. might hesitate before opting for the Political Department. One of the most impressive of the last generation of Indian 'politics', Sir Malcolm Darling, thought his invitation to transfer to the Political, 'a doubtful bait'. He was swayed by the advice of a likeable District Commissioner who thought it 'a good thing to get out of the ruck as soon as possible'. (7)

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1. Curzon wished to reverse the proportion of military to civilian; understandably he felt that a military background was not especially well suited to largely diplomatic duties; but his recommendations were not implemented. See Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 36.
2. Peel to Reading, 2nd November, 1922, I.P., 5, p. 117.
5. Trevelyan, H., op. cit., p. 150.
Deputy Commissioner may have been more than half serious when, to the
information that Fitze had been appointed Probationer in the Political
Department, he added:

'it appears that you will never again do a hard day's work or
endure a hot weather in the plains'. (1)

Probationers in the Political Department were required to pass an
examination designed to test their familiarity with

'a singularly uninspiring publication entitled the Political Manual
and with certain archaic works describing the chaotic condition of
Central India and Rajputana when those areas began to come under
the stabilising influence of the East India Company'. (2)

These texts were not especially germane to contemporary problems and Barton
confessed that

'the training of the recruit lacks thoroughness having regard to
the responsible nature of the work for which he is destined'. (3)

No effective measures to improve this weakness in the structure of the
Department appear to have been taken. The Indian States Inquiry
Committee, in 1928, made a number of recommendations to improve training
procedures for Political Officers. Yet in 1929, in their review of
the deficiencies of the Political Department, both the Political Advisor
to the Viceroy and Linlithgow himself, concurred in their judgement

'that a good deal of the trouble is that both the Civilians and
Soldiers lack proper training'. (5)

The authoritative code of action, drawn up in Winto's time under the
signature of Harcourt Butler, the celebrated Political Manual of 1909,
laid down a number of clear principles for the guidance of Political Officers.

2. Ibid., p. 25. These standard texts were respectively: Lyall's
Rise and Expansion of the British Dominions in India, Lyall's Asiatic
Studies, Tod's Rajasthan, Malcolm's Central India, Sleeman's
Rambles and Recollections. See Report of the Indian States Committee,
1928, Cmd. 3302, p. 39.
p. 29.
4. Cmd. 3302, p. 3.
5. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21st March, 1939, Exp., 17, p. 32.
There is much in the text which suggests a wish to curb the arrogance for which some nineteenth century Residents had been noted:

'the first duty of a Political Officer is to cultivate direct, friendly and personal relations with the Ruling Chief with whom he works'.

All the Political Officer's letters to the Durbar, except on routine subjects,

'should be drafted by himself in a punctiously courteous style. He should always endeavour to place himself in the position of the Durbar and endeavour to realise the Durbar's point of view'. (1)

In theory, therefore, the officers of the Political Department were provided with a set of guidelines which would enable them to act in an enlightened and sensitive manner. In practice, should they contravene the principles laid down in the 'Manual', (owing to the extraordinary powers possessed by the Political Department) there was little recourse against their conduct. This was recognised by the Department itself in a very remarkable Despatch drawn up in 1930:

'the Department is strictly speaking responsible to no body of opinion in India; its decisions are liable to review by no authority in India but itself, and these facts have not unnaturally given rise to the feeling that the virtually autocratic powers, perhaps, amount to a constitutional anachronism .... the extraordinary concentration of exclusive power described above gives the Political Department a degree of authority which is not enjoyed by any other Department of the Government of India. The States have learned from experience that any attempt to bring the activities of its officers before the public would be fraught with serious consequences to themselves'.

The Despatch emphasised that the Department was included in the portfolio of the Viceroy for whom, as the representative of the King-Imperator, the States had a profound regard which in turn made it difficult to question the decisions taken. The Department was 'completely immune from scrutiny' not only at the hands of the Central Legislature of British India:

1. Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Political Department of the Government of India, [12], 11129, 4, clauses (1), (iii).
'in effect it is not responsible even to the British Parliament'.

The despatch did concede the Princes' contention that policy had fluctuated with individuals and accepted that some reconstitution of the Department was necessary. The Viceroy

'...could ensure that the duties of Political Agents and Residents are in future brought more into conformity with accepted diplomatic usage'.

For all that, the Political Service lived on much as before. Practice and political necessity dictated that the manning and style of operation of the Political Department should be kept from the investigatory eye. Prior to the visit of the Islington Committee on the Public Services with its brief on Indianisation, a development abhorrent to the Princes in the context of the Political Department, the Secretary of State explained to the Viceroy:

'...as to the Political Service, we cannot of course give actual instructions to a Royal Commission not to touch on any subject within the scope of its reference. But I think it can be made quite clear to Islington and most of his colleagues that they will be wise to leave this service out of their Inquiry'.

Through an ingenious sequence of expedients, all moves to either reconstitute or Indianise, to any degree, the Political Department were deflected. More or less no progress had been made by 1938 when Linlithgow grasped the 'real difficulty':

'the States are reluctant to accept Indian members of the Political Department, the extent to which they can be employed in the Foreign side is very limited; our recruitment in consequence has to be entirely European'.

1. Government of India Foreign and Political Department, Secret-Special No. 7, 13th September, 1930, 2.c.c., R/1/32/10 (5). The despatch cited Bradlaugh's movement of an adjournment of the House of Commons on the question of intervention in Kashmir, as the solitary occasion on which the activities of the Political Department had formed the subject for debate in the British Parliament.
2. Ibid.
5. This essay in successful evasion is discussed in Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., chapter 6, passim.
In one of his final communications as Secretary of State, Zetland acknowledged the wish of Rulers to deal with Europeans only, but he pressed for the reconstitution of the Political Department as

'a matter of real political importance on which we cannot afford to be accused of showing any racial bias'. (1)

While Curzon's personal monitoring of recruitment and Harcourt Butler's Political Manual were expressly designed to enhance the character and conduct of the Political Service, there are strong indications that the imperious tradition of Ochterlony and Griffin lived on. An astute British journalist and critic, based in Travancore in 1925, recorded of the Resident:

'Cotton is the focus of all snobishness as far as the local English community are concerned. An invitation from him is equivalent to one from the Palace. When he drives to the Capital, Trivandrum, the river ferries are held up in case he should be delayed even for a few minutes'. (2)

Forster, too, was unimpressed by the Political agent whom he encountered at Dewas in 1921, 'whiskified, fishy-faced, and obviously a bully'. His superior, the Agent to the Governor General at Indore,

'is even his inferior in deportment. It is strange that the Political Department, which has had to deal with the Princes, should specialise in bad manners. It was just the same ten years ago'. (3)

The calibre of the Political Agents did cause concern to successive Viceroy's. Chelmsford, when pressed by Montagu to comment, conceded that

'I am somewhat worried by the Political Service', though he did defend the Department from Princey attack by pointing to its inconsistency.

4. Chelmsford to Montagu, 1st April, 1929, Ch.P., 5, pp. 54, 5.
5. This was well illustrated in the case of Patiali's petition to the Secretary of State to have Crump, his Resident, transferred, a move which coincided with Patiali's request to the Viceroy to ensure Crump's retention, 'as a personal favour'. Chelmsford wryly reflected, 'I am left in doubt as to whether to take this as one more instance of the inconsistency of the human mind, or as a reflection of the rest of my Politicals, on the assumption that no change of Resident could possibly be for the better'. See Chelmsford to Montagu, 19th February, 1929, ibid., p. 27.
Reading, too, had his doubts about the excellence of the Department:

'I am seriously disturbed by the paucity of recruits and their lack of quality. I need not emphasise the importance of maintaining a good standard in the Political Department particularly in view of the difficulties in adjusting the relations between the Indian States and British India consequent on the changing conditions of today'. (1)

Harcourt Butler on his investigative tour of the Indian States in 1928, heard evidence from the old Begum of Bhopal, for whom he had 'a great admiration and reverence', about a 'troublesome Political Agent' and a general deterioration in the style of Political from that of the old days. (2) Butler's Report stressed the need for Political Officers to take up a

'special study of the language and customs of the people and all those graceful courtesies of manner and conduct to which Indians attach extreme importance'.

In an implicit criticism of the Department, the Report continued,

'the mischief done by one unsuitable officer is so great that no effort should be spared to get the best men possible'. (3)

The difficulty lay in finding the 'best men'. The Political Department Despatch of 1930 revealed the extent of recruiting difficulties:

'it is not very long since recruitment for the Political Department used to be made by selection from large numbers of well-qualified candidates both civil and military. But in recent years the supply of qualified candidates has been barely equal to the number of vacancies'. (4)

The poor standing of the Department of the early 'thirties is starkly illustrated in the devastating criticisms levelled from both within and without. Keyes, the Resident at Hyderabad, wrote about 'the rottenness' of the Political Department. (5) J. C. G. Davidson, Chairman of the investigating States Committee of 1932, was staggered by the mediocrity of the Political personnel which he found 'almost incomprehensible'.

1. Reading to Peel, 14th September, 1922, E.I.P., 5, p. 113.
The senior men were 'completely worked out' and Davidson was driven
to conclude that 'a very serious deterioration' had taken place in the
Political Department in recent years.

Not surprisingly, Linlithgow, at an early moment in his Viceroyalty,
chose to investigate the calibre of his Political Department. He
invited all first and second class Residents to meet him individually
at Viceregal Lodge, in an effort to gauge their quality which on
information to hand, 'appears to vary very considerably'. The level
of competence was bound to fall as civilian recruits of the 'political'
dried up. Linlithgow was compelled to issue a circular to the
Governors of all eleven provinces exhorting them to release officers.
It pointed to the notable decrease in the number of applications to serve
in the Political Department from the I.C.S. proper:

'you will, I am sure, recognise the great importance of maintaining
the efficient manning of the Indian Political Service'.

The Secretary of State shared Linlithgow's concern. He favoured the
depressing explanation that 'uncertainty regarding their future' prevented
desirable recruits from coming forward. Increasingly, Linlithgow was
concerned about the competence of the Political Department to handle the
disruptions in the States, consequent upon the agitations of 1938 and 1939:

'I am disturbed lest the personnel at my disposal should, with their
very different training and (shining exceptions apart) their very
average quality, prove not up to the work which lies before them'.

Since the supervision of the Political Department fell so uniquely
within the province of the Viceroy, a good deal hinged on the relationship
of the Viceroy to his Department. Harding did not hesitate to over-rule

1. Davidson to Hoare, 20th February, 1932, T.R.(i), 14; Davidson to
Hoare, 6th March, 1932, ibid.; see too chapter 5 p. 434.
his Political advisers, a celebrated case in point being his appointment of General Sir Fertap Singh as Regent of Jodhpur against stiff opposition from the Department:

'this was an example of those cases where the Foreign Department almost invariably endeavoured to obtain the control of the State through the Resident during the minority of the Princess, a system to which, except in certain special cases, I took serious objection, since it met with general disapproval by Indians in the States'. (1)

The relationship between the Viceroy and the Political Department was not always of the closest. When in 1927 Irwin suggested calling together a conference of Political Officers to prepare the ground for the forthcoming States Enquiry Committee, Birkenhead warmly approved:

'I have heard complaints in the past that some Viceroys have neither known nor appeared to care what the Political Agents were doing'. (2)

In the case of Willingdon, the Political Department found itself in harness with a malleable Viceroy who danced to its tune. But with the advent of Linlithgow, the Political Department encountered a Viceroy fully alive to its shortcomings. At one point, Linlithgow contemplated a 'tune up' of the Department. The passage of events, however, seemed to call for a more radical course of action. In a frank disclosure to the Secretary of State, Linlithgow revealed that he was moving towards 'a stage at which I feel we would have to consider a radical reorganisation in machinery for dealing with States, possibly the abolition of the Political Department as such and the disposal of States' work by the posting of officers from the ordinary I.C.S. cadres with experience of revenue work in British India ..... I sometimes feel that nothing short of a shake-up of this kind will purge the Political Service of their medievalism, the consequence of generations of experience in the Indian States'. (3)

1. Hardinge, Lord, op. cit., p. 34.
3. See chapter 5, passim.
5. Linlithgow to Zetland, 7th February, 1939, ibid., p. 55.
The partisans of the Political Department felt that sentiments both genuine and valid had shaped the essential conservatism of the service:

"Political Officers had noticed that the peasants in the States, though they might be poorer, usually seemed to be happier than in British India. Most Political Officers had come to find in the States much that they liked and admired. "Many genuinely did not want the States changed and for reasons admirably altruistic."

Given the remoteness of many Political Officers from conditions in the Provinces and the unimpressive character of most States' administrations, their observations of 'happier' peasantry do not carry conviction. There was much in the lifestyle of a Political to cloud the vision and instil a certain lassitude in the supervising officer. Mason, himself, recalled that there were Political appointments 'in which it would have been eccentric to work after lunch'. At first glance, the Political Service might seem to offer 'an exciting, romantic range of posts', but on longer acquaintance initial enthusiasms were likely to ebb. Fitze was depressed by the general lack of opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile:

"in spite of the glamour of Princely Courts and the kindness and consideration which I had experienced at the hands of so many who frequented them, I found myself wondering whether, after all, the administrative work which I had admired so much in the Central Provinces, and in which one enjoyed a measure of authority for getting things done, was not preferable to a sphere in which one had to depend so greatly on the resources of diplomacy and persuasion, which, it seemed to me, were all too frequently baffled or frustrated."

Harcourt Butler was mistaken in expressing a strong preference for 'fat and good-natured' men to staff the Political Department. It became increasingly clear in the two decades following the Great War, which saw the States subjected to mounting criticism, that rather more than bonhomie was required in Political Officers if the Princes were to overhaul their administrations and retain an influential place in All India politics.

2. Ibid. Fitze was struck by the style of the first Resident with whom he served: 'his main preoccupation in life appeared to be the elimination of ills'. See Fitze, Sir F., op. cit., pp. 64, 5.
Administrative Standards in the Indian States:

British attitudes to responsibility and styles of supervision
Perhaps the most discussed passages in the 1909 Political Manual related to the position of the Resident vis-à-vis administrative standards:

he should be careful to uphold the dignity of the Durbar; he should not interfere between the Durbar and its subjects, nor encourage petitions from the latter against the former; nor should he on his tours inspect the district offices and institutions of the Durbar .... he should leave well alone; the best work of a Political Officer is very often what he has left undone'.

Only vague guidance was offered as to the appropriate moment for intervention:

'Unless misrule reaches a pitch which violates the elementary laws of civilisation, the Imperial Government will generally prefer to take no overt measures for enforcing reform .... the Governor General in Council is opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars to introduce British methods of administration'. (1)

The import of the Political Manual in this respect was not confidential. It was broadcast to the Princes and the outer world by Minto, at the suggestion of Dunlop Smith whose notes for the speech the Viceroy adhered to, at a State banquet in the most prestigious Rajput State, Udaipur in 1909. In essence, Minto argued that

'it is easy to overestimate the value of administrative efficiency - it is not the only object to aim at'.

Minto cautioned Political Officers, especially where the circumstances of a minority gave them temporary charge,

'to accept the general system of administration to which the Chief and his people have been accustomed'. (3)

The content of the Political Manual and the 'Udaipur Speech' swung the pendulum dramatically away from the interventionist stance of Curzon who had indulged in same plain speaking from the congenial platform

provided by the banqueting hall at Gwalior in 1899:

"the Native Chief has become, by our policy, an integral factor in the imperial organisation of India. He is concerned no less than the Viceroy and the Lieutenant Governor in the administration of the country. I claim him as my colleague and partner. He cannot remain vis-a-vis the Empire a loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress, and vis-a-vis of his own people, a frivolous and irresponsible despot." (1)

In pronouncing these strictures, Curzon was swimming against the tide.

Lady Curzon was more representative of Anglo-Indian opinion in viewing free-spending Indian Princes as an unremarkable and enduring feature of Indian life:

"the Rajas were richer than most crowned heads, and their subjects poorer and more adoring. Princely extravagance was unresented; there was no political protest". (2)

There were few territories outside Baroda and Mysore under the rule of Princes which would have passed muster in 1900 as administratively sound.

General Daly, who knew the States well in the post Mutiny era, recorded in his Confidential Report for 1867-8:

"you invite me to discuss Native States and their Government .... I could not do so without giving offence for the truth is ten times worse than anything fancy could devise".

Daly concluded:

"it is a pretty thing to talk of a well-governed Native State. Where is this to be found?" (3)

A directive to Princes appears in one of Kipling's "Tales",

"telling them to put their houses in order, to refrain from kidnapping women, or filling offenders with pounded red pepper, and eccentricities of that kind".

But the narrative continues:

"of course these things could never be made public, because Native Princes never err officially and their States are officially as well administered as our territories". (4)

3. Daly, Major H., op. cit., p. 273, 4.
Indeed instances of official intervention were few and far between in the later nineteenth century, the most celebrated affair being the trial and subsequent deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda in 1875, not ostensibly for the conduct of an orgy of misrule, but for the attempted murder of the Resident. However, the proclamation of the Government of India announcing the removal of the Gaekwar did acknowledge that

'incorrigible misrule is of itself a sufficient disqualification for sovereign power. His Majesty's Government have willingly accepted the opportunity of recognising in a conspicuous case the paramount obligation which lies upon them of protecting the people of India from oppression'. (2)

The case agitated Salisbury who wrote to Northbrook:

'We are anxious that whatever course you take at Baroda it should be sufficiently penal to deter Princes from so simple a plan for changing their Residents and that it should provide for the unlucky ryots an interval of respectable government'. (3)

Non-intervention held the floor from the time of Minto onward.

General Sir "Moore Creagh spotted the drift of things when he observed that the chief duty of Political Agents had been to establish that the subjects of feudatory Rulers were not unjustly treated:

'of late this duty had been rendered difficult. I know feudatory Rulers who are allowed to commit grave tyranny with impunity'. (4)

In retrospect, Political Officers were found to say

'let the India Office formally cancel the Udaipur Speech and we shall be found very ready to go ahead'. (5)

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2. The trial of the Gaekwar brought out to India the first British advocate in a long line to accept a lucrative brief from an Indian Prince, Sergeant Ballantine who negotiated a very sizeable fee for his time, £7,000. Salisbury remarked sardonically, a pro pas of the disappearance of key witnesses due to testify against the Gaekwar, that Ballantine viewed Baroda as 'a place of medieval aspect indeed but of pristine innocence'. See Salisbury to Northbrook, 7th May, 1875, Salisbury, C/2-4.

3. Salisbury to Northbrook, 11th January, 1875, ibid.


5. Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 94.
In fact, with or without the Udaipur Speech, an essentially conservative cadre was equipped by neither inclination nor temperament to press for administrative reform in the States and indeed its recommendations were, on occasions, openly hostile to the notion of reform generally. Montagu got wind of this early in 1919 and Chelmsford was obliged to admit that,

'some of our Political Agents had been writing foolish letters on the subject of our Reforms in relation to the Native States'.

(1)

Only a very gentle reprimand was forthcoming. Chelmsford did make a gesture of sorts towards steering the Princes in the direction of progress at the Bharatpur Investiture shortly after the publication of the Montford Report:

'in India itself the British Government has decided to grant a substantial measure of power to the people in the administration of their own affairs. Autocratic rule anywhere will in future be an exception and an anomaly'. (2)

It was widely understood that this sentiment was not well received in the Political Department. There, opinion was strongly in favour of retaining the status quo; the mood of complacency prevailing was well illustrated in a confidential note drawn up by the Political Secretary in 1924.

Sir Robert Holland explained that in a good many States

'there is not much efficiency, as we know it, and in others there is actual oppression owing to the failure to control rapacious officials. But even in the most backward States, the subjects rarely reach the stage of rebellious discontent and they would always prefer to be ruled by their own Maharaja rather than that the State should be converted into a part of British India'. (3)

Administrative standards in States were of some concern to Irwin and he took the unprecedented step of calling a conference of Political Officers at Simla in July, 1927:

1. In view of the 'confidential nature' of his information, Chelmsford declined to act directly: "I let it be known, however, to one or two of the Agents in private conversation that I had heard of some such action as I described, and that I strongly disapproved of it". Chelmsford to Montagu, 1st April, 1919, Sh. II, 5, pp. 54, 5.


'the principal point which I sought to rub into them was that
the doctrine of non-interference, except in cases of gross
maladministration, did not imply, and was not meant to imply,
that they should not exercise all the arts of influence and
suspicion at much earlier stages. I had been surprised to find
among some of the more junior officers an impression that the
Government of India wished them to interfere even in this way
as little as possible'. (1)

To back up his verbal directives, Irwin circulated Political Officers
with a note on the essentials of good administration, pointing out
'the necessity of some machinery by which the needs and desires
of the subjects could be made known'. (2)

In substance, the notes recommended the establishment of a 'Reign of
Law' with provision for an uncorrupt administration, realistic taxation,
and a fixed civil list. The extent of the document's circulation
to Princes is very uncertain since Irwin stipulated that it should be
given only to Princes who asked for it. The culmination of Irwin's
efforts came with the 1928 Chamber session when the Princes
'succeeded in carrying a motion, which I have foreshadowed from
time to time during the last year, in favour of a fixed Civil
List and independent Judiciary and the like'.

A note of realism tempered the Viceroy's satisfaction:

'with a good many it will never be likely to be more than a
pious sentiment on paper ..... there will be plenty of opportunities
for cooking accounts and budgets'.

But he felt it was a useful step in the right direction to have secured
unanimous acceptance for the motion.

The general run of Secretaries of State had not been over-concerned
with the pace of reform in Indian States. However, with the establishment
of a Labour Government, Benn at the India Office asked for some tangible

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 7th July, 1927, Hx.**, 3, pp. 151, 2.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 18th January, 1930, Hx.**, 6, pp. 13, 4.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th February, 1928, Hx.**, 4, pp. 31, 2.
record of progress in the Princely territories. This request placed Irwin in some difficulty:

'the matter has been continuously before me and my predecessors since 1919'.

With nothing of substance to report, Irwin paradoxically urged the merits of laissez faire. The Princes were

'swell aware of our views of the need for progressive reforms and I do not think that we can safely do more at present than we have been and are doing ..... The only large States which have representative bodies exercising a real popular influence on the administration are Mysore, Cochin, Travancore and possibly Baroda'.

Irwin acknowledged that this might seem to be an unsatisfactory state of affairs but he advised against a second stage-managed declaration in the Chamber of Princes:

'it might even do harm if they suspected us of trying to stampede them towards responsible representative institutions'.

Irwin settled for the comfortable assumption that popular opinion, within and without the States, would force reform.

Within the Political Department, one of the few far-sighted minds could see on the eve of the Round Table Conferences that stormy times lay ahead:

'as democracy becomes more fully established in British India, it is highly probable that strong criticism will be directed against these autocratic Governments. Such criticism will not be satisfied by the Princes' own enunciation of their pious intentions or by the offer of the Standing Committee to exert their influence over the less admirable members of their Order'.

The memorandum noted that the 'tactful' 1928 Resolution made no reference to the punctual publication by States of full and accurate budgets and administrative reports, 'possibly it was considered to be one in respect of which non-compliance would be too easily detected'. The solution lay in genuine reform.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 18th January, 1930, Jx.I., 6, p. 14.
Two major difficulties were likely to frustrate the implementation of material measures of reform in the States; the conservatism to be found in the Political Department and the disposition of Maharajas to preserve the old ways. Advice about good government induced in Kipling's Prince a wish to go to bed. Many of his factual counterparts in the twentieth century evinced similar sentiments. There were sound reasons why States' affairs were generally shrouded in darkness. The senior Political, in the final generation of the service, noted that 'there was usually something wrong in every State'. Prior to the first World War, some attempt was made to throw dust in the eyes of the observer through the institution of sham 'Assemblies'. There seemed less need for this in the period following the Montford Reforms when the Princes were imagined to have achieved 'a new lease of life accompanied by greater freedom from supervisory arrangements'. Conditions might border on the ludicrous and many anecdotes centred round the 'comic opera' atmosphere to be encountered particularly in the smaller States. In one case, the most highly paid State's functionary was 'the Inspector General of Dancing Girls', who received a small additional fee for acting as Lord Chief Justice.

It was generally conceded that in the majority of States, the higher grades of the Civil Service were 'underpaid and proportionately unreliable. Appointments were not always made with due regard to merit and suitability; a highly trained electrical engineer, for example, may find himself posted to the Palace Amusements Department'.

Justice in the Indian States was often spoken of as 'rough and ready' in character. This was very apparent to Jawaharlal Nehru, put on 'trial'

2. Corfield, Sir C., op. cit., p. 111.
3. Fraser, L., op. cit., p. 231.
5. Ibid., p. 27; see too Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 67.
in Nabha in 1924, at a time when a British Political Agent was directing
the administration of the State. Nehru noted that the presiding
(1) magistrate was illiterate. Some officials in British India were
versed in the inadequacies of what passed for legal proceedings in the
States. Barton complained of the refusal of District Magistrates in the
United Provinces to surrender their subjects for trial in the States even
(2) when they received warrants signed by the Political Agent. Not only
the smaller States were badly run. In Kashmir, corruption existed at
all levels in State administration, police, revenue, even forestry.
This depressing state of affairs threatened to frustrate the noteworthy
achievements of that remarkable missionary and teacher, Tyndale Biscoe,
who fought institutionalised villainy in Kashmir over a span of some
fifty years between 1896 and 1947.

There were important exceptions to the generally bleak record of
maladministration. In two major States where the Princes devolved many
key powers to able Dewans, notably enlightened administrations were
functioning. In Mysore where the Maharaja spent his time in religious
study and devotion, the impressive Prime Minister, Mirza Ismail, could
boast of the highest literacy rate in India, and in Mysore City and
Bangalore, two of the most beautiful towns in the East. In Baroda,
a very free hand was given by the Ruler to his Dewan, Sir V. F. Krishnamachari,
who presided over a well-run and progressive State which instituted
(3) 'the best library system in the East'.

One device which Princes did use to give an appearance of modernity
to their States was to incorporate British administrators in their regimes.

1. Nehru recorded a full and vivid account of the 'Gilbertian'
proceedings in the Nabha Courthouse before a wholly uneducated judge,
See too Ramusack, B. N., 'Incident at Nabha', Journal of Asian Studies,
3. Tyndale Biscoe, Canon, op. cit., passim.
5. Ibid., p. 121.
In 1934, Willingdon was pleased to inform the Secretary of State that 'more and more Princes are asking for European Political Officers to assist them in the administration of their States, and I must confess that I am anxious not to discourage them to do so'. (1)

In this instance, as in many others, Willingdon showed himself to be out of step with shrewder Viceroys, alert to the dangers of permitting senior Political Officers to return to States' employment. As Reading warned Birkenhead;

'if the practice were allowed, it would be difficult for officers towards the end of their service to maintain complete independence in dealing with matters from States in which they might hope to obtain employment'. (2)

Both Linlithgow and Zetland were also in agreement about the grave disadvantages which would follow from senior Politicals obtaining high office in the States.

With the advent in 1938, for the first time on a substantial scale, of Congress-inspired agitation in the Indian States, much public attention came to be focussed on the surviving autocracies. The Viceroy was seriously perturbed by the suggestion that political medievalism was the direct product of British policy. This was the implication which might be taken from the statement published in The Statesman furnished by the wily Dewan of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, a politician with an unparallel experience of participation in Indian constitutional deliberations. Aiyer argued that:

'legally it is not possible for the Ruler without the concurrence of the British Government, to divest himself of his individual authority and jurisdiction over the governance of the State in favour of any other authority'. (5)

2. Reading to Birkenhead, 11.8., 19, Telegram No. 254.
3. Linlithgow to Zetland, 30th November, 1938, 1.1.5, 15, p. 542.
4. By his own reckoning, Aiyer had been a non-official elected member of every Legislature in India and later on the official leader of every Legislature. He had served on every committee appointed either by the Princes or by the Government of India to discuss questions of constitutional reform since 1918. See Aiyer to Skrine, 2nd February, 1938, C.B.K., R/1/29/1689, p. 9.
5. The Statesman, 8th February, 1938, ibid.
Linlithgow pressed for immediate action through a Parliamentary Question to clear the air:

'we are likely to hear more of this theory if it is not exploded as soon as possible'. (1)

A formula for a Question was duly decided, Linlithgow's version being the one accepted, which established the benevolent interest of the Government of India in constitutional progress in the States.

Aiyer's tactics were designed to secure a British guarantee for the status quo in Travancore. In a highly disingenuous letter, the Travancore Dewan set out the Princes' purported difficulties in the matter of constitutional reform before the Madras Resident:

'the States are on the horns of a dilemma. If they resist the demand for Responsible Government, they will be styled reactionaries in their own States, they will encounter the antagonism of Congress, and they are not certain of the help they will be given by the British Government'.

Aiyer went on to forecast that with the grant of responsible government the Rulers would become pensioners and that the Government of India could not possibly accede to such a position if it desired the maintenance of the historic links between His Majesty and the States:

'in view of these inevitable postulates, the time has come when the Government of India and the British Cabinet should make up their minds as to their policy and guide the actions of the Indian States'. (3)

The dualism in the British position was very evident in the transmission of the Madras Resident to the Political Secretary:

'the British Government is unlikely to approve of a Ruler putting forward his treaty obligations to the Paramount Power as an excuse for not satisfying a legitimate demand on the part of his people for constitutional reforms. If, on the other hand, a Ruler is honestly convinced that a 'totalitarian' form of Government is the best suited to the particular needs and mentality of his subjects, he should make his policy clear to them and take full responsibility for it, in which case he need not fear that pressure will be brought to bear on him by the Paramount Power to act otherwise'. (4)

1. Linlithgow to Zetland, Secret File No. 24-P (Sec), 1938, ibid.
Faithful to the tradition of the Political Department, the Resident flung his support behind the retention of autocracy. Were a 'strong case' to be made against responsible government for Travancore, then moral support from the British Government would not be refused. Skrine himself, had few doubts about the unsuitability of Travancoreans to responsible government. It was rumoured inside Travancore that Skrine had been 'squared' by the Dewan.

Aiyer's efforts to attribute slow constitutional progress in the States to the application of a British veto were not favourably received by editorial comment generally throughout India. As a final fling, Aiyer, in the course of an interview with Linlithgow, attempted to secure the Viceroy's approval for a statement indicating that the point of maximum constitutional advance had been reached in Travancore. Linlithgow avoided the trap by refusing to commit himself to the acceptance, in any individual State, of a final point of advance. As he sensibly remarked to Zetland;

'Congress would immediately take the point that the Crown Representative's judgement on this matter of advance was represented by the point reached in Travancore ----- my strength lay in manœuvre and freedom'. (4)

In the wake of Aiyer's ensnarements and increasingly strident nationalist publicity about suspect States' administrations, a 'Very Confidential' letter was issued on Linlithgow's instructions to all Residents (first and second class) in June, 1938. Having referred to the

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1. In the Resident's version: 'it is easy in such a polity to imagine what would be the result of entrusting the government to a Chief Minister whose authority would depend upon the unstable and kaleidoscopic grouping of communally organised political parties in the legislature'. See Skrine's Strictly Confidential Fortnightly Review No. F.R. 4/38, 4th March, 1938, "ibid.".


increasing volume of unfavourable criticism, legitimate and otherwise, the letter continued:

'defects which a few years ago might have passed unnoticed are likely to be widely advertised to the detriment of the States in general. It is all the more necessary therefore that every effort should be made to induce all States, where the administration is indifferent, to remedy these shortcomings'.

Linlithgow pressed for frequent visits to blackspots backed up by reports (1) to his Office on progress made. There is little indication that the Viceroy's promptings in this connection bore fruit. The Political Department fought shy of working towards the overhaul of States' administrations or of regrouping less viable concentrations of smaller States. When Linlithgow canvassed the Governors and the Secretary of State for suggestions towards the regeneration of States, the Political Secretary thought the response to be 'of little practical value'.

While Glancy claimed that pressure was being brought to bear on all States to redress legitimate grievances,

'it is hardly possible to attempt any codification of the point at which the Paramount Power should normally intervene to improve the Government of a State'.

Glancy was markedly hostile to the idea that Political Officers should go through an administrative course; the knowledge gained would be 'superficial'; replacements could not be arranged due to the stretched condition of the Service. Glancy's final comment on the Governor's suggestions struck a defiant note:

'one is apt to glorify unduly the administrative techniques of British Indian Provinces'. (2)

In this Glancy mirrored the conservatism of his Department and the confidence of his lieutenants, Corfield and Lothian for whom, during the current trials, it seemed to be

'a question of holding firm for a short time and of then reverting to the good old days'. (3)

1. C. J. Herbert to all Residents, 17th June, 1939, D.O. No. 166 P(0)/38, C.R.R., R/1/29/1734.
2. Glancy to Laithwaite (Private Secretary to the Viceroy), Confidential, 13th February, 1939, ibid.
The lack of progress in achieving noteworthy reforms within the States resulted in more frequent enquiries to the Secretary of State. Zetland was fully conscious of the thin ground on which he stood and it was only with the greatest reluctance that he agreed to speak publically on this sensitive topic at the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in March 1939. His circumlocution on this occasion was equal to Gladstone:

'I was chiefly concerned while speaking to make clear the distinction which I drew between administrative reform in the States and constitutional reform, and I said that, while in the circumstances of today I thought that the Paramount Power without in any way derogating from the sovereignty of the Princes should be rather more active than in the past in tendering advice where it seemed desirable that an attempt should be made to raise the standard of administration, this did not mean that the Paramount Power would be justified in bringing pressure to bear upon a Ruler to introduce drastic changes in the existing form of Government'. (1)

The real weakness in the British case was put with admirable clarity by Linlithgow in 1939. Given that so many States were thoroughly badly run:

'we are confronted by the dilemma of backing up with bayonets administrative conditions which we cannot possibly justify, or of making administrative improvements to all appearance at the bidding of Congress'. (2)

As the last months of peace slipped by, it seemed to Linlithgow that Minto's chickens, released at Udaipur in 1909, had come to roost. Linlithgow confided to Zetland:

'I cannot help feeling that we have ourselves to thank to no small degree for the pitch which matters have reached in certain circumstances. The great mistake, I am now disposed to think, lay in the change of policy after Curzon's retirement which led us to relax our control over individual Princes and over happenings inside their States to the extent which we have ..... we and the States have now, and will I suspect continue, to pay for 30 years of laisses faire'. (3)

2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28th February, 1939, P.P., 17, p. 88.
Zetland concurred, 'there is a great deal of truth in what you say', but subsequently declined to support Linlithgow in pushing the Princes towards constitutional reform. The Secretary of States' hesitations stood as a reminder of a third interest, operating behind the scenes, which together with Princely reaction and the conservatism of the Political Department, strove to guarantee that the status quo would obtain in the Indian States. On the right of the British Conservative Party, a constant watch was maintained over the rights and prerogatives of the Indian Princes. Hence Zetland's anxiety:

'I am not quite sure how far you would be prepared to press the Princes to go? I should myself hesitate a good deal before deciding to depart from our published policy, namely, that the form of government in their States is a matter for the Princes themselves. Any suspicions that we were intending to go beyond what we have announced would, I am afraid, create grave misgivings in the mind of the Conservative Party here'. (2)

Viewed from the perspective of British politics, Zetland's calculations were perfectly rational. They made little sense in an Indian setting where an intensification of States-Congress agitation was confidently expected. Only the fortuitous outbreak of war removed, temporarily, one of the most intractable dilemmas with which any Viceroy was faced.

2. Zetland to Linlithgow, 9th May, 1939, ibid., pp. 107, 8.
Grounds for Intervention: cases of deposition or 'abdication'
The Nabha Case.

However complacent the supervisory style of the Political Department had become in the relaxed period following the Udaipur Speech, widely publicised instances of chronic misrule could not be ignored. The first such case emerged during the Viceroyalty of Reading, in the Punjab State of Nabha. For forty years, from 1871 to 1911, this State had enjoyed something of a golden age during the beneficent rule of Maharaja Sir Hira Singh. However, a very disturbing deterioration set in under his son and successor, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. The handling of the Nabha affair by Reading, provides an interesting illustration of the very generous latitude accorded Indian Rulers in the conduct of their affairs and the degree of sensitivity of the Government of India to publicity touching States' matters.

The incident which precipitated high-level enquiries into the Nabha administration was the incarceration of a British Indian subject, one Mahomed Din Malak, in a Nabha jail on a trumped-up charge of stealing confidential papers. Malak was well connected in England and pressure was exerted on his behalf by the eminent jurist and future Princes' Counsel, Sir Leslie Scott. Reading declined to intervene, acting on the precedent set by the Chelmsford Government which had refused the representation of the Punjab Government in 1918 that the

1. The relationship between Sir Hira Singh and Dunlop Smith was held up as an ideal example of 'the goodwill and comradeship which could exist between Ruler and Adviser'. Nabha had served with the Indian Army in the Afghan War of 1879. He was described by Dunlop Smith as 'an autocrat in excelsis, who runs his State admirably'. See Gilbert, ‘…, op. cit., p. 13.'
general subordination of the Indian States to the British Government gave the Government of India power to demand the extradition of any person as an act of State. Reading claimed that this might be construed as an infraction of the Nabha sened.

The affair developed into something of a trial of strength between Montagu and Reading. The Secretary of State pressed for Malak's release citing the 'monstrous' treatment meted out to Malak and his alleged proximity to death. Reading had heard that Malak was 'no living skeleton'. Montagu subsequently took up a strong line:

'no doubt there are great difficulties involved in interference, but if the facts be that a British subject is in jail unjustly and is in danger of dying there as a result of his imprisonment, these difficulties must surely be overcome .... I cannot get over the simple fact that he is and has always been innocent of the offence'.

Reading's consistent reluctance to intervene is an interesting proof of the sensitivity with which States' rights were regarded. He expressed a vague hope that Malak would be rescued 'by some means or other'.

Having secured a minimal concession from Nabha, that a Government of India agent should be granted access to Malak in prison, Reading solemnly warned the Secretary of State that:

'we have already gone further in this case than we have ever before attempted, and are perilously near what might be regarded by other Princes as an encroachment upon their rights and liberties ...... you and I have travelled almost beyond the verge of traditional practice'.

Malak was released in March 1922, his term had expired, and the Government of India was left to deal with questions of his compensation.

2. Montagu to Reading, 3rd November, 1921, ibid., p. 218; see too, Scott to Montagu, 26th October, 1921, ibid., p. 220; F. Fazil Din to Sir John Wood (Political Secretary) ibid., p. 221.
3. Reading to Montagu, 16th December, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 1362.
4. Montagu to Reading, 22nd December, 1921, R.P., 3, p. 308; see too, Montagu to Reading, 21st November, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 1061.
7. Reading to Montagu, 26th March, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 137.
8. See Peel to Reading, 6th November, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 173; Reading to Peel, 29th November, 1923, ibid., p. 253.
The more dangerous aspect of mismanagement in Nabha centred upon the dispute with the neighbouring State of Patiala. The feud had ramifications in the politics of the Punjab. Patiala personally pressed his grievances upon Montagu: two Patiala police had been arrested by Nabha. Montagu surmised that Nabha,

'besides being cruel to people in his power and a bad neighbour to his fellow-Princes is, to say the least of it, suspected of complicity with the Sikh agitators in the Punjab'.

Reading, too, had an inkling about Nabha's political connections in the Punjab but initially did not take the Maharaja too seriously:

'I believe the view that he was not readily sane was accepted in Chelmsford's time'.

In view of the delicacy surrounding an inter-State dispute, it was decided to establish a Committee of Enquiry to begin its sittings in early 1923. A Court of Arbitration was refused lest too much of an unsavoury nature emerged about Nabha. But even the Enquiry proved to be far from satisfactory from Reading's point of view:

'nothing can be worse for the Princes ... than this investigation into the doings of the Rulers of the States and of their officers. Even if the results were fairly satisfactory, there are many enemies of the Ruling Princes who would find material for attack; but when as I fear in this case, the results may be very unsatisfactory - and indeed worse - it will be almost inevitable that the public disclosure be injurious to the prestige of Ruling Princes'.

The revelations about the Nabha administration shook Reading. Immediate action would be required in the case of Patiala subjects languishing in Nabha jails on bogus charges. The case brought into question the doctrine of non-interference:

1. Montagu to Reading, 27th October, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 954.
2. Reading to Montagu, 8th November, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 1109.
3. Reading to Peel, 28th November, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 446; see too Reading to Peel, 16th December, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 445; Peel to Reading, 11th December, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 436.
4. Reading to Peel, 10th May, 1923, R.P., 6, pp. 100, 1.
I have myself thought that we have in the recent past pushed the principle too far, and that as we are bound to help the Princes with force of arms in case of difficulties in their States, we must be entitled to prevent mal-administration which threatens to become, or has become, a source of danger to the peace of the State. (1)

Reading foresaw that the Enquiry Judge would be able to establish 'grave mal-administration in Nabha', and decided to engineer a 'voluntary submission' by Nabha, which would prevent other Rulers from rallying round, in exchange for a generous settlement:

'in the circumstances I think the price of his retaining titles and salutes and an allowance of three lakhs annually worth paying in order to rid the State of his rule without delay'. (2)

This undercover operation did not commend itself to Peel who questioned the propriety of Reading's move in intimating the proposal to Nabha, without consulting London. This seemed an offer 'which was going to get him off uncommonly easily'. (3) A further worry held that Nabha in Europe or America might be a dangerous focus of anti-British intrigue.

In the event, Nabha fell back on frustrating prevarication: 'I am seriously in doubt about the condition of his mind', fumed Reading. The Viceroy issued a short deadline for acceptance after which a British military escort would enter Nabha, suspend the Maharaja from office, and order him from the State. The Government of India would take over immediately the administration of the State. (4) Following the implementation of the de facto deposition, a few protests from Sikh societies followed but Reading took comfort from the fact that the Press generally approved the decision, though

'naturally the liberal and extremist papers tout the moral and urge that such incidents may always happen under an autocratic regime of a Ruling Prince'. (5)

1. Reading to Peel, 2nd June, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 120.
2. Reading to Peel, 13th June, 1923, R.P., 17, Telegram No. 230.
3. Peel to Reading, 19th June, 1923, Ibid., Telegram No. 255.
4. Reading to Peel, 5th July, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 133.
5. Reading to Peel, 19th July, 1923, Ibid., p. 139.
Unfortunately for Reading, the removal of the Maharaja was no seven day wonder since Sikh agitation persisted on the Maharaja's behalf. This was surprising since Nabha was no orthodox Sikh; he was known to have dined and danced in a gurdwara at celebrations on the birth of an heir. Additional troops were despatched to Nabha and statements procured from prominent Nabha citizens denouncing in measured language the 'evil machinations' of the Maharaja. Reading determined to play down the 'alarmist' reports now circulating in Britain through The Times which dwelt on the continued interest of the volatile Sikh political movement, the Akalis, in Nabha's removal. Reading put this down to the absence of special grievances to play on. Congress itself held back beyond passing a sympathetic resolution protesting against the 'abdication'. It proposed no action nor did it contribute to funds.

The Viceroy determined on a policy of silence:

'the Government of India's view all along has been that this is a matter relating to the Princes, there was no call to explain our action as would have been required in a case affecting British India ..... there is a very distinct inclination of a desire even in the extremist newspapers outside the Punjab to give the go by to the Nabha affair which they feel is very dangerous and delicate for them to handle. The ex-Maharaja's reputation is well known'.

The new Labour Secretary of State, Olivier, might have been excused his 'slip', for which he apologised to Reading, in referring to the 'deposition' of the Maharaja of Nabha. In regard to his speech in

2. Reading to Peel, 9th August, 1923, ibid., p. 184.
3. Reading to Peel, 23rd August, 1923, ibid., p. 184.
4. Reading to Peel, 13th September, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 205; see too, Reading to Peel, 11th October, 1923, ibid., p. 209.
5. Reading to Peel, 25th November, 1923, ibid., p. 213.
6. Olivier to Reading, 28th February, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 32.
the Lords covering the Nabha affair, Olivier stiffly observed that he had not anticipated that the Government of India 'might consider it was expedient to attempt to dissemble'. Reading took strong objection to the Secretary of States' terminology. Reading felt that the position of his Government required further elucidation:

'there is no question of hiding the fact that Government can suspend or restrict the powers of a Ruling Prince or remove him from his State on account of gross misrule ....... our point is that Sikh agitators are inflaming Sikh sentiment regarding an event, the unjust and coercive deposition of a Sikh Prince, which never occurred'. (3)

Nevertheless the Government of India strove with might and main to persuade Nabha to admit that he had resigned voluntarily. Olivier, poring over the Nabha files, thought it a very open question

'whether or not I was justified in saying that it had been intimated to him that he should resign his position'. (4)

Administrative standards in Nabha, particularly those pertaining to justice, received further unwelcome publicity with the arrest by the Nabha police of Jawaharlal Nehru, and the farcical 'trial' which followed. Olivier thought it to be particularly unfortunate that the British Administrator should have barred an unconditional visit to Nehru in Jail by his father, Motilal:

'such an attitude towards a Swarajist politician is, however, regarded as perfectly natural and proper by public officials in India, but it is not surprising that it is not so regarded by those who are subjected to it, and that irritation and hatred are provoked by it'.

Olivier further deplored the recommendation of the Administrator in Nabha that outside counsel should not be allowed to appear for Nehru's

1. Olivier to Reading, 5th March, 1924, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 89.
2. Reading to Olivier, 4th March, 1924, ibid., Telegram No. 84.
3. Reading to Olivier, 7th March, 1934, ibid., Telegram No. 87.
4. Olivier to Reading, 10th April, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 50.
5. See chapter 2, p. 135. 
two companions. In the event, Nehru escaped from Nabha Gaol with a suspended sentence; he took with him an unpleasant souvenir in the shape of a typhus germ which resulted in a dangerous illness.

The Government of India were left with the problem of replacing the Maharaja; the new Governor of the Punjab, Sir Malcolm Hailey, favoured the placement of Nabha's youthful son on the gadi. Reading doubted very much whether Nabha himself, now lodged in Dehra Dun and not replying to letters, would assent. Reading's sensitivity to Ruler's rights was very evident in his refusal 'to take the view that he (Nabha) had committed such breaches of the agreement whereby he abandoned his ruling powers as to afford justification for treating the agreement at an end'.

In time, the Maharani might persuade him to accept his son on the gadi. However, the displaced Maharaja declined to bow out from the scene. By keeping the heir, Pratap Singh, in residence with him at Dehra Dun, it was possible to fend off the Administrator from the heir. In 1926, Irwin reported in consternation: 'the boy, eight or nine, is reported to be running wild'. Birkenhead, ever alert to princely scandals, pressed the Government of India to take action:

'I do appreciate that it may be difficult to take him away from his father and still more from his mother and agitators will no doubt make capital out of such ruthlessness. But I'm sure that you will not be deterred by that consideration. Three Rulers with young or youngish sons have just come badly to grief - Nabha, Holkar and Khairpur - and I think we ought to do all we can to save the next generation'.

The ex-Maharaja persisted in funding a network of intrigue, one branch of which was conducted in London. Birkenhead was 'amused' to discover that 'the eminent patriot Lajpat Rai, while over here was in the pay of Nabha, but has apparently done nothing for his money, as the Maharaja complained that he had had nothing from him except a picture post card'.

3. Reading to Olivier, 26th June, 1926, R.P., 7, pp. 120, 1.
4. Irwin to Birkenhead, 8th July, 1926, H.P., 2, pp. 47, 8.
5. Birkenhead to Irwin, 8th July, 1926, ibid., pp. 52, 3.
Kabha's finances ran to the hire, in Rai's place, of the eminent Indian Liberal lawyer, Setalvad, at a fee of three lakhs. Birkenhead remarked frostily to the Viceroy:

'I can hardly think that you were aware of this when you recommended Setalvad to me as a substitute delegate to Geneva'. (1)

The inevitable consequence of these activities was that the formal deposition, which Irwin had contemplated in 1926, was enforced in 1928. The heir was sent to England with his mother where he attended R.M.A. Sandhurst and underwent a course of administrative training before assuming control of the State in 1939. It seemed to the Political Officer then posted to Nabha that the intervening Council of Regency, on the surface, had now established 'a model State'. On further examination there was much to concern, notably the very substantial numbers of 'political' prisoners.

Life still held a good deal of interest for the ex-Maharajah who continued to employ agents on his behalf, both Indian and European, to petition for his release from internment and the restoration of his full allowances on grounds of failing health. The ex-Maharajah had the misfortune to commission the former Labour M.P. and mountebank, T. Hardy Jones, whose correspondence with the ex-Maharajah, intercepted at Kodaikanal in 1939, revealed a far-fetched scheme whereby Hardy Jones would present Nabha's case to the Government of India backed by a supporting letter from the Duke of Windsor to the Viceroy. To the last, the ex-Maharajah continued to be a source of anxiety to the Government of India: the intercepted telegrams indicated that he held strongly pro

German views:

1. Birkenhead to Irwin, 2nd September, 1926, ibid., p. 79.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 23rd September, 1926, ibid., p. 115.
3. The ex-Maharajah was arrested under the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 and interned at Kodaikanal in the Madras Presidency; his allowance was reduced from Rs 25,000/- to Rs 10,000/- per mensem. File No. 331 - P3/38. C.R.R. R/1/29/1739.
6. Hardy Jones' nefarious activities are documented in Brasted, H. V. and Douds, G., 'Passages to India: Peripatetic W.P.s on the Grand India Tour 1880-1940', (forthcoming).
The Indore Case.

To a greater extent than with the Nabha line, it was commonly believed that the Holkar dynasty was infected by a strain of madness. The Maharaja of Curzon's day, Sivaji Rao, was known to position himself at a high window and order the abduction of passers-by wearing black coats. Curzon made much of Holkar's eccentricities in Leaves from a Viceroy's Note-book, and hastened to accept Holkar's abdication when it was rashly offered. Holkar enjoyed the last laugh when, following Curzon's failure to enlist Cabinet support in the dispute with Kitchener, the Maharaja wired to the outgoing Viceroy: 'I deposited greet you deposited'. The State itself was regarded as a pleasant posting: Fitze remembered with affection a superlative cook and the dispensation of cocktails known as 'Residency Specials'.

On the eve of the great scandal of 1925, Fitze had described its central figure, Sivaji Rao's son and heir, as 'a thin, green-eyed man of 34 who had betrayed no eccentricities'. Yet Holkar was not easy to sum up; Montagu, too, had made little of 'that curious fellow' during a long discussion in 1921. Marital difficulties were the clue to the Maharaja's Downfall; it followed from the gist of identical petitions addressed to both Viceroy and Secretary of State that all was not well within the harem. Reading explained that much friction was due to the marriage of Holkar to 'a dancing girl or something of the kind' who subsequently came to exercise great influence over the Maharaja. Reading was clear that:

'into this holy of holies we cannot penetrate, for after all the matrimonial relations of the Ruling Prince with his ladies are not the concern of the Paramount Power' (5)

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2. Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 75.
5. Reading to Olivier, 21st August, 1924, R.F., 7, p. 139.
The spectacular affair which precipitated the removal of Holkar was the abduction of the dancing girl, Mumtaz Begum the beauty from Lahore, who had previously fled Indore by ruse, from the home of her wealthy protector in the Malabar Hills, Bombay. The abduction was witnessed by two British Army officers and conducted by agents of the state led by the Chief of Police. In the fracas, Mumtaz Begum's current host was shot dead. The Rawla murder case, taking its designation from the place of the crime, excited considerable interest in Britain and Birkenhead was quick to pose the leading question:

'are there any reasons for apprehending that the potentate himself is directly involved ... the repercussions in such an event seem likely to be considerable'. (2)

Reading thought it 'very unfortunate' that a scandal should have arisen connecting the Maharaja of Indore, whether justly or unjustly, with the Bombay murder and conspiracy to abduct'.

Reading surmised that some who knew of Holkar's disappointment following the lady's exit from Indore had conspired to return her 'with the object of giving him a pleasant surprise'. But as to public reaction,

'many have already become convinced that the Maharaja is the fountainhead of the evil doings ... feeling runs high in Bombay and elsewhere and really one cannot wonder'.

Reading was on his guard against any suggestion that either his Government or the Government of Bombay were seeking to protect Indore. The Durbar had raised no difficulty about arrests and extradition: the Prime Minister in giving every facility had inspired the uncharitable explanation that he was settling scores: Reading felt that 'here we are stabbing into the region of the Arabian Nights'.

A recommendation of the Montford Report clearly laid down that whenever the question arose of depriving a Prince of any part of his privileges

1. These spicy events are recounted in some detail in Lord, J., op. cit., pp. 68, 9.
2. Birkenhead to Reading, 22nd January, 1925, R.r., 8, p. 3.
3. Reading to Birkenhead, 12th February, 1925, ibid., p. 32.
or powers, an appropriate Court of Enquiry should be convened. A number of difficulties beset this arrangement. Princes would have to be represented on it, but the major Rulers including Indore would have nothing to do with the Chamber set. Reading anticipated the difficulties which might confront his successors:

'I feel convinced that the tendency of the future will be to look more, and not less closely into the affairs of the Princes. This policy has been developed to some extent in my own time. I found myself unable to accept the full extent to which Government had applied the doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State unless there was gross maladministration. I thought myself that we had washed our hands too much of affairs in the Ruling States, especially when we were giving more extended rights in British India'. (1)

For all that, Reading moved with the greatest of circumspection in arguing against the suspension of the Maharaja. The evidence brought out against the Indore Agent in court did not incriminate Holkar. Reading was impressed by the

'desirability of not causing discontent among a body of Princes who are extremely quick to detect what is regarded by them as an infringement of their powers'. (2)

Reading's caution was reinforced by news that Holkar had taken opinion of some of the most exalted Counsel in England; Sir John Simon, Sir E. Marshall Hall, Sir Austin Bennet. None found evidence to emerge at the trial pointing to the Maharaja's complicity. In addition to his canvas of prestigious British legal opinion, Holkar engaged top Indian minds; both Sapru and Sir Sivaswami Aiyer were called in for consultation. Reading now assumed that there would be no further talk of abdication, that both would advise Holkar to submit to an Enquiry.

The Indore affair inspired much commotion in the Princes' camp. Patiala attempted, unsuccessfully, to put official representations to Reading. A meeting of the Chamber of Princes was hurriedly convened to discuss the implications of the Indore affair but, as might have been

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 2nd December, 1925, R.P., 8, pp. 185, 7.
2. Reading to Birkenhead, 14th December, 1925, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 238.
3. Reading to Birkenhead, 6th December, 1925, ibid., Telegram No. 239.
4. Reading to Birkenhead, 14th February, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 216.
5. Reading to Birkenhead, 14th January, 1926, ibid., pp. 207, 8.
anticipated, the move to form a deputation fell flat: as Reading recorded Their Highnesses' habitual inconclusiveness,

'there was a great desire among a large majority to do something, as it was felt that the holding of an enquiry would be prejudicial to the general status of the Princes, but no one could suggest any legitimate ground for waiting on me'. (1)

Reading pressed on with arrangements for forming a Commission; Bikaner accepted an invitation to serve; Mysore who commanded the respect and confidence of both Princes and public, declined. Reading had to fall back on a minor Prince, another of the Chamber set, Palanpur.

The unexpected arrived with Indore's sudden decision to abdicate.

A baffled Viceroy found it difficult to believe that

'unless Maharaja Holkar's conscience pricks him, His Highness would prefer abdication to a Commission of Enquiry'.

Reading assumed that Holkar's 'exulted' pride, which would not contemplate a humiliating Enquiry, had dictated this action. Of course Holkar had not realised that the Government of India had gathered no clinching evidence against him. Indeed the Political Secretary was 'extremely nervous' lest the result of the Enquiry should be in favour of the Maharaja. Reading declined to suggest to the Maharaja

'any action by way of punishment which would not be so drastic ad abdication. This extreme course is his own choice in preference to any form of enquiry'.

An official insistence upon an Enquiry held fears for Reading:

'it would be tantamount to asserting that we hold prima facie evidence of his complicity in occurrences the result of which are that several persons have been hanged and others transported for life'. (3)

On reflection, Reading thought the voluntary abdication to be

'perhaps the best settlement of the case, although I fear it may cause some discontent among some of the Princes, who dislike the impression created upon the public that a Ruling Prince can be called to account by the Ruling Power'.

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 14th February, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 217.
2. Ibid., p. 218.
3. Reading to Birkenhead, 24th February, 1926, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 444.
Every care was taken in the matter of liberal allowances to ensure that Holkar's future circumstances would be comfortable. No restrictive conditions were imposed 'except in so far as they will be necessary to prevent interference by the ex-Maharaja in the administration of the State'. (1)

Birkenhead, who had backed Reading's judgement throughout this delicate affair expressed himself as well satisfied with the outcome, 'this was a considerable relief to me'. There had been awkward enquiries made about Holkar in Britain, and at one point, Birkenhead had to dampen down Parliamentary curiosity through the 'discrete cooperation' of the Speaker. A leader in The Times entirely justified the Government of India's action 'pointing out that the Government both claims and exercises right of intervention in gross cases and that public opinion in India is now less tolerant to misbehaviour'. (2)

Unlike the Nabha affair, the sequel to the Indore scandal worked out reasonably well for the Government of India. The ex-Maharaja departed to his villa in Switzerland; his son, now the young Maharaja, to Oxford. The ex-Maharaja staged a return to India late in 1927 in company with a Miss Nancy Miller of Seattle and her grandmother. Holkar entered India via Colombo, Miss Miller via Karachi. Birkenhead acidly observed of this curious arrangement that it might indicate 'a repercussion of the publication of the second part of the League of Nations Report on a certain traffic'. (3)

The ex-Maharaja subsequently married the American lady and the application of the happy couple to be present at Holkar's daughter's marriage in 1930 was a source of grave embarrassment to the Political Department.

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 4th March, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 223.
2. Birkenhead to Reading, 4th March, 1926, ibid., p. 113.
3. Birkenhead to Reading, 28th December, 1925, ibid., p. 97.
5. Reading to Birkenhead, 25th February, 1926, R.P., 8, p. 234. The ex-Maharaja was well provided with European properties; a chateau at St. Germain and a villa at Cap Ferrat. See Lord, J., op. cit., p. 69.
In the shadow of the Bawla murder scandal, both Viceroy and Secretary of State felt a sense of duty to young Holkar and the State of Indore. Irwin found him

'a difficult young man, inclined to suspicion and with no great stability of character to enable him to resist undesirable influences'.

Irwin decided that it was imperative to rush the young Maharaja away from Indore

'...and give him the chance of mixing on equal terms with some decent Englishmen'. (1)

Birkenhead kept a watchful eye on the behaviour of young Indore once in England. The Secretary of State spotted the discrepancy between on the one hand a training in the value of money: on the other the lavish dispensation of hospitality to shooting parties in a large country house.

Holkar's personal tutor was suspect: his major concern was alleged to be the securing of a future lucrative post in Indore. (2) Birkenhead was not unimpressed with the Maharaja:

'a sensible lad with a personality of his own;' (3) and he favoured the Princes' notion of round the world travel. However, it had to be conceded that the Oxford experience was not a particular success. Peel, while he formed a favourable impression of Holkar's intellect and character, noted that the Prince did not mix with English students or even his eighty or so fellow countrymen who themselves kept to their own devices. (4)

In the event, the unorthodoxy and wilful spirit in the Holkar blood triumphed over the specifically English training in self-discipline. In the fullness of time, Holkar married two American ladies in succession. The first of these alliances scandalised Linlithgow, coming as it did in early 1939 when general public attention was so much focussed on the

Princes and their doings, due to internal disturbances in States. (5)

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th May, 1926, Hx.P., 2, p. 17.
4. Peel to Irwin, 3rd December, 1928, Hx.P., 4, p. 205; see too Peel to Irwin, 5th December, 1928, ibid., p. 200.
5. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28th March, 1939, Z.P., 17, p. 14, 6; Linlithgow to Zetland, 4th April, 1939, ibid., p. 150.
As for dedication to States' affairs, Holkar spent the greater part of every year in the United States and Europe. Indeed at one time it looked as though the Prince would remain permanently abroad and this inspired the Resident, who enjoyed cordial relations with Holkar when he saw him, to suggest a change in the official Indore anthem to 'Some Day my Prince will come'.

The Alwar Case

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Alwar deposition was the fact that this sinister and perverted Ruler, Sir Jai Singh, had been permitted to rule the State for almost 40 years. His insensate vices ranged from the use of babies as tiger bait to the incineration of a pony whose performance displeased him. Corfield scorned Alwar's homosexuality. Lothian acknowledged that 'it had been a matter of common repute for many years that he was perhaps the worst man among the Rulers'.

Alwar's survival was attributed by Lothian to his shrewdness in cultivating Secretaries of State and Prime Ministers for whom he posed as a philosopher-Prince. Alwar was also adept at ingratiating himself with the well-connected through invitations to supremely sophisticated shikar arrangements where the beaters were disciplined infantry. A duchess had only to cast a line into an Alwar pool to hook a large fish. Lady Reading was representative of the many European dignitaries who were puzzled by Alwar when she confessed to enjoying his company but still found him 'uncanny'.

1. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 102.
2. A catalogue of Alwar's vices is provided in Lord, J., op. cit., pp. 204-7.
5. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 144.
Alwar's immunity distressed other Rulers vulnerable to intervention and cast doubt on the Political Department's instructions vis-à-vis misrule.

It was not generally known in India that it was Alwar's extravagance rather than his notorious vices which led to his removal. Late in 1932, only a few days after a Resident 'not known for his perspicacity' had described Alwar as his brother in a sentimental speech at a State banquet, the Maharaja's outraged subjects rose against him, 'a very rare occurrence in the States of those days'. While the immediate cause of the rebellion was the grossly excessive taxation currently levied on Alwar's Moslem Noor cultivators, the root cause was Alwar's personal extravagance and his determination to ape the style of Bikaner, Gwalior and Kashmir who ruled far wealthier States.

The troubles in Alwar erupted at the end of 1932. Willingdon, who earlier in the year had taken the Maharaja to task after his arrival at a Princes' garden party given by the Vicereine fifteen minutes before it ended, at first attempted to exonerate Alwar on the grounds that the disturbances were 'a purely political effort' on the part of fractious Moslems. As the situation worsened, Willingdon had to take a closer look at Alwar's activities:

'he is so clever and such an astute manoeuvrer that the only thing to do is go straight at him'.

Willingdon issued an ultimatum:

'I am inclined to think that he is perfectly terrified of the thought of an English officer coming into his State and finding out facts'. (7)

4. The Noors were taxed at a prohibitive rate some 40-50% higher than the high assessment fixed by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in 1900. There is an interesting account of the Alwar disturbances at first hand in Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., pp. 123-7.
In a misleadingly optimistic vein, very characteristic of him, Willingdon announced the withdrawal of most of his troops from Alwar; the Maharaja had apparently 'toed the line'. Two months followed before Willingdon became aware of the extremely precarious financial position of the State and only then did the Viceroy contemplate 'clearing Alwar out of the State for a while'. Alwar attempted to evade responsibility by aping the Gandhi style, dressing up in a rough white dhoti and thus hoping to pass himself off to his Hindu subjects as their spiritual rather than their administrative head. By May, 1933, Willingdon had grasped that the State was bankrupt and that Alwar was attempting to raise his Hindu subjects against the A.G.C.; 'it really is an impossible situation'. Willingdon subsequently authorised a second 'ultimatum' claiming, with some justice, that he had shown 'the utmost patience' with Alwar.

With his bluff called at last, Alwar elected to go to Benares, become a holy man, and take up residence there until allowed to return to his State. Willingdon was not reassured, knowing that Alwar was 'as cute as Gandhi in trying to escape from the inevitable'. From London, Hoare watched with anxiety:

'there has been a great deal of interest here in Alwar. His crimes and vices seem to have impressed public opinion and he seems to be universally detested. This is all to the good. If, however, we can persuade him not to come to England, so much the better. The King is very anxious that he should not come here and seemed surprised when I told him that no one had any legal powers to prevent him entering the United Kingdom if he wished'.

But for Willingdon ever anxious to transfer responsibility, packing Alwar off to Europe appealed as a neat solution and he seized upon a proposal

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 30th April, 1933, ibid., p. 288.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 22nd May, 1933, ibid., p. 305.
by the Maharaja to this effect. The Viceroy pleaded for the King to
give Alwar a 5 minute interview since the Maharaja was not after all
deposed:

‘you may of course tell me that I am shirking my own difficulties,
and that to some extent is true, but it really has been extra-
ordinarily difficult to deal with the fellow who is extremely
able and quite unscrupulous’. (2)

For the time being, the King dug in against seeing Alwar, but this did
not delay the departure of the Maharaja for Europe. The reading of a
full report on conditions in Alwar, drawn up by Wylie, the Political
Agent most closely concerned, convinced Willingdon, rather belatedly, that
the King might be justified in refusing to grant Alwar an interview.

This rebuff

‘might have satisfactory reactions on the Alwar citizens, who are
still in a state of abject terror at the thought of his return’.

Indeed in the light of some personal revelations from Wylie about Alwar
and his doings, Willingdon questioned whether the Maharaja ever ought
to come back.

To the frantic relief of the Secretary of State, Alwar stopped off
on his journey at Rome, to ‘sit on the doorstep of the Vatican demanding
an interview with the Pope’. Hoare wrote,

‘thank God Alwar has not yet appeared, I am praying that he will
not reach London until most of us, including the King, have gone
away’. (6)

Willingdon’s change of heart about the desirability of a Royal interview
for Alwar understandably annoyed the Secretary of State who had by now
prevailed upon a reluctant King to invite the Maharaja to a garden party.

The invitation was speedily withdrawn when a further list of Alwar’s
misdeeds reached the King.

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 5th June, 1933, ibid., p. 310.
Alwar now faded from a scene in which he had been
'surrounded by all sorts of ghouls, whose on anxiety must be to
fawn upon him, flatter him, and if possible rob him'. (1)

His de facto deposition did little to curb his effrontery or mellow his
satanic disposition. Before long he petitioned unsuccessfully for an
increase of from 3 to 4 lakha per annum in an already generous allowance.

Though fully versed in Alwar's shady record, Hoare remained surprisingly
sensitive to further interventions in the Maharaja's affairs. When
the Political Agent administering Alwar refused to send Alwar's daughter
to His Highness, Hoare suggested that such interference in a Ruler's
family affairs was 'outside our province'. For once, Willingdon had
the complete answer in Alwar's documented cruelty to a child in need of
special care through a condition of congenital syphilis.

From his place of exile in Bombay, Alwar fomented intrigue in his
(5) old State. The Government of India served him with a ban, for a
period of 15 years, on his return to the State. Political Agents were
glad to cease dealings with a character of ungovernable temper who kept
a revolver in both drawers of his desk. Too late in the day,
Willingdon recognised his error:

'the intrigues which are going on in Alwar at the present time are
making the position extremely difficult, and the reports I get
about Alwar himself in Bombay are really too deplorable for words.
I ought, in the first instance, to have turned him out of the
State altogether'. (7)

Fortunately for the preservation of stability in Alwar, the Maharaja
died at his Paris home in 1937 of apoplexy believed to have been brought
on by a fall in a squash court. At an early stage in the bizarre

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 21st August, 1933, T.P.(i), 6, p. 347.
3. Hoare to Willingdon, 13th April, 1934, T.P.(i), 4, p. 1041.
funeral proceedings, held in Alwar, an attending prince adorned the sightless face of the corpse with his own sunglasses. This created such a lifelike effect that the crowds lining the route gasped with mingled amazement and fear. The rumour was spread that his cremation had been the only way of bringing his evil influence to an end. (1)

There was no more weighty indictment to be made against the non-intervention policy of the Government of India, than a recital of the career of the Maharaja of Alwar.

The Dewas Case.

By comparison with the cases of Nabha, Indore and Alwar, the abdication of Dewas Senior occupied little space in Viceregal/Secretary of State correspondence. Dewas was neither a paranoiac, not a libertine, nor a pervert. The circumstances surrounding the exit of the Ruler are instructive in that they throw light on the insensitivity of the Political Department to the problems of an unstable Ruler who had some commendable qualities. Unlike the principals in other 'abdications', Dewas Senior became relatively well known as the major subject in two largely sympathetic books; the work of his one-time tutor, Sir Malcolm Darling, *Apprentice to Power*, and the narration of his secretary, F. M. Forster, *The Hill of Devi*. The setting for this human tragedy was, in itself, curious: as a result of a historic accident arising from a quarrel between two brothers 100 years before, the Central Indian State of Dewas had been divided into two, Senior on one side of the road, junior on the other, each Maharaja having a salute of 15 Guns: 'it was a comic absurdity'.

Although Darling had his difficulties in conveying to Tukoji Rao

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immutable principles from Will and Bagot, he drew very close to the young Maharaja. The Dewas match with the daughter of Kolahapur, dynastically the premier Maratha State, occasioned a wedding which, in the spectacles that it produced, transported Darling:

'as we moved along, fountains of tiny gold flakes spirited upwards from earthenware pots set across our path, and from above hissing rockets showered stars of many colours upon us, and from the crowd came an unending murmur of excited chatter. It was another example of the advantage the Chiefs had over us in popularising their rule'. (1)

More mundane sentiments overtook Darling when in 1908, he took up new duties as Adviser and Private Secretary:

'the whole machinery of the State needs overhauling .... the District Magistrate would take six months over a case and was so incompetent that the Superintendent of the State would often have to dictate a judgement for him. Nearly all the officials, too, were corrupt'. (2)

Dewas, himself, thought his State no worse than most small States.

In the interval between Darling's departure and Forster's 1921 visit, the States' affairs had drifted towards crisis. Forster reported:

'I found Dewas an untidy ant-hill, I leave it equally untidy but a desert. All the works have been stopped for lack of funds and the hideous unfinished palace juts out of the landscape like a mausoleum or a lunatic asylum. It is an appalling tragedy'. (3)

This was most certainly a case where the Political Department should have exercised a firm yet diplomatic rein on the Prince's ambition; it did not materialise. Darling had an uneasy premonition before leaving Dewas in 1908 that should the Maharaja be allocated

'a Political-Agent who misunderstands him and pricks his pride with tongue or pen, there will be trouble. He will never swallow even the suggestion of an affront and there are so many unimaginative 'Politics' that I sometimes fear for him'. (4)

The intervention of the Government of India in the case of Dewas Senior was provoked not so much by maladministration but by a family tragedy.

In 1916, against a background of intrigue of Machiavellian proportions, Dewas sent his wife back to her home State of Kolhapur, this affronting a powerful family who lost no time in placating agents provocateurs within Dewas. The product of the union, the Yuvraj, fled to Indore in December 1927 to seek the protection of the A.G.C. and to issue the far-fetched claim that he was being poisoned by his father. There was no recovery for Tukoji Rao. That sums he could raise were spent on secret agents to combat the Kolhapur conspirators; the added impact of the general slump in agricultural prices ensured that the State went bankrupt in 1933. In reply to an enquiry from the Secretary of State, Willingdon felt he had a strong case for instituting an enquiry into the affairs of Dewas Senior:

'he is a thorough-going wrong 'un, who married the sister of the present Maharaja of Kolhapur. She found it impossible to live in the State and has for the past year been living at Kolhapur with her brother. She has a son whom the Maharaja dislikes intensely, and his one effort seems to be to ruin the State so that he should have nothing to succeed to'. (4)

Willingdon's version of events is more notable for what it leaves out than for what it says. It is an indication of the success of the agents of Kolhapur, strong in racing circles and generally well connected in Bombay, in poisoning the official mind against Dewas. When the Government of India pressed Dewas to accept an accounts officer or chief minister nominated by the Government of India, the Maharaja first prevaricated and then absconded to the French enclave of Pondicherry which he refused to leave. On a visit there to intercede with Dewas, Darling found him

2. Forster believed the Yuvraj's mind to have been warped by emissaries from Kolhapur whose devices included a stage-managed 'attack' on the Yuvraj. See Forster, E. W., op. cit., pp. 162, 164.
destitute. Dewas died in Pondicherry in 1937 and his body was cremated according to ancestral rights. (1)

Forster railed against the injustices meted out to Dewas Senior. Certainly by comparison with the latitude accorded Alwar, Dewas appeared to have been harshly dealt with. The downfall of Dewas was in great part due to the unsatisfactory nature of his relationship with the Political Department. As Forster explained:

'Unfortunately most of the A.C.C.s and Political Agents he had to deal with were not the sort of people whom he wanted as friends or negotiators; nor can I feel surprised; I have experienced them myself. They were insensitive and if they were sensitive, they were clever-clever and tried to beat him at his own tricks, and one or two of them were cads ... There were exceptions ... but on the whole they constituted an unattractive body of men'. (2)

Trevelyan is scathing of Forster's judgement and there is substance in the argument that Dewas Senior, given his record for improvidence, could hardly be left in unfettered control of the destinies of his subjects. Yet the degree of trust established between an outstanding officer like Darling and the Maharaja throws into sharp relief the limitations of the Political Department generally and its signal failure to take into account the major contribution which intrigue made to instability in the State. The manner of the fall of Tukoji Rao suggests that scant attention had been paid by the Politicals involved to the Butler Committee recommendations which called for the schooling of Political Agents in 'all those graceful courtesies of manner and conduct to which Indians attract supreme importance'. (4)

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2. Ibid., pp. 167, 8.
4. Cmd. 3302, para. 75.
Grounds for Intervention: cases of administrative and financial breakdown
The Udaipur Case

Alongside the few much publicised cases of intervention connected with scandalous crimes and chronic maladministration, there existed a much larger category where the Ruler was not necessarily unhinged or contemplating murder, but rather had no gift for administration, being unfit for lifestyle and background. In such circumstances, the Government of India could be roused to action.

Reading had to face a difficult situation in Udaipur in 1921. This Prince represented the senior branch of the Rajput dynasty, was of celestial descent, and sat behind a ring fence of immemorial tradition. Sir Fateh Singh assumed the gadi in 1885 and steadfastly refused to countenance the coming of the twentieth century. The railway ended three miles from Udaipur city; no 'fire carriage' was permitted to enter. The Maharana chose to use the waters of Udaipur for adornment rather than irrigation,

'preferring, no doubt, that its people should die of no drains, rather than of too much efficiency'. (2)

Earl Winterton, the Under Secretary of State, noted on tour in the early twenties a stark contrast between British India and Udaipur where he found

'badly metalled roads .... apathetic constables .... a medley of dirt, squalor, poverty, wealth and colour which even I, with my experience of the East, have never seen equalled'. (3)

Udaipur struck Lothian as an impressive Prince:

'he was the quintessence of courtesy and an excellent Ruler according to old-fashioned lights'. (4)

The embarrassment for the Government of India lay in the Maharana's insistence on personal control of the administration of his big State in every detail; this hopelessly clogged its administration.

Official attention was drawn to this unsatisfactory state of affairs when disorders broke out in 1921. Reading's solution was to push the Maharana towards devolving power on his son, but this policy ran up against the sympathies of the Princes generally who favoured the cause of the old Maharana. The affair caused concern to Montagu since Udaipur's case was taken up in Parliament by an excitable Conservative M.P., Joynson-Hicks. In the event, Reading's transfer of effective control to the heir seemed to work out remarkably well. In the view of Trevelyan, it was curious that it should have been in Udaipur, 'a State which had got left two centuries behind', that some of the most effective steps were taken to secure survival. The young Maharana was surprisingly liberal in his approach, engaged an able Prime Minister and energetic education minister and, at a later stage, shrewdly decided that the Congress Party should be registered not outlawed. As Trevelyan put it:

'in a remote corner of Rajasthan took place one of the few promising exercises in the combination of modern administration and traditional rule'.

1. Lothian noted one case where prisoners in the State Jail under sentence of death remained there 12 years, their papers mislaid in a file waiting attention. Ibid., p. 104. Winterton was shaken to discover that an action between farmers over a disputed field took 8 years to settle. Winterton, Earl, op. cit., p. 62.


3. Not all of this support was spontaneous: a substantial bill for propaganda conducted on his behalf, was later unearthed among Sir Fateh Singh's papers, following his death. Lothian, Sir J., op. cit., p. 104.


5. Trevelyan, E., op. cit., p. 215. Trevelyan further described Udaipur as 'an ossification of old traditions, where it was still a criminal offence to kill a monkey or a peacock'.

These promising developments did not catch the eye of either Viceroy or Secretaries of State. The continuing baleful presence of old Sir Fateh Singh monopolised their attention. Birkenhead even contemplated a restoration:

'the vitality of the Maharana is extraordinary, and the position in which he finds himself today commands sympathy; but having regard to his age (77) and previous record, I think that we should be very cautious in dealing with any suggestions, if made, that the arrangement under which, more than 5 years ago, the Maharana delegated administrative powers to his son, should be modified. But I do not exclude this topic if the Maharana should continue to rejuvenate and his son to senesce'. (1)

Irwin, too, was uncertain as to how to proceed in Udaipur. 'I don't know whether or not you have ever had time to look into Udaipur affairs'

Irwin wrote to Benn,

'but ever since I have been here they have been round my neck, and I cannot resist the conclusion that the arrangement Lord Reading made was not well advised. I have always been at a loss to vary it without blacking the face of the son who now succeeds, and long ago formed the conclusion that the death of the old man was the only possible solvent of the difficulty'. (2)

The death of Sir Fateh Singh in 1939 did resolve the immediate problem. A disturbing feature of the case remains the evidence of considerable support for an admittedly picturesque but lethally incompetent administration in Udaipur, and the apparent suspicion in high quarters of its more enlightened successor.

2. Irwin to Benn, 28th May, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 166.
The Hyderabad Case

When posted to Hyderabad, the premier Indian State, Sir Arthur Lothian found it to be 'an extraordinary mixture of the old and the new'. In truth, in the matter of administration, there was a good deal more of the old than the new. A State population almost entirely Hindu was ruled by a Muslim elite. The limitless passion for intrigue in Hyderabad is well captured in a novel which details the scale of the espionage network in existence, the Khan Nazrat (Nizam) with his spies among the British Resident's employees and vice versa. Curzon had intervened to avert bankruptcy in 1902 and some improvement followed from the appointment of a British finance minister. In 1919 a State Executive Council had been instituted to exercise control over the running of the State. In practice, the Nizam interfered in even routine administration and it was left to the Resident to hold the balance. With the appointment of a Resident in the early 'twenties temperamentally inclined towards the non-interference policy, (indeed in the Secretary of States' view, 'unequal to his task'), the Nizam was quick to step into the driving seat and provoke accelerating discontent through the extortion of nazars on a large scale. By March 1925, when Lothian left, 'thermiserable state' of Hyderabad had reduced three members of the State Executive Council to tears.

The report drawn up by the incoming Resident, Sir William Barton, dated December 1925, seriously alarmed Birkenhead:

'it would hardly be possible to frame a blacker indictment against any Ruler'.

4. Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., p. 80. This was Sir Lennox Russell of an eminent Anglo Indian family. Rather ominously, Russell's ancestor had been Resident at Hyderabad at the time of the notorious Palmer Bank scandal. Sir Lennox Russell had previously occupied the Residencies at Indore, Udaipur and Baroda.
5. Birkenhead to Irwin, 22nd April, 1926, H.R.P., 2, p. 3.
6. Compulsory offerings on certain formal occasions: the frequency of these and the decision to remit or otherwise were at the discretion of the Ruler.
Birkenhead was struck by Barton's conclusion:

'that a state of gross misrule prevails in the Dominions, that the constitutional machinery has broken down and that the people have almost reached the limits of endurance'.

As Birkenhead reviewed Hyderabad affairs, the Nizam had previously received a number of 'serious warnings' about the probable consequences of maladministration: in 1918 'in the plainest possible language' by Chelmsford; in 1920 again by Chelmsford; again in 1925 through a belated letter from the unimpressive Resident, Russell, which warned that British assistance against disaffection could be accompanied by an investigation into the causes of the discontent. What principally worried Birkenhead was:

'that the state of misrule in Hyderabad today reflects grave discontent not only upon the Ruler but upon the British Government which maintains him upon the Masnad'.

Birkenhead called for prompt and decisive action which would go well beyond Barton's suggestion of a series of interviews with the Nizam:

'these would only give him further opportunities for the crafty bamboozlement of which he is a master, and there would be a new stream of firmans and promises, fulfilment of which would be evaded as soon as the crisis seemed to have subsided'.

The Secretary of State proposed that the Nizam be asked to stand aside from the administration and he was prepared to ask the Cabinet to agree to an immediate Committee of Enquiry. Birkenhead did acknowledge that certain considerations might trim the Government's course,

'the probable actions upon Mahomedan feeling in India and upon our relations with the other Princes who are already disquieted by the action taken in the case of Udaipur, Nabha and Indore'.

This said, Birkenhead insisted on the presentation of an ultimatum specifying European control of the main departments otherwise no undertaking to abolish nazars would be effective.

Irwin was much less keen to act, anxious to wait two or three months in view of the inevitable anxiety engendered in the minds of other Princes’. The Viceroy saw snags about a public Enquiry, confirmed by Glancy who had previous experience in Hyderabad as Finance Member. Most of Barton’s information ‘rests on what ministers, nobles and sufferers have told him and we cannot expect the latter to substantiate their statements if there is a regular enquiry’. (2)

Not till July, 1926, did Irwin, in confident mood, send a minatory letter to the Nizam:

‘if he realises that the Government of India are in earnest in the matter, he will follow the path of prudence’. (3)

The Viceroy strove to give an encouraging impression of progress in Hyderabad. Barton was 'to be congratulated' on his handling of the case. Irwin thought the fact that the Nizam was trying to encourage the belief ‘that we blame his officials and not him personally for the misrule’ was an indication that he intended to surrender.

Some progress was in evidence with the submission of a 'communique' from the Nizam that acknowledged though severely understated the administrative defects. Irwin continued to threaten publicity on the supposition that the Nizam would climb down rather than face it. Although the Nizam made frequent attempts to get behind Barton’s back, Irwin felt that 'affairs in Hyderabad seem to be going as we desire'. A long memorandum from the Nizam 'accepts our advice on all essential points'.

While the Viceroy pronounced results in Hyderabad to date to be 'pretty satisfactory' and dismissed the Nizam as 'at present in a funk', there were strong indications that His Exalted Highness was fighting back, notably his nomination of a very safe man for the Presidency of the Council.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 13th April, 1926, ibid., p. 3, 4.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12th May, 1926, ibid., p. 15.
3. Irwin to Birkenhead, 9th July, 1926, ibid., p. 47.
4. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th August, 1926, ibid., p. 64.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12th August, 1926, ibid., 7, Telegram No. 141.
8. This was Sir Kishan Pershad, on Irwin's admission, 'not a very strong man'. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 15th September, 1926, ibid., pp. 104, 5.
Birkenhead shrewdly spotted that the Viceroy's reports might be oversanguine. As the Secretary of State interpreted Barton's most recent report,

'It seems to indicate that whatever promises the Nizam might make in his letters - the old abuses are going on .... I am sure that you will agree with me that having once begun we must see the thing through, and insist on prompt and genuine compliance and no eyewash'.

Casting around for evidence of 'progress', Irwin claimed that the Nizam had now agreed to Government of India clearance for appointment and dismissal on his Council. However, he did fall in with Birkenhead's observations on the continued capacity of the Nizam to nullify British efforts. Birkenhead had by now lost patience and he ruthlessly exposed the Viceroy's show of misplaced personal optimism:

'it is almost four months since our demands were presented yet Barton's report indicates 'that very little progress has been made of any kind whatever'. Of the Nizam, Barton noted 'he has not in the least changed his methods and has done nothing whatever to show that he intended to do so'.

At heart Birkenhead was concerned with the prestige of the Government of India:

'I do not want to hustle you but the position must be known all over India .... the other Princes look on and wonder quoique tandem .... I do most sincerely trust that you will address yourself energetically and resolutely to this matter. As Arthur Balfour once said, it is better to be odious than ridiculous'.

It is instructive to note that the one consideration which inclined Birkenhead against demanding a purge on the Hyderabad ruling elite was the need to appease Muslim opinion in India. It had been put, in convincing fashion, to the Secretary of State by a prominent Muslim, Sir Muhammad Rafique, that Hyderabad

1. Birkenhead to Irwin, 23rd September, 1926, H.A.P., 2, pp. 89, 90. Birkenhead evidently read the Hyderabad Resident's reports with circumspection. He fastened on one paragraph which referred to the Nizam's retainers at the theatre 'leering at inadequately dressed English dancing girls ..... it is notorious that few things are more damaging to our prestige as a people than the exposure of the bodies of white women before Indians'.


'is the refuge of those members of noble British Indian Moslem families who—whether from pride, ignorance, or want of adaptability—are unable to get a living in British India. They drift into the Nizam's service and earn a livelihood, but they are quite inefficient. Refique fears that British officials placed at the head of the Nizam's departments may make a clean sweep of these gentry, and he thinks it would be a mistake. So long, he says, as this refuge is open, there will be no serious criticism of our policy among reasonable Indian Moslems'. (1)

Indian Muslims were watching developments in Hyderabad with close interest and Irwin noted that

'the less respectable Muslim papers are trying to make as much trouble as they can'.

In the absence of any positive progress to report, Irwin fell back on a personal attack on the character of the Nizam:

'Barton continues to write letters which show that this incredibly contemptible man, lost to all sense of self-respect and immersed in depravity, is by no means abandoning his minor malpractices of administration'.

Irwin felt that it was better to get the big things settled first in order that a stiffened administration could crash down on the Nizam's more reprehensible practices.

By the end of the year Irwin could report that the Nizam, after a final protest, had accepted the British Viceroy's portfolios. (3) It seemed an appropriate moment to the Viceroy to defend his policy in this astonishing situation where,

'the Government of India have known all about Hyderabad administration for years, and everybody has known that they know. Yet as regards administration, nothing has been done beyond warnings that were not followed up'.

Irwin felt that given this setting, steady pressure would now have to be applied but with an appearance of courtesy and consideration. Given the Nizam's place in the Muslim world:

'any other course would have predisposed the general body of Princes to feel for him a certain amount of sympathy where they now feel none'.

Moslem agitation 'had been able to cut very little ice'. Although the Nizam held out to the end against a British Finance Member, he had accepted British officers as Revenue Member, Director-General of Revenue and Director-General of Police. Irwin stood by the belief that such gradualism was 'the right way to deal generally with such cases in Indian States'.

The Nizam did not take readily to the stiffened Council; after the passage of a few months, a row blew up over the inclusion of the City Police in the Police portfolio now held by a British Officer. As Barton construed this development,

'the Nizam's eagerness to keep City Police away from Trench is due to the fact that these police are his most efficient instrument of tyranny'.

Irwin deployed his usual sanction by warning the Nizam that

'hitherto we have protected him from publicity, but that if we are compelled to publish a full statement of reasons for the advice we have given, public opinion in England and here will demand strong action'. (2)

Birkenhead confirmed his 'fullest support'.

Irwin's state visit to Hyderabad in November, 1929, revealed that though administrative reforms had taken some effect, the Nizam had not reformed. The Viceroy, anxious to supervise the provision made for the education of the Nizam's sons, found him 'slippery as an eel'. Irwin was struck by the manifest friendliness of the crowds lining the Hyderabad streets:

'the enthusiasm is significant of the feeling entertained in the bazaars that the Government of India has rescued them from the Nizam's tyranny'.

It became clear to the Viceroy that Barton's picture had not been overdrawn:

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 30th December, 1926, Hx.P., 2, p. 176.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12th April, 1927, Hx.P., 8, Telegram No. 110.
3. Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th April, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 135.
4. Irwin to Benn, 6th November, 1929, Hx.P., 5, pp. 159, 160. In an issue of protocol, it was only as a result of much pressure that the Nizam agreed to see Irwin off, 'as an act of private courtesy'. Irwin to Benn, 26th November, 1929, ibid., pp. 173, 4.
'I have at times been tempted to think that the Nizam's wickedness had become an obsession with Barton and that he was falling into exaggeration in regard to it, but my stay here had convinced me that he was faithfully representing the feelings of all classes in Hyderabad with the exception of a limited circle who stood to gain by a continuation of the previous regime'.

On returning to the Nizam, the Viceroy had nothing encouraging to say:

'the really is an impossible man and I'm afraid I don't think there is any chance of the leopard changing his spots'.

Unrelenting pressure was required to checkmate 'constant attempts at evasion'.

The Government of India kept its word about maintaining a suitable discretion concerning Hyderabad affairs. Sir William Barton, in many ways the central figure in the drama, published in 1934 a large work on the Princes which included an interesting chapter on Hyderabad: it contained no reference to the crisis of the mid 'twenties. The circumspection with which the Hyderabad affair was handled is an indication of the growing sensitivity on the British side to Moslem interests, potentially a more formidable counterpoise to Congress than the princely bloc. Sir Mohammed Rafique need not have feared too much for the immediate future of the Muslim nobility in Hyderabad. It was there that Philip Mason found himself transported by those elegant buffet suppers, set out between flowering bushes in the scented dusk, so much enjoyed by the grandees of Hyderabad, a mere five months before the transfer of power: 'it was like the spring of 1789 at Versailles'.

The Bharatpur Case.

The Maharaja of Bharatpur's life was short and tragic. He sprang from a fated line; Bharatpur senior, of unsound mind, had been deposed for killing a man in a fit of mania. In the recollection of an old Political,

1. Irwin to Benn, 19th December, 1929, Hx.P., 5, pp. 183, 4.
2. Barton, Sir W., op. cit., see chapter IV: the only reference to the political standpoint of the Nizam runs 'temperamentally he is not inclined to democracy'.
Bharatpur was strikingly handsome; he had been educated at Wellington and returned to Bharatpur in Eastern Rajputana in 1919. The full coffers accumulated by the previous minority administration were at the Maharaja's disposal and within the span of a decade, Bharatpur was dead and the state was bankrupt.

In the era of Reading, Bharatpur was justly famed for its sport with duck; and even a very average shot like Reading enthused about a weekend spent on one of Bharatpur's 'great wild-duck shoots. 'It was good fun and very enjoyable, and we got 881 ducks and some wild geese with 24 guns'. Extravagance was the keynote in all Bharatpur's activities and the danger signals began flashing in 1926. A gloomy memorandum from the Political Secretary, Holland, and the sudden retirement of the European State Engineer pointed to an approaching financial crisis. Irwin, too, had enjoyed Bharatpur's spectacular hospitality but 'rumours disseminated about the States' finances and the Viceroy persuaded Bharatpur to abandon his enormous polo gymkhana-tea for the Simla season. 'The tragedy is that he has the best duck-shooting in India', remarked Irwin in semi-serious vein. The Maharaja himself struck Irwin as

'a very pleasant fellow and I think really hood hearted, but I think he is weak'. (3)

Following a familiar pattern, the Maharaja circumvented the official advice to put his house in order. In consequence Irwin's attitude hardened:

'we have been having a lot of trouble with Bharatpur ..... I think the young man is really off his head as a result of some hereditary disease'.

However, it did look as though Bharatpur would accept 'an adviser with very wide powers'. As was usually the case, Birkenhead, even at a distance,

2. Reading to Peel, 30th November, 1922, L.P., 5, p. 204. All the great pro-consuls had taken their stand at some time on Bharatpur's famous 'Viceroy's bund'; those who shot straight counted their victims in hundreds. See Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 138.
had the shrewder grasp and he saw emerging an intolerable situation in Bharatpur

'if his dilatory tactics are not checked, and if in consequence nothing is done to restore the financial stability of the State'. (1)

But by December 1927, despite Irwin's normal tactics in such situations, the threat of a Commission of Enquiry made in March, nothing had been done.

Irwin now took the unusual step of calling in Alwar and Patiala informally

'to tell Bharatpur that it was in his own interests and those of his Order to accept Government advice without prevarication'. (2)

Sane or not, Bharatpur might have been excused for blinking at the choice of intermediaries; Alwar was to be deposed in 1933, Patiala to be officially investigated in 1930. Irwin felt that Bharatpur affairs were now working out well. In withdrawing an earlier request for an Enquiry, the Maharaja had

'left himself unreservedly in my hands .... it will no longer be necessary to go through much of the dirty linen of the past'. (3)

Nor had Bharatpur gathered much sympathy anywhere among the other Princes, 'who indeed regard him as a very dangerous black sheep'.

Birkenhead could no longer restrain his choler:

'the Maharaja seems to have been treated with extraordinary leniency and patience, and I see no evidence in the fragmentary papers which I have received that he is going to react, as he decently should'.

Birkenhead was further upset by the spectacle of Princes appearing to act as intermediaries and taking the credit for any leniency which the Government might accord a peculant Ruler. Birkenhead urged that if Bharatpur failed 'to play straight' with the Officer administering the State,

'our position will be a very strong one for dealing with him very firmly indeed'. (5)

Irwin defended his apparent appeasement by arguing that the Maharaja had now unreservedly accepted the conditions laid down without 'the trouble, expense and scandal of a Commission'. The intervention of Princes was
a natural consequence of the existence of a Chamber of Princes. In an unguarded moment Irwin suggested that

'I think it true to say that any Indian, provided that he has had a hearing, will accept almost any decision without demur'.

Implicit in Irwin's defence was the unmanageability of Bharatpur,

'slippery and cunning, but he will get no sympathy now when the crash comes'.

His misdemeanours could be summed up as consisting 'mainly of personal extravagances, deflating the treasury and paralysing the administration'.

As Birkenhead had forecast, Bharatpur obstructed the British Administrator at every turn. D. G. MacKenzie had to submit a special application to see every file. At last Irwin hardened his line. Either Bharatpur would have to play the game

'in fact as well as on paper or else he will have to go and live outside the State'. (2)

The Maharaja's evasions reinforced Birkenhead's earlier assessment:

'it is easy to be wise after the event, and it was certainly desirable to try and avoid a cause celebre .... but seeing the response the Maharaja has made to your endeavours to spare his face and preserve his izzat, it does seem a pity now that you took all that trouble'. (3)

Bharatpur had compounded his folly by engaging the prominent counsel, Sir Leslie Scott, at 10,000 guineas, a hefty fee for a bankrupt State.

Little alternative remained to Irwin except expulsion:

'I have been compelled to tell the Maharaja ...... to disinterest himself in the affairs of his State till further notice and keep at a reasonable distance from its borders'. (5)

No public announcement was made of the Viceroy's instructions to the Political Agent to take over entirely the administration of the State.

1. At one point, Bharatpur had misappropriated the greater part of a State loan of 15 lakhs raised for reconstruction after a flood. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 21st March, 1928, Hx.P., 4, pp. 49, 50.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th March, 1928, ibid., p. 53.
4. Scott's enormous fees generally attracted unfavourable official comment; see chapter 3, pp. 300, 1.
Birkenhead, of course, felt that Irwin was in a very strong position:

'the Maharaja has been treated from the start with the utmost patience by the Political Department, you yourself have accorded him every consideration, and I am emphatically of the opinion that he has entirely failed to play the game'. (1)

The Bharatpur affair stopped short of a deposition through the precipitate illness and demise of the Maharaja. Irwin, called in to the death-bed by the ubiquitous Alwar, saw 'a pitiful sight'. (2) With the administration now fully in the hands of Dewan MacKenzie, a Political Officer whom Irwin found to be 'a little bit stiff and inelastic', the finances of the State appeared to have moved onto a more stable basis. Presumably so, since less than two years later, the Viceroy felt able to return to Bharatpur to indulge in the renowned duck shoot. (3) The meteoric rise and fall of the Maharaja of Bharatpur suggest that once more the Political Department was at fault in the timing of its intervention. It also seems clear that, by itself, an English education was not proof against the pitfalls associated with profligacy and intrigue which awaited the Ruler of a Rajput State.

The Bahawalpur Case

A more successful case of intervention was in the small Moslem State of Bahawalpur on the frontiers of Northern Rajputana and the Punjab. Here, similar problems to those afflicting Bharatpur, looked like emerging. Ostensibly, there was every reason to suppose that Bahawalpur should exhibit a degree of financial stability. The Nawab had been groomed by English tutors, made an Honorary A.D.C. to the Prince of Wales in 1922 and an honorary captain in the Indian Army. However, his frequent London

3. Irwin to Benn, 13th December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 351.
visits and lavish entertainment schedules were making heavy demands on the State. It came to Irwin's notice that

'Bahawalpur, as far as I can discover, light-heartedly dismissed the First Minister that he had taken with our approval. The State is, I fear, riddled with intrigue, at the bottom of most of which is a Mauvi who enjoys all the Nawab's confidence, and whose sanctimonious exterior conceals a great amount of rascality and vice'.

As with Bharatpur, initially, Irwin found Bahawalpur

'a nice boy by himself, but is weak and lets himself drift hopelessly into the wrong hands'.

Irwin calculated that a personal interview with the Nawab would settle the matter without further trouble.

For once, Irwin's formula appeared to have succeeded in that no public scandal broke out and British administrators discreetly took over the levers of power. The State limped along though Barton was careful to suggest that its uninspiring progress was not immediately connected to any deficiencies in the Nawab: 'the general opinion is that the people lack drive and energy'. After eleven years of running on a British leading rein, the then Secretary of State felt it a little premature to transfer power though he recognised 'the considerable progress' made in the rehabilitation of the administration under a succession of British Officers. But given the Ruler's 'unstable temperament and poor heredity', Zetland agreed with Linlithgow that it would be wise to leave a British officer in charge of administration.

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2. Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 222.
The Bilaspur Case

Gross maladministration was not in every case due to the incapacity of the Prince. In 1930, Wakefield was commissioned to deal with civil disturbances in the small Himalayan State of Bilaspur. Insurgents had attacked the Central Jail and released the prisoners. The Ruler, His Highness Anand Chand, was still a minor and since 1927, the State had been run by a Council of Administration under the supervision of the A.G.G. Wakefield soon discovered that the unequivocal cause of the revolt was the tyranny practised by the Council:

'I was sorry for the men we arrested. If I had been a subject of the Raja of Bilaspur in 1930 I would have certainly been one of the rebels'.

When the young Raja assumed full ruling powers in 1932, he granted a general amnesty. The Bilaspur disorders stand as a further instance of a lack of vigilance in the Political Department and an undue delay in intervention.

The Khairpur Case

Khairpur was a relic of the independent confederacy of Sindh overrun by Napier in 1845. Mir Ali Nawaz Khan had supported the British and in return he retained his territory which became known as Khairpur State. Mir Ali Nawaz Khan who ruled from 1921 presented the Political Department with problems, not in themselves unusual, but certainly weighty. Many Punjab Princes were extravagant, but none matched the Mir in sheer irresponsibility. With Government of India intervention and the placing of a

3. A man of massive proportions, the Mir had constructed a Rolls Royce with custom-built body and doors to accommodate his outsize frame. See Wakefield, Sir E., op. cit., p. 160.
4. With the State sunk deep in debt, the Mir spent tens of thousands of pounds on jewelry in Delhi and Karachi. A British Finance Minister habitually followed the Mir, one shop behind, cancelling the orders. Ibid.
Political Officer in the State, some improvement might have been anticipated. The Mir shrewdly accepted this supervision since he saw how it could be evaded and indeed requested that the officer's term of office be extended by another three years in view of his exceptional popularity, and deep sympathy towards our Order'. (1)

In supporting the Mir's request, Irwin found the Ruler 'full of assurances of good intentions to me'. The Mir had been

'rather in disgrace for a time as a result of his maladministration, but the reports of his doings are more satisfactory now and he seems to have a good Council'. (2)

But, as was so often the case, 'princes' assurances could not be relied upon. When Wakefield spied the Mir at the Quetta races in 1934, he had just returned from a lavish pilgrimage, the expense of which had plunged the State even deeper into debt. As was normal, the Political Department sought to shield the Mir from publicity. Barton merely noted in his publication that Ali Nawaz Khan

'has had some difficulty in administering his State and has of late years employed British officers to assist him'. (4)

With the death of the Mir in 1935, a fresh set of problems presented themselves in Khairpur since the mind of the twenty-two year-old heir was not so deranged as to justify his formal exclusion from the succession yet he was manifestly incapable of exercising ruling powers'. (5)

The administration of the State was vested in a minister responsible to the Resident and the Mir with his family was removed to a private house outside the Capital. The delicacy of the situation, and the adverse publicity which it might invoke, came to exercise the minds of both Viceroy and Secretary of State. In 1938, after some careful thought, Zetland approved the suggestion that since the Mir had now been reported by a Medical Board to be incurably insane, the considerations in favour of his

1. Khairpur to Irwin, 14th November, 1927, fo. 1, p. 229.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 24th November, 1927, ibid., p. 228.
deposition should be weighed. It appeared that insanity in itself might not prove grounds for deposition:

'I can quite see that it might be embarrassing to have to justify such drastic action as deposition when the Mir exercises no authority and is therefore politically harmless: I fancy when in 1900 and 1902 respectively the Maharajas of Bharatpur and Fanna were deposed as insane, each had been found to be concerned in some criminal act. On the other hand, the maintenance in the titular position of Ruler of an insane person, who might conceivably break out and do himself and others a mischief, strikes me as an anomalous proceeding and one that might cause us worse embarrassment in the future'. (1)

Linlithgow, having consulted the local Resident on the Khairpur case, felt that there was little need to alter the status quo: 'the position is causing us no immediate anxiety'. The proposal mooted, the abdication of the Mir in favour of his infant son, had to reckon with the possibility that the boy had inherited his father's disability, a condition which might not become apparent until adolescence. Not till 20th July, 1947 was the Mir officially declared insane by the Crown Representative; he was succeeded by his minor son, who had been educated in Europe. The Khairpur case is a further demonstration of the remarkable limits of tolerance extended by the Government of India to Rulers unfitted to rule.

The Kashmir Case.

In view of its previous bleak record for maladministration, the State of Kashmir might have been expected to be the scene of frequent British intervention in the twentieth century. The origins of the ruling Hindu regime were, to say the least, curious:

'the Kashmir valley with its Muslim inhabitants had been handed over to the Raja of Jammu for a cash payment after the first Sikh War'. (4)

The Politicians who served in Kashmir were unanimous about its scenic splendour:

'as far as natural surroundings go, Kashmir is in truth the nearest thing to paradise on earth'.

Its Muslim inhabitants, for the most part, had little time to reflect on the Garden of Breesa or the exquisite Dal Lake, being the victims of centuries of oppression. It was not unknown for taxes to be extracted by thumbscrews.

On occasions, the visitations to Kashmir were natural, the cholera epidemic of 1890, the great floods of 1893. But as Lawrence recalled, the great famine of 1871 left its mark on

'the minds of the people, for they are clever enough to know that with good administration a real famine should be impossible'.

In the 1871 famine perhaps three-fifths of the people died: the heavy mortality was mainly due to the revenue system of the governing Pandits which left no reserve of grain with the peasantry. A temporary intervention by the Government of India was followed in Lansdowne's time by the restoration of powers of administration to the young Maharaja, a step 'well meant, but it is proving most unfortunate to the always misguided people'. The Government of India was required to send in perhaps its most able Political Officer, Sir David Barr:

'if he is as industrious as he is strong, Kashmir, may, on the present system, he extricated from the slough in which its politics have always lain'.

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3. Lawrence, Sir W., op. cit., p. 154.
5. The Times, 23rd January, 1893.
6. Ibid. O'Dwyer took Barr, together with Sir Charles Bayley, as the most distinguished Political Officers of their generation. See O'Dwyer, Sir W., op. cit., p. 137.
With an improvement in administration, Maharaja Sir Partap Singh was given some administrative responsibilities in 1905 though financial control remained in the hands of the Resident. Very much under the influence of his Pandit ministers, the Maharaja did not cut an impressive figure in the eyes of visiting Europeans. Two Scottish ladies, having been introduced at a State banquet in 1904, recorded of Sir Partap:

"he was about four feet nothing, half swallowed up in an enormous white turban, had roving eyes and was said to be under the influence of opium after 2 p.m." (1)

Fitze, who took up a Political appointment in Kashmir in 1915, noticed that the Kashmir Government had a strong compliment of Europeans. He found the Maharaja difficult to place:

"after a somewhat chequered career, in the course of which his ruling powers had been subjected to considerable limitations, his four main and curiously assorted obsessions were religion, opium, cricket, and staunch devotion to the King Emperor". (2)

The spectre of famine returned in 1921 with the failure of the rice crop. The State now paid the penalty for isolationist policies which had left the capital, Srinagar, separated from the railway by 200 miles of difficult road. Reading was in no doubt that the 'lamentable' condition of the Kashmiris was due to

"the machinations of grain-dealers and money-lenders, who exploit the Zamindar and also the consumers, and there seems to be be no compunction in extracting the utmost farthing'.

In their attempts to alleviate the hardship, the Resident and the British officials met with

"all sorts of intrigue .... bribery and corruption which make it very difficult to ensure that a law will be obeyed". (4)

2. Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 45. The Maharaja's prolific run rate as a batsman was not due to an aptitude for cricket; 'his arrival at the wicket was invariably the signal for an orgy of buffoonery. Bowlers sent down the most tempting of long hops and umpires were alert to call 'no balls' in the event of any careless delivery appearing likely to hit the stumps'. Ibid., p. 46. Lothian guessed that the Maharaja was privately conscious of the farce but felt that it generated enjoyment all round. See Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., p. 76.
4. Reading to Montagu, 8th October, 1921, R.P., 3, p. 149.
Tyndale Biscoe was convinced that behind the obvious profiteers were 'certain high officials of the State'. Reading, who was on the spot and had to contend with all sorts of 'eyewash', undertook to convince the Maharaja,

'that he must act consistently and persistently in order to check a condition of things which, according to all reports to me, may very easily culminate in very serious trouble'. (3)

On Reading's suggestion, the Maharaja agreed to appoint a 'Board of Control' with very full powers to include Sir Bertrand Glancy of the Political Department.

It did not help to ensure stability in Kashmir that the Maharaja suspected the existence of a plot to depose him in favour of his nephew, Sir Hari Singh, and was ultimately induced by interested Pandit ministers to adopt the son of the Raja of Pooh, a feudatory of Kashmir. This move was blocked by the Government of India and Hari Singh succeeded to the gadi in 1925. Reading was concerned that the inauguration should go off well, even to the extent of watering down the terms of the proclamation which Hari Singh considered to be derogatory to his position.

These diplomatic concessions were in no small measure due to Hari Singh's misfortunes in London as 'Mr. A', the blackmail victim, in the notorious 'Midland Bank Case'. Despite much European sympathy, inside and outside Kashmir, Hari Singh had shunned society altogether on his return from Europe.

1. Tyndale Biscoe, Canon, op. cit., p. 175.
2. Tyndale Biscoe had witnessed many of these shows including an elaborate deception arranged for Chelmsford when scores of barges full of grain were lined up all along his route through the City. Ibid., p. 177.
3. Reading to Montagu, 18th October, 1921, ibid., 3, p. 149.
4. Reading to Montagu, 25th October, 1921, ibid., p. 152.
6. Reading to Birkenhead, 5th October, 1925, ibid., 19, Telegram No. 231.
7. This causecelebre is discussed in chapter 2, pp. 243-7.
8. Lothian, Sir A., op. cit., p. 73.
Irwin, early on, formed a favourable impression of Hari Singh when visiting Kashmir: 'a good host and we move in the utmost comfort'. Irwin felt that the new Maharaja might have progressive tendencies.

Birkenhead, characteristically more wary of the Princes, noticed that Kashmir had not hit it off with his Resident. Nor was the Secretary of State enamoured of the Maharaja's peremptory dismissal of a European in Kashmir's service, Colonel Ward: 'I don't like the idea of throwing a British subject to the dogs'. Irwin, called upon to review the Maharaja's character, elicited a mixed response from Howell, the Resident who found Hari Singh both alert and receptive,

'but he can hardly be called a good administrator...... on the whole, though surrounded by every sort of temptation to indolence and vice, he in general lives simply and works hard if somewhat intermittently'.

Howell's major reservation held that Hari Singh was obsessed by a passion for divesting himself of Residency control.

The Maharaja's determination to assert a form of independence, was well illustrated in the intransigence with which he refused to reinstate Colonel Ward. The Viceroy surmised that had Ward approached Hari Singh directly, something might have been done; now any concession would be seen as a result of Government pressure. A distorted version of the case was sent direct to the Secretary of State by the Maharaja; a document assessed by Peel as 'a typically disingenuous letter'. Then Peel raised the matter with Hari Singh at a London luncheon party, the Maharaja claimed that he had no knowledge of the subject. When the

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 3rd April, 1927, H.R., 3, p. 53; see too Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th May, 1927, ibid., p. 81.
2. Birkenhead to Irwin, 19th January, 1927, H.R., 4, p. 9. There were grounds for Hari Singh's dislike of Colonel Ward, a cattle and sheep breeding expert, and close friends of the late Maharaja. Ward had been 'largely responsible' for introducing Hari Singh to the villainous A.D.V.C. who had engineered his blackmail in Europe. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 21st March, 1929, ibid., p. 501.
3. Ibid.
4. Irwin to Peel, 21st February, 1929, H.R., 5, pp. 40, 1.
6. Peel to Irwin, 17th April, 1929, ibid., p. 81.
7. Peel to Irwin, 14th March, 1929, ibid., pp. 59, 60.
Secretary of State reopened the matter in November 1929 and 'remonstrated gently' with the Maharaja, he met with the same unhelpful response and Peel was left to conclude that things looked black for Colonel Ward.

It was unfortunate for Ward that Birkenhead was no more. He would almost certainly have fought Ward's case, sensing the bully in Hari Singh whatever his manner at the Chamber of Princes or in Viceregal Lodge. Birkenhead had delayed the award of a G.C.I.E. to Kashmir, trading upon a dramatic instance of Hari Singh's disrespect for the Residency, namely his demolition of the Residency flagstaff.

It would have been surprising, given the hypersensitive character of Hari Singh and his aversion to advice from the Residency, if the State had survived without internal disorders. A wave of disaffection swept Kashmir in 1931. Barton thought a number of influences were at work. In addition to a vague reference to Bolshevism, he instance more realistically the unpopularity of the Hindu Pandit administration in itself connected with Hindu-Muslim tension in Kashmir. In the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, Hari Singh found a useful supporter. When trouble broke out in the State, Willingdon wrote reassuringly to the Secretary of State:

'I assure you that you needn't worry about what Bhopal and Bikaner tell you over Kashmir. I know Hari Singh the Maharaja very well. He is a great friend of mine. We are doing nothing to impair his authority in any way, for I have every sympathy with him in his troubles'. (3)

Having misread the situation in a way which so characterised his Viceroyalty, Willingdon had swiftly to recognise the serious nature of the disturbances which had occasioned much destruction, and arrange for an investigatory Commission. In this, Willingdon found his 'great friend' to be markedly unhelpful:

1. Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th April, 1928, ibid., 4, pp. 54, 5. Irwin's somewhat lame response doubted whether Hari Singh 'fully realised the enormity of what he was doing'. Irwin to Birkenhead, 21st May, 1928, ibid., p. 114.
'the Maharaja is very slow in his action with regard to the appointment of the Commission with Clancy as its Chairman to enquire into Muhammadan grievances'. (1)

Willingdon attempted to deflect attention from the Maharaja by depicting the Brahmin Prime Minister, Hari Kishan Paul, as 'the villain of the piece', and the central figure obstructing British efforts to work with the Maharaja. Legislation was passed in consultation with the Government of the Punjab to stop Punjabi Moslems moving into Kashmir to support their co-religionists: in Willingdon's phrase, 'to prevent our people invading a friendly State'. It seems clear that the day was saved for Hari Singh by the 'steadying effect' of the presence of British troops in the State which the Maharaja had requested. One week later, Willingdon reported that 'things had settled down' under the direction of the two European-chaired Commissions set up. This optimistic impression was tempered by doubts about the stability of the Muhammadan community, which had kept up agitation against the Maharaja. Rather than attribute the continuing unrest to genuine internal grievances, Willingdon chose to interpret it as a means of influencing the current Round Table Conference in London.

With the eruption of more disorder in Kashmir inside three months, Willingdon was forced to revise his impression of the Maharaja:

'Alas the situation in Kashmir had boiled over again and we have again to send troops to help the Maharaja. We are doing as little as we can, but I very much fear that, before he can settle matters, it will mean a considerable extension of our authority.'

Willingdon had found that it was very difficult 'to make the Maharaja see reason'. He had been delighted when British troops brought peace and quiet; he then complained of their presence; once removed his troubles recommenced and the troops returned. The Viceroy ruefully concluded:

'you may be sure that I shall do everything I can to try and pull him through his present difficulties; but I honestly think that we shall have to put strong pressure, if not to insist, on his altering the personnel of his Ministry'. (5)

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 9th November, 1931, ibid., p. 25.
4. Willingdon to Hoare, 22nd November, 1931, ibid., p. 34.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 1st February, 1932, ibid., p. 68.
The troubles died down with the Report of the Commission which remedied minor grievances and pledged itself to give Moslems a reasonable share in administrative posts.

Under the insensitive regime of Hari Singh, the prospect of communal disturbances was ever present. At an early stage in his Viceroyalty, Linlithgow took the opportunity to visit Kashmir where he found the Ruler 'in good form and heart ...... Her excellency bagged a good panther'.

Behind the shikar and show, Linlithgow sensed the presence of communal tension. He felt far from easy about the proposed appointment of a Madras Hindu, Gopalaswami Iyyanger, as the Maharaja's Prime Minister:

'We know to our cost that no one but a European appears to command complete confidence where a tense communal situation exists and if things take a turn for the worse, we may, I fear, have to advise the Maharaja to accept a European Prime Minister'. (3)

Zetland concurred, knowing Iyyanger's reputation for orthodoxy. While immediate fears about the stability of the State were still by a show of 'firmness and effectiveness' from Iyyanger, with the emergence of Congress-inspired agitation in 1938 in the States, Kashmir not surprisingly figured prominently. In common with most States, the Kashmir Durbar had instituted punitive legislation against political association. In September, 1938, Linlithgow was disturbed to note the formation of a 'national' party aimed at combining Hindu and Moslem, a development which had given rise to 'fairly widespread disturbances'. This, of course, was a more difficult form of disorder to explain than the communal variety. Linlithgow hopefully surmised that the union would be short-lived and noted with satisfaction that a number of arrests had been made, including that of 'the chief organisers of trouble in the State for the last seven years', Sheik Abdullah.

As may be noted from Tyndale Biscoe's memoirs, the record of the Kashmir Durbar had been far from impressive, yet British intervention was minimal and more or less confined to those occasions when it looked as though the Maharaja would be overthrown. Notoriously punitive punishment was exacted for cow-killing by a Hindu dynasty in a State overwhelmingly Muslim in population. As Tyndale Biscoe and his flock discovered, self-help was the only recourse against State tyranny. Without the British guarantee, physically manifest on occasion through the presence of British troops, the State was likely to lapse into at best chaos: a conclusion underlined by the events of 1947.

1. Tyndale Biscoe visited a Kashmir prison containing 117 inmates, 97 of whom were Muslims being punished for killing cows. A sentence of 21 years was later modified to 7. See Tyndale Biscoe, Canon, op. cit., p. 188.
Grounds for Intervention: moral and humanitarian considerations
Depravity: the Patiala Case.

The survival of Alwar till 1933 seemed to indicate that a career of unbridled depravity in itself would not attract the intervention of the Government of India. But should such considerations have weighed with the Political Department then, apart from Alwar, the outstanding candidate for scrutiny was the Maharaja of Patiala. However, a number of circumstances conspired to keep Patiala on the gadi. In making a notable contribution to the war effort, the Patiala Contingent had served in Egypt, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia; Patiala's energetic participation in the Chamber of Princes had resulted in his Chancellorship in 1926; British approval seemed implicit in his selection as India's representative at international conferences and his breastful of medals; his generous sporting patronage was widely recognised in connection with cricket and polo; there were his close connections established with Lord Salisbury and an influential diehard Conservative group in the 'thirties. Indisputably, Patiala looked the part of a Prince. Barton published an impressive description:

'a splendid figure, with a striking and forceful personality, delightful host and a great conversationalist, with a sense of humour'.

These apparent accomplishments could not change the fact that Patiala was descended from bad stock. In the troubled times of the first Lord Minto, Patiala and his Rani were something of a laughing stock having maintained for years, a squabble 'of lyric intensity'. Holkar observed

1. These were respectively, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., L.L.D., A.D.C.
2. Patiala's crook polo team, the 'Patiala Tigers' were the talk of India for a time. See Corfield, Sir C., op. cit., p. 73.
of them: 'God has assuredly sent us these two chicks to pluck'. (1)

Following the Mutiny, there were frequent interventions in Patiala to prevent gross miscarriages of justice. Most certainly the bad blood came out in His Highness Sir Bhupinder Singh who assumed the gadi in 1909. For some time rumours of misgovernment and carnal practices circulated, fostered, Barton believed, by a venal press. (2) Discontent surfaced with a series of petitions to the Government of India, one of which in the summer of 1929, had attracted the notice of the Secretary of State. Irwin explained that these were not taken seriously by the Government of India 'which had not acted on any of these memorials'.

However, in 1930, an event took place which forced the Delhi administration to interest itself in the affairs of Patiala. This was the publication in Delhi of a book entitled *Indictment of Patiala*, copies of which were sent to M.P.s. It contained what purported to be the results of an unofficial enquiry, held by five British Indian politicians, into grievances of Patiala State subjects against the Maharaja and his administration. The book contained a number of serious allegations made by witnesses examined by the Committee, it concluded that there was a prima facie case against the Maharaja which must be investigated by the Government of India. (3) The 'Indictment' made alarming reading for Irwin: the twelve individual counts numbered variously, instigation to murder, establishment of a bomb factory, torture, forced labour, abduction,

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2. In Patiala in 1926, after the death of the Prince, it was found that there were substantial numbers languishing in jail without trial having been charged with the most trivial offences. See Arora, A. C., *op. cit.*, p. 301.
4. Irwin to Benn, 2nd April, 1930, H.R.P., 11, Telegram No. 113.
5. The best known of these was the Chairman, G. Y. Chintamani who later, for reasons which are difficult to establish, got cold feet and disassociated himself from the book.
illegal arrests, confinements and confiscations, misappropriation of funds raised for public purposes. Irwin viewed this weighty fusillade as 'at first sight very damaging to the Maharaja'; but he was inclined to dismiss the book as the outcome of intensive propaganda financed by the enemies of Patiali.

In a personal interview with Patiali, Irwin's first advice was to prosecute under the Princes Protection Act. But bearing in mind the publicity which would be in the interests of the accused, Irwin settled for an in camera enquiry by Fitzpatrick, A.C.G. for the Punjab States, which would 'avoid the scandal of publicity that Patiali's enemies principally desire'. This form of enquiry would avoid the subjection of the Maharaja to the

'scandal of open crossexamination .... and does not prejudice the Maharaja by assuming his guilt as might be the public result of appointing a special officer or commission'.

The Labour Secretary of State, Benn, backed up Irwin in his moves to protect Patiali. Anticipating, correctly, that Fitzpatrick would find the charges not sustained, Benn felt that the Government of India should protect Princes' honour by officially proscribing the book, without asking Patiali to prosecute. Naturally, the device of a secret enquiry and the appointment of a Political, Fitzpatrick, to chair it, drew strong protest. Benn had to deal with much critical correspondence from leading Indian liberals and others:

'I have replied that it would not be in accordance with precedent to offer a Commission of Enquiry or other enquiry of a judicial character merely on allegations of maladministration made by third parties'.

Fitzpatrick's Report lived up to the expectations of the Viceroy.

The 'Indictment' had been produced by bodies

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1. See Irwin to Benn, 2nd April, 1930, H.M.P., 11, Telegram No. 320.
2. Irwin to Benn, 2nd April, 1930, ibid., Telegram No. 113.
3. ibid.
4. Benn to Irwin, 10th April, 1930, ibid., Telegram No. 148.
5. Benn to Irwin, 24th June, 1930, ibid., Telegram No. 256.
'supported financially by the ex-Maharaja of Nabha with the object of accomplishing Patiala's downfall and disgrace, a further motive being His Highnesses' loyalty and his refusal to show sympathy for Akali agitations and disloyal activities both in British India and Patiala State'.

With respect to the individual counts, the allegations generally were not bourne out. In the case of abductions, Fitzpatrick did permit himself a slight hesitation:

'whatever view may be taken of morality, no criminality may be attached to the Maharaja'.

Nor could the Report be considered comprehensive in the sense that the authors of the 'Indictment' together with their witnesses had refused to appear before Fitzpatrick. Nevertheless, as a result of the Report:

'the Government of India have satisfied themselves that the charges made against His Highness the Maharaja in the publication Indictment of Patiala are unproved, and were the outcome of a conspiracy between certain individuals and public bodies with the object of vilifying His Highness and disgracing him in the eyes of his subjects and the Government of India'. (1)

The affair was still not defused. Irwin declined to prosecute the authors of the publication in case an appeal was made to the High Court which might in turn demand the production of the Fitzpatrick Report, thus nullifying its in camera status and opening the door to public mudslinging. Neither at this nor any other time did Patiala take steps to confront his accusers. Given his scandalous reputation as 'a womaniser with one of the most rapacious sexual appetites ever satisfied', (3)

there was widespread dissatisfaction with the protective stance taken up by the Government of India. Few impartial observers could take the comfortable view of an American lady, later to exploit the commercial possibilities attached to Princes' hospitality:

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 28th July, 1930, Ex.P., II, Telegram No. 320.
2. Ibid.
3. Lord, J., op. cit., p. 164. Lord discusses in some detail the considerable number of supporting agencies deployed in Patiala palaces to fuel the Maharaja's erotic obsessions: any woman in the State or neighbouring territories was at risk. The indulgences of Princes in erotic enterprises are revealed in Chudgar, P. L., op. cit., pp. 18, 22; Gauba, N., op. cit., pp. 192-190.
4. Miss Rosita Forbes who became closely associated with the semi-fraudulent 'Orientourist' organisation in 1937. See correspondence pertaining to 'Orientourist', Cr.R., 8/1/29/1644.
'the villagers might grumble. Their emotions might momentarily be aroused by the insecurity of their daughters who, if sufficiently beautiful, might be forcibly taken to the royal zenana. But compensation flowed into the pockets of the bereaved'. (1)

Within the Political Department itself, the outspoken and indiscreet Resident in Hyderabad was fully alive to the damaging implications of the Fitzpatrick Enquiry and Patiala's escape. He wrote accordingly to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy:

'you would hardly credit the keeness of the interest taken in the Patiala case. Madras ladies in Cooty, Muhammadan ladies in Bombay, all classes here and in Western Indian States are indignant at the way in which he is being whitewashed. A hundred coats won't stick on him; and confidence in the Viceroy, as standing for something which all parties respect, has been shaken'. (2)

Patiala's light was not unduly diminished. He remained active in Chamber circles and as a focus for British diehard attentions during the framing of the India Bill. But his spermatogenic obsessions had long since robbed him of any will to preserve financial stability in his state. By April 1935, it was clear that Patiala was approaching bankruptcy. For all that, Patiala continued to thrust himself forward as the representative Prince, certainly of the Phulian States. Linlithgow, much sharper in these things than Willingdon, had 'little doubt that Patiala's sole motive is to manoeuvre himself into the lime-light again'. (3)

To the last, Patiala promoted himself as the loyal Prince par excellence. In 1937, he announced his intention to move in the Chamber resolution expressing the readiness of the Princes to give all possible assistance in event of war. Linlithgow, shrewdly wishing to be under no obligation, 'thought it best to head him off politely'. (4)

1. Forbes, R., op. cit., p. 52.
2. Keyes to Cunningham, 5th August, 1930, First, 28.
3. See chapter 5 passim.
Patiala's disreputable career was crowned, in the year of his demise, by the issue of a manifesto from his Dubbar purporting to favour administrative and constitutional reform within the State. As with the Maharaja, the manifesto was not what it seemed and Linlithgow dismissed it as 'a carefully guarded document' containing 'very little, if any, substance'. On his death, in March, 1938, Sir Bhupinder Singh left the fortunes of Patiala at a very low ebb. Linlithgow recorded of an interview with Patiala's heir: 'he fully realises, poor man, the financial difficulties of the State'. Though the new Maharaja would have preferred a free hand, the Viceroy impressed upon him that the budget must continue to be submitted to the Resident. Linlithgow thought young Patiala to be 'optimistic' in supposing that he could remedy the sorry state of affairs which he had inherited, in five years. The vast progeny of Bhupinder Singh was never exactly calculated. It later had its uses when, during the elections of 1977, the Congress nominee in Patiala, a descendant of Bhupinder Singh, campaigned as a 'people's' Maharaja and effectively pressed into service enormous numbers of 'uncles'.

1. Linlithgow to Zetland, 4th February, 1938, L.R., 15, p. 69.
2. According to that enthusiastic observer, Miss Forbes, the death of the Maharaja was a notable occasion: 'some hundreds of women, crazed with grief, hurled themselves into his apartments, rent their clothes, tore off their jewels, beat their heads against floors and walls and gave every appearance of an anguish which they probably felt. See Forbes, M., op. cit., p. 52.
3. Linlithgow to Zetland, 19th May, 1938, L.R., 15, p. 372.
Opium and the Indian States

The suppression of the opium trade was a matter thrust upon the Government of India through the deliberations of League of Nations administrators at Geneva in the early 'twenties. A suppression policy had far reaching implications for the Rajputana and Central Indian States. Traditionally, opium had been known as 'the stirrup cup' of the Rajput; in the later nineteenth century both Scindia and Holkar had profited from the boom in opium. The Government of India also stood to gain: upwards of Rs. 2,000,000 per annum was collected at Indore for the Imperial Government in the shape of export or transit dues on the drug. In Fitze's time, opium still figured prominently among the Central Government's sources of revenue, the most sought-after variety being that grown in the Malwa principalities. It did not entirely please Fitze and his fellows that 'international busybodies' came to exert irresistible pressure on the Government of India to suppress its opium trade.

The bleak news pertaining to opium, especially disagreeable to the Central Indian Princes for whom the trade was an important contribution to economic stability, was broken to the Chamber of Princes by Chelmsford. Moves were made to scale down consumption. But Reading, towards the end of his term, strongly opposed external pressure to enforce prohibition:

'I realise the embarrassment that may be caused to His Majesty's Government if American views have to be met with abrupt refusal; but the question of opium is of first importance in India .... if I search for a parallel, the case that occurs to me is the feeling which would be produced among working classes in England by the sudden order of prohibition of use of beer'.

Reading was impressed above all by the probable repercussions in the States:

1. Daly, Major H., op. cit., p. 303.
2. Ibid., p. 323.
4. Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 132. Fitze held the view, as did Sir Michael O'Flyer, that the Indian habit of taking opium in pill form was not only harmless but on occasion beneficial.
'some States already complain that adherence to our opium policy had involved them in loss of revenue and unpopularity among their subjects. Further attempts to reduce consumption with a view to stop non-medicinal use would be strongly opposed. It would be practically impossible to secure agreement; and if we insisted on enforcing our policy on the States we should be accused of the infringement of rights of internal sovereignty'.

Reading's clinching point was that given the number of States involved and the extent of their frontiers, prohibition could not be implemented in practice.

However, pressure directed towards suppression built up at the Geneva Conferences of 1924 and 1925: Sir Robert Cecil was required to exercise 'great discretion' on behalf of the Government of India. Irwin, inheriting an awkward problem at once put the Princes fully in possession of the facts relating to opium in his speech to the Chamber in 1926. He argued that the Geneva Conventions could be applicable to the States. At Geneva it had been agreed that within five years steps were to be taken to prevent the illicit traffic in raw opium. A Commission of the League was due to visit the producing countries at the end of that time to decide whether the obligation had been fulfilled. The two features causing the Government of India most concern in certain States were the very high rate of consumption and the enormous stocks of old opium held. Irwin referred to the existence of 'extensive smuggling' from Central India and Rajputana and the need for 'radical improvement' before the visit of League Commissioners.

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 5th January, 1925, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 2.
2. Reading to Birkenhead, 15th May, 1925, ibid., Telegram No. 47.
3. Irwin amplified this position at the 1927 Opium Conference when he reasoned that since Bikaner had signed the Versailles Treaty by which the League of Nations was brought into being, this automatically involved ratification of the Hague Opium Convention and thereby India and not merely British India became a party to the Convention. See Halifax, Lord, op. cit., pp. 123-5.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Ibid. Irwin calculated that in Central India the consumption of opium was eight times and in Rajputana sixteen times the standard rate laid down by the League.
Birkenhead welcomed the provisional decision made by the Delhi administration to announce a terminal date for opium exports:

'it was sure to make a great impression internationally ...... but I am afraid that effect will be diminished considerably if the period of extinction is as long as 15 years'. (1)

Birkenhead argued for a period of ten years and his advice was followed. It was announced at the Opium Conference of May 1930 that the last Indian exports would take place in 1935. In his reflections on the problem, Irwin came to much the same conclusion as had Reading:

'We are simply faced with the fact that certain communities or races, e.g. the Sikh and the Rajput, are especially addicted to the use of the drug .... some of the States hold enormous stocks of opium at present and without a measure of voluntary self-sacrifice on their part it is difficult to see how to get rid of this leaky reservoir'.

The Viceroy proposed that the way forward lay in persuading the Princes to close down their cultivation and sell opium from British India at British Indian prices. Birkenhead agreed and fully endorsed Irwin's circular to the Princes concerned. The Secretary of State acknowledged that where States held stocks of opium sufficient for the legitimate needs of thirty years,

'it is evident that, if production goes on uncontrolled, the situation will soon become highly dangerous'. (4)

Ultimately, something of a compromise was worked out. As Irwin revealed in his 1929 Chamber speech, enough was done to ensure that the Opium Special Commission found evidence of progress on its tour. In thanking the Durbar concerned for their readiness to cooperate, Irwin gave an undertaking that

'the minimum degree of financial loss shall be occasioned to the States concerned'. (5)

Fitze rejoiced that in his later days of service in Central India,

'the beauty of a field of flowering poppies was not altogether a rarity in the Malwa scene'.

The Government of India set up an opium factory allotting to the States concerned a share in the provision of raw material. Yet, as Fitze himself concluded, the opium question had displayed all too clearly the basically insoluble problems and frictions arising from the coexistence of British India and Indian India.

Slavery in the Indian States.

While enforcement of the international Opium Convention in relation to the States had raised difficulties for the Paramount Power, a second Geneva Convention, that on slavery, proved to be more problematic and certainly more embarrassing. As calculated in the Census Report of 1921, there were in Rajputana and Central India alone, 160,735 slaves:

'these communities, Hindu and Moslem alike, wives and children, were owned body and soul by the Princes'. (2)

Closely associated with slavery was the system of begar, unpaid and forced labour, which was 'prevalent in all the Indian States in some form'. The position of the Political Department vis a vis slavery and begar was far from clear. A speech by the A.G.G., Rajputana, delivered in Kotah in 1923, attracted a good deal of attention:

'bega in itself is not a curse or a form of slavery. It is not an institution that reduces people to the level of serfs. It is on the contrary an evidence that the right kind of relations exist between the Prince and his nobles and their royats (subjects). It is a service of affection rendered with spontaneity and willingness and received with kindness and benevolence ....... I for one should be very sorry if it were completely abolished even in British India and I hope that it will long survive in the States'. (4)

4. Ibid., pp. 78, 9.
This pronouncement was cited with effect in the Legislative Assembly debates of 1934, preliminary to the passing of the Princes Protection Act, as 'a clear incitement for the continuance of serfdom in the Indian States'.

As with the case of opium, activities at Geneva brought slavery within the sphere of international consideration. Comprehensive questionnaires were issued by the International Labour Office to elicit views on the regulation of forced labour with a view to its ultimate abolition. A temporary Slavery Commission of the League recommended that an International Slavery Convention was desirable. This was adopted by the Seventh Assembly of the League in 1926 and ratified by India:

'the High Contracting Parties recognise that recourse to compulsion, or forced labour may have grave consequences and undertake, each in respect of the territories placed under its sovereignty, jurisdiction, protection, suzerainty or tutelage, to take all necessary measures to prevent forced labour from developing into conditions analogous to slavery'. (2)

The Convention drew a circuitous statement from a British Delegate:

'the Government of India were satisfied that slavery in the ordinary sense did not exist in the Indian States, but were prepared to urge the Rulers of the States to institute reforms where necessary'. (3)

Some years later Willingdon recalled the scene and the extreme discomfiture of the participating Indian Princes:

'I remember very well having Patiala as my ally when I led the Indian Delegation at Geneva in 1926, and he and I sat on the Commission that had to do with international slavery. He was then, I own, like a cat on hot bricks, but fortunately we couldn't finish our discussions, so nothing serious eventuated'. (4)

Patiala's statement to the Chamber of Princes on his return argued for the exclusion of the Indian States from the Convention:

'quite apart from the question as to whether or not institutions akin to forced labour and predial servitude exist in certain of the remoter areas under the jurisdiction of Your Highnesses, it would have been quite impossible considering the relations between the Indian States and the Government of British India for the latter authority to take upon themselves the responsibility for enforcing the provisions of the Convention upon Indian States territories over whose domestic concerns they have no control'.

1. See the speech by Gaya Prasad Singh, 5th February, 1934, Legislative Assembly Debates, [Vol.], B/1/29/1355.
3. Cited in Chudgar, P. J., op. cit., p. 35.
Irwin was inclined to acquiesce. He acknowledged that conditions approximating to those described in Article I of the Convention did exist in the States but supposed them to be disappearing. It was more politic to let them 'die a natural death' rather than 'make a serious divergence from our policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Indian States'.

Irwin took a more positive line at the 1929 Chamber of Princes' session in warning the Rulers against the accommodation of capitalists keen to evade British Indian factory regulations by establishing their mills in the States.

The more backward Princes could take comfort from the fact that the States had slipped through the net of the Slavery Convention. The Chamber publicists boldly broadcast the eradication of slavery and begar, an unlikely claim which inspired a spirited correspondence in The Spectator in the summer of 1931. A further Forced Labour Convention of 1929 was ratified by the Indian Legislative Assembly with some modifications; it could not be made binding on the Indian States.

This exclusion annoyed a number of Assemblyman, notably B. Das who had served on the Geneva Forced Labour Committee and who declared on the floor of the Assembly that 'forced labour is the usual thing in the Indian States'.

One of the more ironic aspects of the slavery issue concerned the proposal made by an energetic committee in Britain to bring a William Wilberforce Memorial Appeal to the notice of the Indian Princes. After

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12th April, 1926, Hx.P., 7, Telegram No. 9.
2. Halifax, Lord, on. cit., pp. 162, 3. This had been a clearly observable trend and Halifax noted the absence of control over length of shift and provision of accommodation once the factories were cited in States' territory.
3. The principal protagonists were Edward Thompson and Rushbrook Williams. Sastri's reaction was representative of the general incredulity with which the 'eradication of slavery' claim was received. See Sastri to Thompson, 19th June, 1931, T.P.
4. Das had heard a South African representative state that the maximum forced labour taken from the adult population in Africa was 40 days; it was exacted from those unable to pay tax. Das recalled the plight of tax-paying Indian States' subjects beating for endless shikar. Elephant kheadds usually took place when harvests were in full swing. See speech of B. Das in Legislative Assembly Debates, 8th September, 1933, C.R.R., R/1/29/1355.
some hesitation Hoare acquiesced, the appeal had influential support, though he acknowledged that

'the case is one of some delicacy. You will remember that the States had to be excluded from the application of the Geneva Slavery Convention'. (1)

Willingdon damned the suggestion:

'I don't think that you or I should have anything to do with the business. After all the Princes know little about Wilberforce and they will feel bound to give if you and I both urge this on them, which I don't think quite fair'. (2)

Wilberforce appeals apart, the exclusion of the States from the Slavery Convention worried Hoare with the Princes increasingly being discussed as central figures in the evolving structure of Indian constitutional reform:

'in the eyes of the reformers we appear to be refusing to tackle the States ourselves and refusing to let other people tackle them. Inevitably they get suspicious as to the amount of slavery or conditions akin to slavery actually existing in the States. The position is embarrassing for us and likely to become more so'.

Hoare suggested that one or two of the more respectable States be prompted to initiate a desire to be brought under the Convention.

Willingdon expressed a formal acceptance of this proposal but he did nothing about it.

Opinion at Geneva and in Britain itself persisted in pursuing the States' exclusion from the Slavery Convention. Hoare's successor at the India Office was sufficiently impressed by the weight of criticism to draft an unusually stiff letter to Willingdon:

'it seems to me that our attitude and record in this matter will be increasingly difficult to defend. Indeed apart from the circular sent to Political Agencies in 1927, I do not know that we have done anything to bring home to Rulers the necessity of setting their house in order in this respect and of speedily eliminating conditions of human servitude which civilised public opinion properly condemns. I am not blind to the constitutional and other difficulties, but we have to face an active body of criticism at Geneva and here and we cannot entirely disclaim responsibility'.

It particularly concerned Hoare that at a time when conditions in Abyssinia were likely to come under discussion, 'unless we can show a cleaner sheet in India, the hands of British representatives are bound to be tied'. (1)

Despite the pressure from London, reforms in respect of the eradication of slavery did not follow on swiftly in Indian States. By 1935, it seemed that the 'evil' had been dealt with in Hyderabad, but a good deal more remained to be done in Madras and Trissur States.

Unquestionably, the speedy implementation of the eradication of begar ran up against the conservatism of the Political Department. This sensitivity to the positive aspects of forced labour together with a defence of gradualism informed a confidential note to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, drawn up by the Political Secretary in 1939: commenting on the prevalence of begar in the Eastern States and Central Provinces, Clancy argued that begar had been legislated for in the regular settlements conducted by British Indian experts. A similar situation existed in the Punjab Hill States. Clancy conceded that the begar system had been criticised as inhuman but he argued that

'on practical grounds there is much to be said for its continuance to a limited extent'. (3)

It was, however, 'being made to disappear'. The Viceroy himself, of an old Scottish landed family, was not unsympathetic to such conservatism and reluctance to take up the subject of debt bondage:

'knowing as I do the zeal and enthusiasm (too frequently unrelated to practical considerations) with which the Geneva Commissions of the League are disposed to press these matters, I am not in the present circumstances very anxious to bring strong pressure to bear'. (4)

4. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21st February, 1939, L.L., 17, p. 73.
Edgar Snow touring the Indian States in the 'forties still found peasant communities bound body and soul to the Princes. The policy of excluding the Princely States from the Geneva Slavery Conventions stands in contrast to the more cooperative attitude shown on the opium issue. In their failure to tackle the slavery issue in the Indian States head on, Irwin, Willingdon and Linlithgow in turn had opened the door to well-founded criticisms which would suggest that the charge of 'medievalism', attributed by Linlithgow to his Political Department, could with justice be levelled at a succession of Viceroyas.

The exercise of paramountcy disputed territories
The Berars Case

The surprising restraint exercised by the Government of India in respect of the Slavery Convention emphasised one face of Paramountcy. But where occasion demanded, the Delhi administration could move with unambiguous intent against the presumption of an Indian State. Perhaps the most celebrated issue which put the doctrine of Paramountcy to the test, was located in the area of disputed territories: the Berars case, which involved the aspirations of India's premier State, Hyderabad.

The origins of this dispute were to be discovered in the condition of hopeless chaos which gripped the Nizam's dominions for the first three decades of the nineteenth century. On British instructions, a large irregular force, the Hyderabad Contingent, had to be raised and financed by the Nizam's near bankrupt administration. Arrears mounted to the extent that the Indian Government insisted on an assignment of territory as security for payment, and the Berars, richest of the Nizam's provinces, were taken over for this purpose in 1853.

This twilight arrangement, which saw the Province nominally administered on behalf of the Nizam by a British Resident, not surprisingly caused considerable friction between the Durbar and the Government of India. Salisbury felt that the British did not stand on firm ground in the matter. He feared for Parliamentary interest in the Berars' case, and earnestly hoped that the Phayre scandal in Baroda

'will push the Berar question out of the way: and that, with the contempt of logic habitual to an English Assembly, they will be so disgusted with the doings of the Gaekwar that they will give nothing to the Nizam'. (2)

In similar vein, Salisbury poured scorn in 1876 on a proposal of Lord Napier and Etrick

'to give back Berars on conditions which shall make us safe from the growing military strength of the Hyderabad State'.

Salisbury remarked caustically that

'Englishmen in dealing with India will not be at the trouble even of so much thought as is required to remember that there is a difference between conveying lands and conveying populations'. (1)

In 1902, Curzon induced the Nizam of the day to lease the Berars in perpetuity on payment of a quit rent of twenty-five lakhs. Only with the utmost reluctance did the Nizam agree; the Hyderabad Contingent (2) was absorbed into the Indian Army.

The reemergence of the Berars Question, an extremely unwelcome development for the British, came in 1920 with the publication of a suggested restoration in The Times. In the interpretation which a Lahore journalist put to Curzon, the article was alleged to have made 'a profound impression' in India where the notion of restoration was 'exceedingly popular'. Commenting on Curzon's 'horror' at the prospect of the subject being reopened, Chelmsford noted of the 1902 settlement:

'a splendid bargain for him and indeed for both parties, and it would be both a novel and deplorable precedent if a solemn Act of State thus accomplished by one Viceroy were, except for overwhelming reasons - to be revoked by another'. (4)

In taking up a similar stance, Reading had to endure the heated protestations of the Hyderabad Prime Minister, whose attitude in advancing the Hyderabad claim was 'distinctly objectionable'. Imam alleged that the late Nizam had granted the concession

'as the victim of coercion and misrepresentation at the hands of Lord Curzon. I gave him the opportunity of withdrawing his inexcusable language, and when he did not take it, I abruptly terminated the interview'. (5)

1. Salisbury to Lytton, 7th April, 1876, ibid.
3. Rajpoot, M. D. to Curzon, 8th April, 1921, R.P., 3, p. 89.
5. Reading to Peel, 4th April, 1922, R.P., 16, Telegram No. 149.
A curious aspect of the Hyderabad claim was the Nizam's proposal to give complete self-government to a restored Berar

'which would be a strange feature of his administration in as much as nothing of the kind is suggested for Hyderabad itself'. (1)

In October, 1923, Reading received a formal request from the Nizam for the reopening of the Berar Question.

The Nizam carried the fight to London by sending the Berars' correspondence to the Secretary of State and most of the Cabinet together with a petition for their support; a newspaper was begun on the Berars issue. The Labour Secretary of State expressed himself to be unimpressed: Olivier put down Sir Ali Imam as 'a wind bag', but found it impossible to block the Hyderabad 'campaign of luncheons and friendly talks .... Curzon is quite agitated about it'. Reinforcement for the Government of India position came with Reading's enquiries made to the Governor of the Central Provinces and his Council. They were unanimous and emphatic in stating that there was no desire in Berars for a return to Hyderabad. This was quite in accordance with what Reading expected in as much as at least 90% of the population of Berars was Hindu and most unlikely to favour transfer to the sovereignty of the Mahomedan. Reading himself was strongly against the restoration of British administrated territory to a Ruling Prince for fear of creating an unfortunate precedent. The news of the opposition of the population of Berar to transfer was welcome to the Secretary of State, currently conducting a difficult correspondence with Sir Ali Imam who urged that the retrocession was a matter for His Majesty's Government. Olivier contented himself with warning Imam off

1. Reading to Peel, 5th April, 1922, R.P., 5, p. 2.
2. Reading to Peel, 3rd October, 1923, R.P., 6, p. 222.
3. Olivier to Reading, 24th July, 1924, R.P., 7, p. 111: see too Olivier to Reading, 14th February, 1924, R.P., 18, Telegram No. 47.
4. Olivier to Reading, 10th April, 1924, R.P., 7, pp. 49, 50.
5. Reading to Olivier, 24th April, 1924, ibid., p. 80.
such energetic canvassing and press campaigning.

With the Mizam pressing for a reply, Reading detailed the Political Secretary to research into the Berars files. By and large this was wasted effort: as the Viceroy stated, the controversy 'centred around the interview of the late Mizam with Curzon.' The investigation was pursued with urgency since Reading was concerned to put at rest the minds of the Berar population. In October, 1924, Reading felt able to pronounce the case complete,

'and our answer is inevitable ...... the only new wing in the whole superstructure which Sir Ali Imam has laboriously built up upon the basis of a claim more than 100 years old is the claim founded upon the alleged duress, coercion, oppression, tyranny, or whatever word you may choose to employ, of Curzon in his interview with the present Mizam's father. A close examination of records has not only failed to disclose sufficient evidence to justify these allegations, but has convinced me that there is no ground whatever for them'. (4)

With Birkenhead at the India Office, a hard line on the Berars case could be anticipated: he instanced the uncompromising despatches of Salisbury from 1875 to 1878 as 'the only really secure foothold for our relations with the States'. (5) Reading proposed that since both he and the Viceroy had held the highest judicial office in Britain, they should announce that they had jointly perused the arguments, and 'found ourselves in complete agreement with the conclusion previously arrived at by His Majesty's Government'. Birkenhead, however, took up an implacable stance:

'I feel so strongly the desirability of maintaining the chosen judge in these matters that I should prefer not to suggest that we have reexamined the case at all'. (7)

1. Imam to Olivier, (n.d.), R.T., 7, pp. 66, 7; Olivier to Imam, (n.d.), ibid., p. 68.
2. Reading to Olivier, 26th June, 1924, R.T., 7, p. 121.
3. Reading to Olivier, 18th September, 1924, ibid., p. 187.
4. Reading to Olivier, 9th October, 1924, ibid., p. 196.
5. Birkenhead to Reading, 2nd December, 1924, R.T., 18, Telegram No. 389.
6. Reading to Birkenhead, 9th January, 1925, R.T., 19, Telegram No. 5.
7. Birkenhead to Reading, 13th February, 1925, ibid., Telegram No. 45; see too Birkenhead to Reading, 13th February, 1925, ibid., Telegram No. 46.
The last shot in the Nizam's locker was his offer to submit to a commission, to bear the whole cost, and to repeat his promise of autonomy to Berars. Reading stood emphatically for rejection:

'his demand for a Commission challenges the authority and jurisdiction of the Government of India and his Majesty's Government and would lead us eventually into serious difficulties with the States'.

Reading now proposed that the correspondence with the Nizam should be published. Uppermost in his mind was the conviction that the Nizam had mounted a challenge to Paramountcy itself. Publication would be desirable

'not only for the purpose of publically refuting the Nizam's claim, but also because there is an underlying current of thought among the Princes - and not for the first time as the records of conversations preliminary to the formation of the Chamber of Princes will show - to claim that under their engagements and treaties they, or most of them, are allies of His Majesty and consequently should be in a position of complete internal independence whatever may happen regarding foreign relations'. (1)

Birkenhead approved of the Viceregal draft pronouncement on Berars with the proviso that the principle of the supremacy of the Paramount Power was built up with an insistence on it as standard outside all Treaties. (3)

The Viceregal letter to the Nizam, together with the relevant background correspondence on the Berars' issue, was duly published as a Command Paper. In the key passage, Reading bluntly stated that

'the Sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no Ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing'. (5)

The letter stressed that the Secretary of State was at one with the Viceroy and that there was no precedent for a court of arbitration in any case which had been decided by His Majesty's Government.

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 6th October, 1925, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 239.
5. Cmd. 2621, para. 4.
6. Ibid., para. 8.
In the wake of this uncompromising document, the Berars' issue disappeared temporarily. It surfaced in 1932 when senior advisers to the Secretary of State, interested in baiting the Federal hook for the Nizam, considered reopening the case. Hoare thought it safer to cajole by way of some new honour or title rather than 'some arrangement under which Berar would obtain an appearance of autonomy which would, on the one hand, break up the Central Provinces, and on the other, lead in a short time to the complete retrocession of the district to Hyderabad'. (1)

The Nizam only became reconciled to the loss of Berar late in the day when his astute legal adviser, Fonckton, pointed out that its inhabitants were predominantly Hindu and Congress-minded: should the Nizam recover the province, 'he would be nourishing a serpent in his bosom'.

As to the morality of the initial seizure of Berars, Barton echoed some generally felt doubts. But no trace of ambiguity attached itself to Reading's much publicised letter of 1926 to the Nizam. For those Princes of overblown pretensions in the permissive atmosphere which followed from Minto's Udaipur Speech and the patronage of Montagu, Reading's missive served as 'a tremendous rap on the knuckles'. It resulted in a tide of Princely anxiety directed towards a reinvestigation of the nature of British relations with the Indian States.

The Jhalawar Case.

While there was no parallel in scale to the Berars case, other Princes expressed grievances related to the loss of territories. The most successful in converting an alleged territorial injustice into hard

cash was the 13 Gun Maharajrana of Jhalawar, a small state in Rajputana. The case came to Montagu's eye in 1921, largely through Jhalawar's action in petitioning M.P.s. The Secretary of State asked Reading to expedite a decision on compensation for Jhalawar's lost territories, 'he is a good fellow'. Montagu had convinced himself of the 'harsh nature' of the territorial settlement imposed on Jhalawar by the Elgin administration and feared for the effect of 'extremist' influences on the Maharajrana. All in all, Montagu was struck by a 'nice, kindly, loyal fellow' who was 'carrying on a most hurtful propaganda amongst M.P.s'.

Reviewing Jhalawar affairs in June 1921, Reading concluded that the State was certainly in need of financial support, indeed no funds were left to pay State officials. But he remained wary of Jhalawar and his claims for the restoration of districts given to the neighbouring State of Kotah some 25 years before on the deposition of his predecessor. Both Crewe and Montagu had previously rejected this request. Reading was prepared to remit, for five years initially, the annual tribute of Rs 30,000 payable to Jhalawar. The political difficulties implicit in helping Jhalawar weighed heavily with the Viceroy:

'I regret to state that to give a subsidy out of the pocket of the Indian taxpayer to make up the deficiencies of this Ruling Prince is impossible in my judgement'.

This said, Reading confessed to a modicum of sympathy for Jhalawar's position:

'It is difficult to be a Maharaja without spending like a Maharaja'.

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1. Montagu to Reading, 6th April, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 17.
2. Montagu to Reading, 11th April, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 39.
4. Reading to Montagu, 16th June, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 332.
5. Reading to Montagu, 24th June, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 392.
6. Reading to Montagu, 27th July, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 567.
7. Reading to Montagu, 11th July, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 495.
While investigating Jhalawar's finances, Reading found that payments to State officials were extremely exiguous. In Jhalawar's disingenuous explanation, 'they served out of devotion to him'.  

Montagu received the news of the Viceroy's misgivings with 'deep regret'. Montagu thought it appropriate to grant a "non-votable payment .... an assessment of land revenue equally divided, capital value £100,000, should, I think, be the right way to compensate him".  

The £100,000 suggestion was flatly turned down by Reading. Montagu persisted in his plea that remission of tribute by itself was not enough: 'I can't help thinking that he has a grievance'. Montagu's next move was to suggest that Reading appoint a Commission:  

'if it didn't approve compensation, Jhalawar could not complain; if it did then the Legislative Assembly could not complain'.  

This simplistic equation did not impress Reading now firmly convinced that the Maharajrana should cut his cloth to suit his style. If the transfer of territory 20 years before was legal,  

'I find it difficult to understand why the taxpayer should now compensate him.... I think it hard to be a Maharaja without sufficient income to keep up the prestige and dignity. Is it however too much to ask that when a man arrives at this position, he must think of his State and if necessary cut down on his own personal expenditure'. 

The Viceroy would not countenance arbitration and it seemed to him that Montagu had little inkling of the intensity of feeling within the Legislative Assembly:  

'I think that you possibly do not realise how strongly our politicians feel in regard to the States'. 

2. Montagu to Reading, 18th July, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 500.  
5. Montagu to Reading, 26th August, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 701.  
7. At this point Reading cited the example of a number of States, less well favoured than Jhalawar, but apparently balancing their books. See Reading to Montagu, 12th September, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 859.
In December 1921, Reading announced that Jhalawar State was on the verge of bankruptcy and enjoined that the Prince should be required to live within his means while in England. Jhalawar consented to the appointment of a British Administrator in his State and accepted an allowance of Rs 7,000 p.m. (to be found out of British Indian revenues). Montagu now developed the line of argument that Jhalawar should be appeased as a means of soothing the sensibilities of the Princes generally. He referred to Government of India intervention in Udaipur and forecast, correctly, forthcoming interference in Nabha:

'these actions must lead to a feeling of insecurity in the Indian Princes which is excessively dangerous in times like these, and it is highly important for the good relations between the Indian Government and the Native States that Jhalawar should not have a financial grievance...... we must keep the affairs of the Native States from the floor of the Legislature at all costs'.

Following a considerable dispute between Secretary of State and Viceroy, the allowance of Rs 7,000 p.m. was settled. Reading capitulated with great reluctance, word having reached him that Jhalawar had already taken two houses, one in Oxford, one in London. The generosity of spirit with which Montagu had disputed the case for Jhalawar, was not rewarded by a display of self-discipline on the part of the prodigal Prince in the management of his affairs. By June 1922, Jhalawar was petitioning for remittance in excess of his allowance to meet a number of claims, one in favour of Harrods for £2,000. These requests were made at a time when the State was forced to borrow to meet the salaries of State officials. The Jhalawar case is instructive in drawing attention to several key features in the evolving relationship between British interests and the Indian States: the gullibility of Montagu regarding Princes' claims; Reading's confirmation of the Princes' low stock in the Assembly; the apparent interest of some Parliamentarians in Princes' grievances,

1. Reading to Montagu, 8th November, 1921, R.P., 10, Telegram No. 1108.
2. Montagu to Reading, 22nd November, 1921, ibid., Telegram No. 1074.
4. Reading to Montagu, 14th January, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 12.
5. Reading to Peel, 8th June, 1922, ibid., Telegram No. 221.
a portent here for the connections to be struck up between the
Conservative diehard lobby and some Maharajas in the early 'thirties.

The Limbdi Case.

In general, the Government of India in the twentieth century set its
face against retrocession of territories. Where retransfers did take
place, the Camp Bazar area of Indore, the Nowgong tract in Central India,
they did not relate to any substantial acreage. The retrocession of
Bangalore to Mysore, involving very small numbers, was fiercely attacked
in the Commons, in 1935. Retrocession had to reckon with hostility
within the territories concerned; opinion would oppose transfer to the
rule of a Maharaja. Such sentiment was well illustrated in the case of
the Limbdi villages.

The 9 Gun Thakor Sahib of Limbdi, in the Western States Agency, had
placed himself in the good graces of the Government of India through
his uncompromising stance against Civil Disobedience. Limbdi had also
surpassed other States in the ruthlessness with which States' Peoples
movements were suppressed. Over a long period, the Limbdi Durbar had
pressed for the return of the Barwala villages. Irwin's Government
had declined to reopen the case in 1931 but Willingdon, ever amenable to
Princely protestations, came to feel that Limbdi's efforts'in assisting
Government officers' during the Civil Disobedience campaigns deserved
recognition. The case would have to go before the highest court of
appeal in Britain, which alone could reverse an action taken by the Court
of Directors in 1814. Although Willingdon continued to make much of

2. See chapter 5, p. 494.
3. The Limbdi Durbar did not hesitate to employ 'organised violence and
gangsterism' in the suppression of political movements. See
Phadnis, U., op. cit., p. 119.
4. Willingdon to Hoare, 29th September, 1933, T.P.F.1, 6, p. 368.
the Thakore Sahib's considerable contribution to the suppression of agitation in Gujarat and Kathiawar, Hoare drew back from compliance with his request:

'the case for handing over to the State villages which for more than a century have been part of British India has seemed to me here to present big difficulties'. (1)

Limbdi himself lobbied the Government of India incessantly about his 'wretched villages'. Willingdon's response was redolent of the paternalism with which he regarded many Princes. The Viceroy had consulted Brabourne, the Governor of Bombay, on the Limbdi question and found him unenthusiastic:

'I would personally much like to see the old boy given the chance of a referendum as to whether the people would want to come into his State or not .... I am inclined to think that if there was a secret ballot, the verdict would go against him. Of course, I am really biased in the matter, for I have known the old boy for many years, am very fond of him .... intensely loyal to the British Raj all through and a great help to us at the worst times of non-cooperation'. (2)

Thus, on Willingdon's own admission, there is confirmation that however much the Viceroy himself might be drawn to the Thakore Sahib of Limbdi, the reputation of Native State's administration ensured that the Barwala villagers were not.

The Exercise of Paramountcy: disputed successions
The Bhopal Case.

In his enumeration of the duties of the Paramount Power, Fitze gave a prominent place to the settlement of succession disputes. These were occasions which might be used to broadcast and reinforce the doctrine of supremacy; a basic principle stated that 'no succession is valid until it has been confirmed by the proper British authority'. Succession disputes represented an opportunity to demonstrate those qualities of justice, diplomacy and concern for effective administration, which in theory resided in the Political Department. But in its handling of the most discussed succession controversy of the twentieth century, the Bhopal case, the Political Department showed up as, at best, less than thorough.

The Bhopal succession became a matter for serious concern through the submission of 'a long and reasoned request' from Her Highness Sultan Jehan Begum of Bhopal, in the view of a touring Parliamentary notable,

'the most famous woman Ruler in India, with almost as much prestige there as Queen Victoria had in this country'. (1)

The Begum petitioned for the recognition of her youngest son Hamidullah as heir, an able and forceful administrator currently making his mark in Bhopal, in place of Habibullah, her senior grandson, whose eventual succession had hitherto been universally regarded as a matter of course.

The Begum threw herself upon Reading's 'merciful kindness' but threatened to abdicate if the decision went against her. The case excited much interest among the Princes generally, most of whom favoured strict adherence

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to the law of primogeniture, a view supported by the Political Department.

For the moment Reading hedged:

'the inclination of my Political Department is undoubtedly against the Begum's view, but I reserve mine until after I have made full examination'. (1)

Birkenhead, with his legalistic background, took a keen interest and his researches led him to an 1860 despatch of Sir Charles Wood which mentioned primogeniture.

Reading's views, initially hostile to the Begum's petition, were 'rudely shaken' by evidence which he scrutinised in London, while on leave. He ordered the Political Department to reexamine the case.

Birkenhead, also, had now concluded that 'the old lady is right', and pressed for a decision in favour of the Begum, who now had the King's support. This became a matter of some urgency when it was revealed that the Begum, currently in London, was suffering from serious heart trouble. For Birkenhead, it was essential that the case be used to establish clearly the discretionary powers of Paramountcy, and enforce the principle that questions of this kind were decided 'on grounds of policy and not of law'. Still the matter was not finalised and early in 1926, Birkenhead alerted the Viceroy to a case in 1873 when the British Government forced primogeniture on the Forte in connection with the succession in Egypt on the grounds that Mohammedan law had always been a fertile cause of intrigue.

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 26th March, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 66.
3. Reading to Birkenhead, 20th August, 1925, ibid., pp. 100, l.
4. Birkenhead to Reading, 8th October, 1925, ibid., p. 44. Ostensibly, the Begum had visited Britain to lay her case before the King Emperor. See Birkenhead to Reading, 2nd December, 1925, R.P., 19, Telegram No. 289. But in the course of her stay, she never let slip an opportunity to put her case. Highly placed ladies in particular were deluged with details. See "Interton to Reading, 28th December, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 97.
The delay built up in India and drew the admission from Reading that the Political Department was seriously undermanned and could not deal with the disputes pertaining to Hyderabad, Bhopal and Indore contemporaneously. In the end, Reading himself had to draft the greater part of the despatches on the Bhopal case especially since 'my Department had come definitely to a conclusion which I could not accept'.

The Viceroy was staggered to find that the Political Department investigation had not gone beyond the Mutiny in search of precedents:

'it was very fortunate that the India Office brought Sir Henry Mayne's note on the Oudh and Delhi successions to my notice'. (2)

Agreement was eventually reached in March 1926. Birkenhead summarised his decision thus:

'the point on which my own opinion was really determined was that there was no vestige of evidence that the English system of primogeniture had ever been applied or accepted in Bhopal. In these circumstances, it seemed to me hardly defensible to apply it for the first time in the teeth of many precedents and against the vehemently expressed desires of a popular Ruler'. (3)

Reading endorsed these findings. On reviewing the case, the Secretary of State was severely critical of the Government of India's approach and in particular of 'the unaccountable and certainly most inconvenient delay' in reaching a decision:

'the second re-examination involved as many months as I should have thought weeks were necessary, for most of the historic work had already been done'.

The last straw for Birkenhead was the appearance of a 'well-informed' leak in The Times and almost all of the British Press, correctly anticipating the decision,

'an unfortunate development which could have been avoided by a prompt official statement from Delhi'. (5)

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 2nd December, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 188.
4. Reading to Birkenhead, 18th March, 1926, ibid., p. 231.
Thus the case of the Bhopal succession ended, as it had begun, in controversy. Reading was left to contemplate the mishandling of the research by the Political Department whose draft despatch purported to represent an examination 'from the rise of British Paramountcy' .... a most deplorable misuse of expression', commented Reading. The Government of India's decision in her favour had been confidently anticipated by Her Highness and her staff since February. In May, 1926, Shah Jehan Begum abdicated and Hamidullah Khan became the first Nawab of Bhopal for a century. Though Hamidullah ruled, by Indian States' standards, reasonably efficiently, the case had its tragic aspect which gave some substance to the Delhi view that primogeniture is always preferable, owing to its certainty, to Islamic rule; primogeniture ensured that long-cherished expectations were unlikely to be disappointed at the eleventh hour. The superseded grandson left Bhopal, consumed by resentment, for a life of unstinted dissipation which killed him at the age of 27.

The Bijawar Case, the Alwar Case.

As a general rule, both Secretaries of State and Viceroy's were concerned to uphold Birkenhead's belief that policy and not law should dictate successions. Even in a minor State, a succession controversy could attract awkward publicity in Britain as well as in India. Between 1935 and 1937, the leading Conservative diehard and editor of the Morning Post, H. A. Gwynne, petitioned numerous public figures including the incoming Viceroy, Linlithgow, with the intention of reversing the succession in Bijawar, an 11 Gun State. Gwynne claimed to have been

1. Reading to Birkenhead, 30th March, 1926, H.P., 8, pp. 240, 1.
3. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 119.
briefed by a senior Political: his most serious allegation held that Willingdon had forced the previous Ruler to adopt an heir, in a spirit of revenge against Patiala whose daughter stood to gain by the original succession arrangement. Gwynne's agitation served to remind the Government of India of a lingering interest in Princes' affairs manifest on Conservative back benches.

The Alwar succession was a case in which not external interference but the rash undertakings of a previous Viceroy jeopardised the discretion of the Paramount Power. In reviewing the arrangements for the accession of the new Maharaja, Zetland was shaken to note that Willingdon had promised to support the late Maharaja's candidate who was far from the obvious choice:

'I was more surprised in view of the strength of the precedents which have been cited in favour of selecting a successor from the Thana house'.

Zetland proposed for the future that any reply given to a Ruler 'should not go beyond a promise to consider the nominee'. Linlithgow was similarly surprised when his investigation of succession policy turned up a number of disturbing communications: a document from Udaipur to the A.G.G., 'the contents of which are unknown', pertaining to the matter of his successor; a similar missive from Travancore. Linlithgow was strongly of the opinion that it had been unwise to accept and place on record such documentation and determined to plug the loophole:

'I felt that undertakings of this nature were objectionable in principle as tending to limit the freedom of the Paramount Power, and possibly seriously to embarrass an incoming Viceroy and Secretary of State'. (3)

1. See Gwynne to Courtauld, 10th December, 1935, E.P., Ms. 17; Gwynne to Courtauld, 2nd March, 1936, ibid.; Gwynne to the Dewan of Bijnawer, 22nd April, 1937, E.P., Ms. 11.


To the last, the Government of India and His Majesty's Government were determined to exercise those very considerable powers over the Princes which were vested in Delhi through control over succession, whatever freedoms were imagined to have been granted by Canning's sanads. A thwarted heir might engage the services of the most eminent and expensive battery of lawyers, but they would not be granted full access to the material since 'political practice' decreed that

'the ruminations of the Paramount Power in this delicate sphere were all to be carried on in an atmosphere of secrecy'. (1)

1. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 125.
The Exercise of Paramountcy: the conflict of economic interest
It did not escape the notice of the more astute Princes that in the economic, as distinct from the political, spheres there were certain to be areas in which the interests of the Government of India and of the States, either individually or severally, clashed. In such circumstances, the role of the Political Department was, to say the least, invidious. In this connection, the growth and administration of States' railways furnish an interesting example. Initially, Dalhousie had pushed railways through States such as Gwalior with largely strategic interests in mind. An enlightened Political, Colonel Daly, did much to encourage Princes themselves to promote railways, and for those States of Kathiawar and Rajputana where the terrain was largely desert and flat in character, tunnels and embankments were few and consequently capital expenditure extraordinarily small.

States' railways could produce a handsome revenue, but sooner or later a clash of interest with the British Indian lines was inevitable. In 1912 Hardinge refused permission to Patiala to construct a railway connecting his State with Jodhpur and Bikaner: the Viceroy was motivated by 'the antagonistic attitude of the B.D. and C.I., and S.P. Railway Companies'. He had previously rejected similar requests from Vysore and Baroda. Hardinge reasoned that existing British Indian interests deserved consideration though he had carefully weighed

'the disadvantages of taking any action which might in any way lead investors in 'Indian' railways in England to think that their interests would not be conserved'.

Hardinge did experience some qualms:

'I do not think that this is a policy we can pursue indefinitely and thus restrict the natural growth development of the Native States and their own lines'.

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1. 'The Success of Indian Railways', The Times, 15th August, 1892.
2. Daly, Major H., op. cit., p. 297.
In his reply, the Secretary of State acknowledged the inequitable situation in existence: 'we have to act more or less as judge in our own case'.

Given the scattered distribution of the Princes' territories it was inevitable that the major trunk routes should cross their domains; the Bombay Beroda Delhi line crossed States' frontiers thirty-eight times. The Government of India insisted that British Indian administered laws should operate throughout the railway system; railway lands were administered by the Political Department. Despite repeated representations from the States, neither the Butler Committee in 1928, nor the Davidson Committee in 1932 would restore jurisdiction to the States in respect of their railways. The most that could be wrung from the Paramount Power was provision for an independent Federal Railway Authority under the terms of the 1935 Government of India Act. Of course, this section of the new constitution was never implemented.

The major bone of contention between the States and the Paramount Power did not concern railways directly; it lay rather in the sphere of customs and excise. Following the establishment of British supremacy in India, the Princes had been persuaded to abolish their traditional duties levied on merchandise in transit through their States. But with the growth of taxation at British Indian ports of goods consigned to their territories, the Princes argued with some justice that they were now the victims of an imposition from which they had formerly benefitted. Kashmir alone enjoyed the privilege of importing sea-borne merchandise in bond.

2. Cmd. 3302, paras. 90.
5. Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 129.
6. This was accorded in exchange for an agreement on Kashmir's part to permit free trade with Central Asia across her frontiers. See Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 129.
The essence of the dispute lay in the Maritime States' claim that they possessed by virtue of their sovereignty the right of levying and retaining sea customs duties at their own ports. The Government of India argued that it was entitled to take steps to ensure that British Indian revenues were not thereby prejudiced. The problem centred on the peninsula of Kathiawar, wholly Indian States territory, with a number of excellent ports in rail connection with wide areas and populous centres. The route from Kathiawar to Delhi was shorter than that from any other port to India's capital. Following the establishment of the rail link-ups, the Government of India suggested that it should take over the administration of the Kathiawar ports and pay out revenues to the States concerned. On the rejection of their proposal by the Maritime Princes, the Delhi administration imposed in 1905 a customs barrier, the Viramgam line, along the British Indian frontier of the Kathiawar States. This drastic measure, highly unpopular in the States, was set aside in 1917, on the strict proviso that the Kathiawar ports would levy customs duties not lower than those enforced simultaneously in British Indian ports; and that should, through the creation of a large scale port, 'the fiscal interests involved become very important, the Government of India would reserve the right to reconsider the position generally'.

No Prince was more interested in the commercial possibilities now offered, through the prospect of luring trade away from the British Indian ports, than the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar. When he applied to officialdom for elucidation as to the limits of permitted expansion, Ranji was not given a precise definition, an oversight which gave the amale Maharaja much

2. Ibid., para. 284.
3. Ibid., paras. 288, 290.
4. Cmd. 4103, para. 291. The vague terms of the 1917 agreement stipulated that the Government would not impede a 'healthy development' of a port to the extent of 'its natural capacity'. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th June, 1927, E.E., 8, Telegram No. 158. Birkenhead thought that the vague assurances given to the Jam Sahib in 1917 were 'most unfortunately worded'. See Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th May, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 160.
room for manoeuvre. The Jam Sahib became the pioneering Prince in
developing attractive port facilities; other Kathiawar Rulers followed
suit offering such lures to shippers as cheap warehousing and low labour
dues. Irwin, alarmed by the massive increase notably in Jamnagar's
trade, put it to Birkenhead that

'States developing transit traffic should be content with the
increased general prosperity that results'. (1)

While Irwin conceded the absence of

'complete proof of malpractice and we recognise the difficulty of
drawing the line between fair and unfair methods of encouraging
trade, it cannot be denied that remarkable expansion of Jamnagar
trade had been aided by grant of easy finance to merchants and
reduction of freight on Jamnagar railways to minimum level'. (2)

With other Kathiawar ports notably Bedi and Okha now equipped for
ocean-going trade, the Government of India decided on a Conference with
the Maritime States at Mount Abu. Birkenhead, normally quick to prick
Primey pretension, on this occasion showed concern about the official
position:

'may it not be urged that natural development of Kathiawar Ports
is being unfairly stifled, and that the attitude of the Government
of India is one of subordinating all equitable consideration to
their own purely financial interests'.

As Birkenhead saw it, the Government was in a cleft stick if it were
emphasised that the consuming public was in British India,

'you will be using the same argument against the Maritime States
as was urged by the Inland States against the Government of India'. (3)

Anxiety mounted in Delhi where, by May 1927, Irwin had in his
possession 'astonishing figures' which appeared to show massive diversion
of sugar imports from Bombay to Kathiawar:

'I cannot doubt myself that the Jam Sahib is, by one means or another,
giving a very elastic interpretation to what might be reasonably
considered the healthy development of his port'. (4)

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 24th April, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 117.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th June, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 158.
3. Birkenhead to Irwin, 14th April, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 129.
But Birkenhead was concerned about the ambivalent role of the Political Department, central to the Princes' grievances. "Was it consistent with the A.G.G.'s duties as a Political Officer", wondered Birkenhead, reviewing progress at the Mount Abu Conference, "that he should play the role of the Government spokesman?" The Secretary of State made his point. Watson, the A.G.G., was withdrawn as Government spokesman and appointed as Chairman. The more cynical Princes would question whether this amounted to a change of role in practice. Birkenhead felt realistically pessimistic about the outcome of the Conference: he did not find the official arguments 'very convincing'.

The Mount Abu Conference duly foundered. The States rejected out of hand the proposal that customs administration should be handed over to Government of India officers in return for a guaranteed annual payment. The failure of the negotiations was 'a great disappointment' to Irwin. The sticking point had been allocation of customs revenue. Other States had been unwilling to accept a financial settlement which would have given the Jam Sahib a permanent advantage over them; his port of Nawanagar was already on the way to absorbing the whole of the Kathiawar trade. Ranjii had made it clear that the liberality of the settlement would have swayed him. Other States were opposed to cash compensation offered, regarding this as tantamount to the sale of sovereign rights.

The Maritime States persisted in their representations against the reimposition of the Viramgam Line. Late in 1928 Irwin had reached some tentative conclusions

'as to the extent to which the States could be allowed exemption from customs duties on goods imported at their harbours and passing thence across the customs barrier into British India'.

1. Birkenhead to Irwin, 20th June, 1927, Hx:E., 8, Telegram No. 190.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 23rd June, 1927, ibid., Telegram No. 174.
He declined to make these public in advance of the recommendations of the Indian States Enquiry Committee. In its Report, Butler considered that the States had 'a strong claim to some relief' given the tremendous jump in maritime customs since 1921, a policy decision on which the States were not consulted. However, this finding was balanced by the assertion that the degree of relief would require careful examination since States admitted to a share of British Indian customs revenue, would have to shoulder 'their full share of imperial burdens'.

The Jam Sahib continued to finance the preparation of lengthy legal representations, drawn up by the prominent Indian jurist who had acted for the State at Mount Abu, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. These were voluminous documents, difficult to peruse, and the Secretary of State experienced a sense of relief on hearing, in late 1930, that Setalvad required another six months to present his case. When the specialist Indian States (Financial) Committee toured in 1932, it was presented with a very formidably dossier by the Jam Sahib, 'an exceptionally strong case', commented one member of the Committee to the Secretary of State. The Committee made a most exhaustive study of the many baffling and contradictory elements within the sea customs controversy. It concluded by recording a dislike of the retention of the Viramgam Line, but declined to put forward any clear alternatives. The Davidson Report fell back on the possibilities offered by an All-India Federation:

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 11th October, 1928, Hx.F., 6, p. 224.
2. Cmd. 3302, para. 82.
5. No less than 52 pages of the Report were devoted to this issue. See Cmd. 4105, pp. 91-143.
6. Ibid., para. 354. Given the impossibility of forecasting future patterns of trade or fiscal policy, the Davidson Report was strongly against British offers for the acquisition of the customs rights of the States generally. Ibid., para. 361.
'an arrangement whereby the Maritime States were at least enabled to retain in their own hands the value of duty on goods imported through their ports for consumption by their own subjects, even though it might involve some diminution of federal revenues, might well be accepted in a Federal scheme embracing so many diverse elements'. (1)

The Jam Sahib's case dragged on to the chagrin of Willingdon. The Viceroy confessed himself to be 'awfully distressed' and urged the Secretary of State to authorise the Tribunal requested by Ranji, 'and get the case settled for good. With my knowledge of the case, I think he was badly treated in the past'. (2)

Willingdon's characteristic response to the Kathiawar Ports dispute was to blame it on past Vicercys; his solution, to call in outside help.

The Viceroy claimed to be confronted by

'what I must call very sloppy and piecemeal legislative action in regard to these Ports matters in the past ..... I'm not sure that it would not be better to put the whole matter to arbitration by two or three really big men from home .... I do think that it is very hard for you and me that we should have to sweep up the faults of our predecessors, particularly as the financial effects must be pretty heavy for the Government of India, and, politically, it would go very hard on us if the nationalist politicians were to start a campaign which laid open to the public our considerable mismanagement of this matter in the past'. (3)

Not till the end of 1934 did Willingdon feel that at last a settlement was near on the Ports question. Jamnagar and Baroda were settled and agreement had been reached with Porbander, Junagadh and Morvi. With Cochin and Travancore coming into line, 'the problem of the Ports is rapidly clearing out of the way'. (4) Willingdon arranged for his Finance Member to produce all the Kathiawar agreements together, rather than piecemeal. Under the terms of the compromise settlements, the States agreed to limit their appropriations to a reasonable figure based on populations and local circumstances. (5) It was an unusually thoughtful

5. Willingdon to Zetland, 5th January, 1935, Z.P., 6, p. 358. Either the fearful complexities of the Ports controversy made little impression on the Finance Member or they tried him to the extent that he sought to expunge them from his record: there are no references to the Kathiawar Ports in his memoirs. See Grigg, P. J., Prejudice and Judgement, (1948)
6. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 132.
move on Willingdon's part to finalise the protracted negotiations over
the Ports dispute before the end of his term. He thus spared his
successor the experience of dealing with a controversy on which, in
Fitze's recollection, 'the expenditure of time, paper and ink in the
secretaries of Delhi and Simla was unparalleled'.

The Ports controversy provided a graphic illustration of the
conflicting economic interests of States and Central Government. The
Political Department was plainly unsuited by origin and nature to
arbitrate and the Princes affected would be conscious of the dark hand of
Paramountcy at work. If Birkenhead was unconvinced by the official
position, the complaints of the Jam Sahib are scarcely to be wondered
at. This said, in view of the documented dramatic expansion of trade
at Nawanagar in the 'twenties, the doyen of Ranji's spokesmen was hardly
justified in referring to it as 'a flea bite'. In theory, the
Soilverein proposed by the Butler Report may have seemed a promising
way forward but the notorious rivalries existing between Their Highnesses
and their obsessions regarding 'sovereignty', so much in evidence during
the Mount Abu proceedings, ruled this out.

1. Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 128.
2. The observation of Professor L. F. Rushbrook Williams, interviewed 17
March, 1972.
3. Cmd. 3302, para. 80.
The Exercise of Paramountcy: the inculcation of educational standards; restrictions on foreign leave
The Inculcation of Educational Standards

It was central to the concept of imperial partnership that the Princes should enjoy a reputation for at best statesmanship and at worst a capacity for adequate administration. Curiously enough, the education of Princes was much more the concern of later nineteenth century officialdom than its twentieth century counterpart. There is a singular absence of reference to educational policy and the Princes, after Curzon's time, in the correspondence of the respective Viceroy's and Secretaries of State. It was in the era of Mayo that Colleges were established specifically for Princes at various centres; Rajkot for Kathiawar, Indore for Central India, Ajmere for Rajputana, Lahore for the Punjab: "the right education for Princes became a matter for imperial concern".

A keen official interest in the level of Princely education was especially evident during Curzon's Vicereignty. He was quick to notice the relative paucity of students on the rolls of the Princes' Colleges, and the general indifference of Princes to these institutions. In the course of two Conferences on Chiefs' Colleges, at Calcutta in 1902 and Ajmere in 1904, Curzon sought to invigorate the College system through the introduction of a number of reforms. The Viceroys even undertook to subsidize the Colleges with Government of India funds, the Colleges being an essential part of his major policy which aimed to build up the

1. Sinh, R., op. cit., p. 37; see too Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 283; Butt, I. A., op. cit., p. 139. The Colleges were known by the following designations: Rajkumar College, Rajkot; Daly College, Indore; Aitchison College, Lahore; Mayo College, Ajmeer. A fifth College was later established at Raipur.
3. Curzon stipulated that Europeans should be in charge of boarding houses; that a common diet of examinations should be adopted; that an Inspector of Colleges be appointed. Curzon also encouraged closer integration among the alumni of the institutions. See ibid., pp. 149, 154.
character and importance of the traditional Indian Rulers.

The improvements enacted did not substantially alter the views of those numerous Princes who entertained reservations about the suitability of the Colleges. The criticisms levelled ranged from lack of grounding in economics and administration, to compulsory enlistment in the Scouts. Barton attributed much of the hostility to a general dislike of Paramountcy, but he confessed that 'the College system' required remodelling in order to bring it more into touch with modern conditions. One practice which particularly hampered the inculcation of self-discipline was the granting of permission to Rajkumars to live outwith college and maintain their own establishments. Fitze knew the Indore College well and it was only through the efforts of two outstanding Principals that the institution was transformed.

'from what had tended to become an outmoded nursery in which pampered young aristocrats were provided with a veneer of good manners before embarking on a career of dignified indolence'.

Barton acknowledged that the question of reforming the Colleges was one of 'pressing urgency'. The matter was taken up by a Chamber of Princes' committee; predictably, nothing happened in consequence.

Irwin's speech to the Chamber session of 1926 recognised that the Colleges had declined in the Princes' esteem. His call for a revival of interest was coupled with the warning that the Government grant now subject to vote in a popularly elected assembly was no longer secure. The fact that the Viceroy had to make more or less the same speech to the 1930 Chamber

1. Ibid., pp. 167, 160.
2. Some tutors did touch upon administration. One Rajkumar when asked how he would clear his State from debt replied: 'I should gain the confidence of my Minister, and when I had all the information that he could give me, I should imprison him till he disgorged the plunder accumulated during my minority'. See Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 284. Sir Walter Lawrence recalled the case of another imaginative Rajkumar at College who wrote in his essay: 'the horse is a noble animal, but when irritated he will not do so'. See Lawrence, Sir W., op. cit., p. 46.
is an indication of the studied indifference shown by the Chamber Princes to
the Rajkumar Colleges. In their original form, the Colleges did not survive much beyond 1930. Thereafter, the entry policy based on inclusion in the Indian Debrett was abolished and the Colleges expanded with a non-exclusive roll.

Since the establishment of Chiefs' Colleges was not a policy which had met with the anticipated success, it was important that an alternative expedient designed to ensure that Rulers came up to the mark, the provision of British tutors resident in the State, achieved some degree of success. British tutors had been appointed during the minorities in Baroda and Hyderabad in the later nineteenth century, and in Mysore in the early twentieth. Particular care was taken in selecting Tutors and some outstanding Politicals acted in this capacity: Sir Stuart Fraser, tutor to both Kolhapur and Mysore, caught Tyndale Biscoe's eye.

But even the most dedicated tutor might find that his student was beyond his reach as was Malcolm Darling's experience at Dewas. A very representative set of difficulties were those encountered by the novelist Edmund Candler when acting as a tutor in 1905: the Prince was generous according to his lights, but the wrong signals were up; and no sermon or moralising could substitute red for green'.

It was in the course of a discussion on *The Prisoner of Zenda* that the Prince's entirely alien conception of morality emerged. Granted that

7. The Rajkumar's interest had been captured by the scene in which Rupert had laid down his revolver as the prelude to a duel: 'the lad excitedly suggested that this was an opportune moment for Rassendyll to shoot his adversary ..... the lad's difficulty in understanding the Western code of honour and his evasive attitude to the truth left Candler melancholy'. Cited in Farry, B., *Delusions and Discoveries, Studies on India in the British Imagination, 1880-1930* (1972), pp. 137, 8.
some Rajkumars might be more receptive to European tutelage, with mounting pressure on manpower within the Political Department in the inter-war years, it became increasingly difficult to spare officers for such work. Thus, at the time when it was of critical importance for the Government of India to produce respectable Princes, its capacity to achieve this had markedly declined.

Restrictions on Foreign Leave.

Just as Curzon had taken the lead in attempting to reanimate the Chiefs' Colleges, a corollary of his concern for Their Highnesses' respectability as Rulers was his issue of the much discussed Foreign Leave Circular. In the course of his speech at Gwalior in November 1899, Curzon had referred with some distaste to the presence of Princes at European race-courses and hotels. His strictures were the outcome of a conviction that the too frequent absences of these potentates was good neither for them nor their subjects. Jodhpur, Kapurthala, Puddukota and Cooch Behar were among the worst offenders, habitues of the demi-monde of the Boulevards and Leicester Square. There was a good deal of antipathy in high quarters regarding the Princes' taste for white women and a general official uneasiness about the custom of peting even minor Princes in Europe,

'where an individual who is looked at askance at a second-rate British entertainment in India, hob-nobs and jollifies at the Courts of Emperors and Kings'.

In August of 1900, Curzon circulated local governments with a formal document which stipulated for the future that permission to Ruling Princes to visit countries outside India would be granted by the Government of

1. Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 68.
2. Ronaldshay, Lord, op. cit., p. 91.
4. Ibid., pp. 96, 100.
India alone. The letter was published in the Government Gazette and widely regarded as a manifesto directed at the Princes themselves. The directive concluded:

'the Government of India desire, therefore, to lay down the initial proposition that repeated absences from India of Native Chiefs should be regarded as a dereliction, and not as a discharge, of public duty'.

The circular was well received in general by the Indian Press; however criticism, particularly of the hectoring tone of the document, emanated from the India Office. It was observed that the Queen and the Home Authorities 'had a soft corner' for Princes.

It was entirely consistent with the enhanced prestige accorded to Princes at the behest of Montagu, that a Resolution was passed in 1921 which required

'little more than full information from the Princes regarding the tours proposed and the arrangements for the administration of the State during their absence'.

This relaxation of control, in the outspoken view of a leading Indian Liberal, had a most unfortunate effect. Speaking at Cochin in 1926, Sastri concluded:

'a great many of the Princes are not to be seen in their palaces ... they are to be seen anywhere where enjoyment can be bought with their peoples' money. You go to London, you go to Paris, you go to all fashionable cities and you meet some Indian Rajah or other, dazzling the people of Europe and corrupting those who go near them'.

The relatively unrestricted flow of Princes to Europe following the end of the Great War might not have excited such a volume of unfavourable and indeed scurrilous comment had it not been for the tremendous publicity attaching itself to the 'Mr. A. Case' which broke upon the British and Indian public in 1924. Briefly put, the heir to the gadi in

1. Ronaldshay, Lord, op. cit., p. 91.
3. Irwin to Peel, 23rd May, 1929, HsP., 5, p. 143.
Kashmir, Sir Hari Singh, had been the victim of a blackmail conspiracy, arranged in all probability by his own A.D.C., one Captain Arthur, an appointment of the Government of India. Arthur's accomplices had extracted £125,000 from the Prince as the price of their silence following his exposure in flagrante with the wife of an English bookmaker in a Paris hotel in 1919. The sordid affair came to light when the bookmaker sued the Midland Bank which had paid out part of the proceeds on a forged endorsement upon a cheque drawn by one of the conspirators.

The case attracted unusual interest in the British Press and the consequent publicity shook the India Office to its foundations.

Birkenhead was beside himself:

'the £125,000 case had caused extraordinary scandal as you can imagine in this country and, indeed, in almost the whole of the civilised world. From our point of view the case seems to me in every way deplorable'.

On the Viceroy's insistence, Birkenhead had arranged anonymity for Hari Singh with an extremely reluctant presiding Justice, Darling. The sobriquet 'Mr. A.' was adopted but

'secrety in such a matter is hardly permanently attainable; far too many people know the facts. The name has already appeared in the American Press'.

Birkenhead was most exercised about the appointment of Captain Arthur whom the judge had spoken of as

'the greatest scoundrel in the whole case ..... we do after all assume ourselves a direct selective responsibility by giving assent to such an appointment'. (2)

Birkenhead pressed for the names of the Political Officers concerned in the selection of Captain Arthur:

'the effect of their action has been to seriously impair British prestige'. (3)

1. For a succinct account of this fascinating case see Jenkins, E., 'The Blackmailing of Mr. A.', The Sunday Times Magazine, 11th October, 1970. A fuller version appears in Roberts, B., The Mr. A. Case, (1950)


With a criminal prosecution imminent, Birkenhead withdrew his objection to the publication of the identity of 'Mr. A', plagued as he was by complaints from the Aga Khan and others that they were being publically cited as 'Mr. A'.

To his further discomfiture, the case did not end as Birkenhead predicted but with the jury exculpating the bookmaker and his wife:

'I am extremely sorry for the young man, who, when little more than a boy, was vilely abused by a gang of English swindlers. It is ironical enough that the very vastness of the sum which he paid to avoid publicity is the very element in the matter which has produced it'.

The Secretary of State pressed for results from the investigation to locate the origin of Arthur's disastrous appointment. He had heard from Colonel Bannerman, a Political Agent who had served in Kashmir, that Arthur had taken up residence there to shirk military service.

Reading thought that the A.D.C. had turned up 'as a casual visitor'. With much trepidation the Viceroy anticipated that 'this most deplorable affair' would be used to the full by the critics of the Government:

'the most unfortunate part of the whole wretched business from our point of view is the part that Captain Arthur played'.

Reading's ire was not softened by the information that Arthur was now secure in France, protected by a quirk in the extradition laws.

Reading confessed that British prestige in India had been shaken in the last five years by 'several very bad affairs' which had drawn in Princes. So India had lost a crore of rupees in taking up the investments of a shady financial consortium, the Boulton Brothers. This train of thought lead Reading to reflect upon:

'the danger of sending the young wealthy Indian Prince and nobleman to Europe under the guidance of a British officer. Leaving aside altogether such horrible cases as Arthur, there are so many pitfalls. The young Indian is translated into another world, is usually passionate and wilful, and has little idea of self-discipline. I confess that I am inclined to the view that these Princes should not go to England till late in life when they have a better knowledge of the world'.

3. Reading to Birkenhead, 21st December, 1924, R.P., 18, Telegram No. 432.
4. Reading to Irwin, 18th December, 1924, R.P., 7, pp. 239, 9.
In discussing the reaction in India to the 'Mr. A' scandal, Reading found to his surprise that the case had attracted less notice than in Britain:

'my impression is that the main interest is in the magnitude of the sum paid and the exposure of the many traps that are laid for the unwary young Indian of wealth and position in England'.

Reading had sent a sympathetic letter to Hari Singh and pursued investigations into the appointment of Arthur. The Military authorities had been against it but in the end the Political Department and the Government of India were influenced by Hari Singh's wish for Arthur and (1) honoured his request.

In Britain anxiety about the case in the highest quarters was undiminished: the King-Emperor himself complained to the Viceroy of

'the disastrous effect such an exposure of Western vice and crime must have had on the Indian mind'. (2)

Reading could offer little comfort beyond the production of a scapegoat for the Arthur appointment, Sir John Wood, the Political Secretary who had obtained Chelmsford's assent despite the Military report. (3) The Viceroy thought Wood to be 'a very tired man when I arrived'. The more embarrassing features of the case were reviewed by Birkenhead in caustic vein:

'personally I am extremely sorry for the young fellow. Like another he fell among thieves and worse and there was no better Samaritan available than Sir John Wood's protege, Captain Arthur. Sir Hari Singh paid so much and got so little for it - not even privacy for a squalid amour'.

The lasting notoriety of the 'Mr. A' case may be gathered from the hostility with which the Secretary of State received the suggestion that Hari Singh should return to Europe within the year:

2. Stamfordham to Reading, 30th December, 1924, R.P., 1, p. 35.
3. In his defence, Wood claimed that Chelmsford was personally acquainted with Arthur. See Reading to Birkenhead, 22nd January, 1925, R.P., 8, p. 19.
4. Reading to Birkenhead, 1st December, 1925, ibid., p. 2.
'if he were to visit this country within the next 12 months, every placard in England – sacrificing for the purpose even a test match – would display the simple announcement "Mr. A arrives".'

Birkenhead reserved his full scorn for the Political Department which 'should have felt a deep responsibility when sanctioning the appointment of a protector to a Prince so young, so inexperienced, so wealthy. To have sanctioned the appointment at such a moment of a man with a bad military record and disapproved by the Military Authorities, seems to me itself to have been a scandalous error of judgement .... at such a time of all others, they should have selected for the position an officer of field rank who had played his part and exhausted his usefulness in the trenches'. (1)

Hari Singh indeed found it difficult to shake off the label of 'Mr. A'. In 1927, Birkenhead pronounced that 'his exploits as Mr. A' (2) had ruled out Kashmir as a representative of India at Geneva. Even a rumoured visit of Kashmir to Britain in 1928, inspired a revival of 'Mr. A' stories. Birkenhead stoutly opposed continued pressure from the Viceroy to send Kashmir to Geneva:

'it would not be possible for me to induce the press not to rake up scandal for Mr. A has become a household word'. (4)

However the Secretary of State did not feel able to block the visit of Hari Singh to Britain as a private citizen in 1928; on hearing of this development the sensational press sprang into action. At the instigation of the Viceroy, Birkenhead wrote round the leading press proprietors and the 'useful suggestion' emerged that a wartime ordinance for the control of confidential material might be revived.

It seems surprising that in the wake of these enduring embarrassments nothing practical was done through the exercise of Paramountcy to restrict foreign tours. The problem engaged the attention of Birkenhead:

2. Birkenhead to Irwin, 12th May, 1927, Hx.T., 3, pp. 52, 3.
4. Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th March, 1928, ibid., Telegram No. 91.
'is it possible do you think, to do anything to check the frequent visits of some of these Rulers? I know that Curzon tried to do it and was pulled up at home. But since then the pendulum seems to have swung rather too far in the other direction'.

Birkenhead speculated that the King might be induced to operate some appropriate sanction: receptions at Court functions and Ascot only for those Princes with an interval of three or four years between their visits. Irwin would not support formal restrictions and would only agree to circulate a private note to the effect that regular visits were not viewed with favour. The Viceroy took up a protective stance:

'there are not many Rulers who regularly visit Europe every year - Baroda, the Jam Sahib, Kapurthala and possibly Rajpipla are the only ones which occur to me at present - and most of them rank pretty high as administrators'. (2)

Irwin was driven to rethink his position following the bitter representations of the Maharani of Baroda, the probable authoress of a violent expose of Princes' 'animal passions' in Europe, which protested against

'what she called our failure to discourage regular annual visits to Europe on the part of some of the Princes. Her own husband, Kapurthala, Rajpipla and the Jam Sahib were the examples quoted and these four have each been the most prominent exponents of absentee landlordism during the last ten years'.

The durations of the absences cited were very considerable. Baroda and Kapurthala had both spent in Europe eight months in each year since 1919; the Jam Sahib and Rajpipla had each averaged between five and six months per year away from their States. There was an obvious logic in the Maharani's contention that frequent absences from States injured the position of Princes generally since,

'if the States function well during the Rulers' absence, it gives reasonable grounds for the question whether they are required at all'. (4)

The coterie of European Maharanis gathered by Kapurthala gave point to the fears of Indian consorts that European visits were hunting trips for white women. The Government of India hesitated to obstruct irregular alliances. In 1928, Birkenhead advised Irwin not to undertake 'the very invidious responsibility' of refusing the Gaekwar permission to ship out a French 'secretary' to Baroda.

Despite the very powerful case for positive action, the Viceroy persisted in his refusal to revive Curzon's formal controls over Princes' foreign tours. He had spoken out at the 1926 Chamber session on the dangers which they represented to States' finances, but neither Baroda, Rajpipla nor the Jam Sahib had shown enough evidence of maladministration and crippled economies for Irwin to feel able to offer definite advice. The Viceroy concluded:

'I am afraid too that in all these cases the habit has become chronic and the Princes concerned are really past redemption. There are signs, however, that the infection may spread to others and before it does I propose, if you agree, to advise the Princes in personal conversation very definitely that once in three years is often enough to leave their States for protected tours of Europe'.

Irwin proposed that the sanction of denial of further honours be employed against transgressors:

'in these days when States are so much in the public eye, the Rulers cannot afford to supply texts to those who accuse them of squandering their revenues on prolonged pleasure trips in Europe, and I think the time has come to tell them so clearly'.

Birkenhead fully concurred: the Princes were not adding to personal prestige by making frequent visits; the King viewed these with disfavour.


2. The lady concerned was one Madeleine Grenier. The happy couple sailed for India in the December of 1928. See Birkenhead to Irwin, 7th December, 1928, Hx.P. 9, Telegram No. 455; Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th December, 1928, ibid., Telegram No. 495.


4. Peel to Irwin, 19th June, 1929, Hx.P., 10, Telegram No. 296.
There is no clear indication that Irwin's proposed private strictures to profligate Princes had the desired effect. Granted that no scandals of the magnitude of the 'Mr. A' case reoccurred, various members of Princely dynasties continued to attract unwelcome publicity through their conduct while in Europe. In 1928, Birkenhead wrote in some anxiety about the behaviour of the Maharani of Cooch Behar, currently engaged in running up considerable debts at Welton Nowbray: 'her relations with the opposite sex are attracting unfavourable notice'. The King, greatly disturbed, was pressing for her recall. This plain request found Irwin, once more, unwilling to act. He explained that the Maharani had complete control over her son's allowances. Ostensibly, the Maharani's reason for her residence in Britain was her wish to protect the Yuvraj from the deferential atmosphere of Cooch Behar; she had placed him at an Eastbourne prep school where the roll included Irwin's own sons.

Having hunted with the Quorn and Cottesmore, the Maharani moved to Le Touquet where she cut a radiant and exotic figure at the Casino, in the description of a breathless friend, 'the Princess of One Thousand and One Nights'. The spell did not last and the Secretary of State was left to add up a very considerable list of debts. By the end of 1929, the Maharani was penniless. Her Highness continued to press the Resident to release funds, in the expectation, it seems, that the good times were ending. She spoke to Benn,

"in a very depressing way of the Princes. She said none of them were good Rulers. They all spent the money on themselves".

With considerable prescience the Maharani added that 'she could not see more than a generation of continued life for the Indian States'.

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2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 19th September, 1928, Hx.D., 9, Telegram No. 311.
4. Ibid., p. 85.
5. Peel to Irwin, 30th December, 1929, Hx.D., 10, Telegram No. 98.
Despite her formidable record for unrestrained extravagance, Irwin raised no objection to the Maharani's visit to Switzerland at the end of 1930; the mitigating circumstances were long trouble in a daughter. (1)

By contrast to the relatively passive attitudes adopted by Irwin and the general run of Viceroys who followed Curzon, the King emerged as a most active official critic of Princely prodigality in Europe. On hearing of the poor state of finances in Alwar and Patiala in 1932, His Majesty instructed both Secretary of State and Viceroy to use

'all our influence to deter them from involving themselves still further in wasteful expenditure and visits to this country'. (2)

The King was upset by the spending capacity of young Jaipur who visited England with a complete polo entourage in 1933. Hoare had to assert that 'no undue extravagance' was in evidence. Though the King eventually came round to this view, there were difficulties for Hoare in the attitude of British opinion and press,

'rather on the look out just now for opportunities to denounce extravagance especially where Indian Princes are concerned'. (4)

With his fondness for Princes' style, Willingdon was not disposed to curb the visits of Rulers to Europe. Indeed he was upset that the Palace should question Jaipur's expenditure:

'I really can't see why a young Ruler should not be allowed to go over if he is in a perfectly sound financial position .... after all his arrival with all those ponies won't do any harm to business in England, and at the same time he is showing our people that his Indian team can play pretty well'. (5)

Thus, nothing was done in a practical sense under the umbrella of Paramountcy to restrict Princes' foreign tours. A frisson of anxiety did run round the India Office in 1935 when it was reported that Kapurthala and his son were present at Italian Army manoeuvres and that the Maharaja

1. Irwin to Benn, 26th September, 1930, Hk.P., 6, p. 265.
4. Hoare to Willingdon, 9th June, 1933, ibid., p. 725.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 26th June, 1933, ibid., p. 321.
had been received by Mussolini. Zetland addressed himself to the problem of Princes' connections particularly with Fascist States:

'According to Press Reports, several Princes have recently sought and obtained interviews with Mussolini. The Jam Sahib and Dewas Junior have been officially reported as having been received by the Fuhrer in Germany. A tendency on the part of Indian Princes to seek interviews with Heads of Governments with which our relations are not normal seems to call for discouragement, though it is difficult to deal with here in cases where a Foreign Government is prepared to receive distinguished visitors from India without introductions from His Majesty's representatives'.

Zetland dropped a heavy hint that the Viceroy should caution Kapurthala against 'fishing in troubled waters'. It further emerged that Kapurthala had attended a Nazi Parteitag at Nurnberg ignored by most members of the Berlin Diplomatic Corps. Zetland readily accepted, as did Willingdon, that the motive behind these Princely appearances was one of self-advertisement. Should the Rulers as a body be instructed to report themselves to His Majesty's Representatives when abroad, it might lead to the supposition by Their Highnesses that they did possess real political importance. This line of reasoning resulted in yet another low key approach. Zetland asked that the Princes be circulated to the effect that Kapurthala's conduct was regarded as 'undignified and foolish'. Willingdon merely undertook to consider this expedient without agreeing to do anything. On his return, Kapurthala was in top form when Willingdon attempted to take him to task; 'I don't hold out much hope that we shall get him to change his ways', confessed the Viceroy.

Viewed in retrospect, it was a lapse of judgement on the part of the Government of India not to make fuller use of the ample discretionary powers afforded by Paramountcy to limit the regular excursions abroad of

4. The ebullient Maharaja had a battery of excuses to hand; the most extravagant that his presence in Italy was at the personal invitation of the King of Italy, 'a very old friend'. See ibid.
at least the less reputable Rulers. There were difficulties to be overcome. Some Princes, who were more popular in Europe than in India, would not be easily dissuaded from touring. But so often, the wrong sort of publicity attached itself to visiting Princes. The Under Secretary of State complained to the Viceroy in 1925

'that the way in which the press make a "stunt" to use a hateful phrase, of the visits of certain Indian Princes to this country is a growing embarrassment; they have done it this year in the case of Jodhpur, Patiala and the Begum of Bhopal'.

Having taken Patiala to a West End theatre, Winterton was annoyed by the Maharaja's exposure to constant stares from all parts of the House;

'the way in which his style of living while here was exaggerated by the cheap press was very unfair'.

It may be assumed that Winterton had not attended a performance of a play entitled 'The Green Goddess' produced on the London Stage later in the decade and subsequently filmed. The central character was a composite figure made up of several recognisable Indian Princes, immaculate in turban and dinner jacket, who successfully abducted an English girl; ultimately, retribution arrived in the shape of R.A.F. bombers over the Zenana.

Given the sort of publicity which the visits of Indian Princes often attracted, theatre-goers might have been excused from wondering just how overdrawn were the play's scenarios.

From the narrow viewpoint of the Princes themselves, it would be strongly urged that only in respect of Foreign Leave had Paramountoy not been exercised to their disadvantage. In every other sphere, from opium cultivation to harbour development and from the selection of a financial minister to the choice of an heir, it seemed to the overheated minds of

1. Thompson, K., The Reconstruction of India, (1930), p. 205. The Jam Sahib in particular was universally popular: 'he of the great black beard who first captured our idaltry in the far off days when the Three Graces arose in the West'. See Gardner, A. G., 'The Jam Sahib of Nawabgarh', in Pillars of Society, (1927), p. 103. Of Jaipur, The Times obituary noted that 'he made a host of friends during his glittering career and was certainly the most respected and popular figure in the polo world of India and England of the last 40 years'. See The Times, 25th June, 1970.

2. Winterton to Reading, 28th December, 1925, R.P., B, p. 97.

3. The play was written by William Archer; a brief resume of the plot appears in Gauba, K., op. cit., p. 15.
some Maharajas that they were subject to inequitable intervention at
the hands of the Delhi Government. In reality, a surprising degree of
latitude had been shown by the Government of India, especially in regard
to standards of administration obtaining within the States. This laxity,
so opposed to Lord Salisbury's despatch of 1875, did not serve well the
long term interests of either the Princes or the Political Department.
### Chapter 3

**The Butler Report**

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The Princes Press Their Case

From the standpoint of the Indian Princes, the arrival of Edward Wood, Lord Irwin, to succeed Lord Reading as Viceroy in April 1926, appeared to open up all sorts of possibilities. The relationship with Reading had never been an entirely comfortable one; 'it was curious how few of the Princes seemed to have liked Reading'. Gossip had it that the Viceroy was most remiss socially, a failing to which Princes would be particularly sensitive, and W. M. Forster's Maharaja found him 'clever, but shifty and quite without charm'. At best, the Princes seem to have regarded Reading as 'difficult to place'.

Amongst some Indian Civilians, Reading was known not to shrink from the use of 'the big stick' in the conduct of States' affairs. Hypersensitive Princes, ever fearful of their izzat as internally autonomous rulers, and ever mindful of recent events at Nabha and Indore, had come to regard Reading's viceregalty as 'an age of veiled despotisms.' Further alarm followed from Reading's interpretation of Paramountcy as defined in his published correspondence with the Nizam.

Additional discontent stemmed from the dilatory approach adopted by the Political Department to the Princes' demands. Of the twenty three cases of alleged interference in States' affairs presented by the General Conference of Princes in January 1919, only ten had been

3. Ibid.
satisfactorily settled by the end of Reading's term in March 1926. Important questions regarding extradition, exile offences, boundary settlements and riparian rights still awaited decision. Reading's administration chose to side-track requests for the codification of Political Department procedure, the convening of an informal round table conference in 1922, and the appointment of an Indian States Committee and an advisory committee of the Princes in 1924.

To add to a substantial list of irritations, the Princes had to face the prospect, with the passage of time, of a statutory re-examination of the working of the reforms in British India. As a logical first step towards nipping in the bud any hypothetical handover of the Indian States to British Indian politicians, it became a matter of increasing urgency for the Princes to elicit, in concrete form, an official definition of their treaty rights and a legalistic pronouncement of cast-iron British guarantees.

To this end, no progress had been made by the last month of Reading's viceroyalty. The Under-Secretary of State for India, Earl Winterton, when questioned in the Commons regarding the Princes' proposals and the possibility of a conference between the Government of India and the Princes with a view to the systemisation of treaties 'in the light of modern requirements', tersely explained that no such action was contemplated by the Government of India.

1. Phadnis, U., op. cit., pp. 42, 3
2. Singh, B., op. cit., pp. 78, 9
3. Ch. 101, Govt. of India Act, 1919, 9 and 10, Geo. 5, Section 81.1.
4. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes had approached Reading in 1922 and 24 'with a definite request for the appointment of a committee to enquire into the position of the Indian States vis-à-vis reforms in British India'. See Panikkar, K. W., The Indian Princes in Council (1936) pp. 7-8; Birkenhead to Irwin, 22nd July, 1926, H.C.P., 2, p. 62.
In view of the stonewalling tactics preferred by Reading, the indications were that his successor would require to deal with some very fast bowling in the shape of Princely grievances. Irwin proved to be more approachable; 'the affairs of the Princes assumed a changed outlook as in him they found a sympathetic friend'.

Sympathetic to the extent of lending a reader ear than Reading, but Irwin's impressions of the Rulers remained privately critical: he seemed 'by temperament attracted by the grandeur and the panache that surrounded the Indian Princes, but he was in no way dazzled by their glitter or unduly influenced by their protestations of loyalty'.

By the penultimate year of his term, Irwin could write confidentially to Harcourt Butler of the Prince of Kotah as 'one of the two or three Princes who really think of their subjects first and themselves second'. When speaking publicly, and especially for the benefit of an American audience, Irwin inclined to a much more generous view of their Highnesses.

In any event, within two months of his arrival in India, Irwin felt sufficiently moved by the Princes' fears to sound out the Secretary of State on the possible means of ventilation of their grievances:

'Several of the Princes have dropped hints about the position if constitutional developments go through in British India .... I think there might be some advantage in giving them an opportunity of expressing their views on the matter, but I am quite clear that if anything of the sort was done it must be through the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, and not through any outside body such as they suggested, I think, to Reading'.

4. See Lord Halifax, The Indian Problem, based on the Jonathan Peterson Lecture, delivered at Town Hall, New York City, 7th April, 1922, pp. 23,4.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 26th May, 1926, Ex.P., 2, p. 27.
After a further month's consideration, Irwin wrote again in
stronger terms regarding the institution of informal conversations
with the Princes and the clarification of treaties:

'I think myself it is quite vital that we should all seek to
clear our minds on the problem in advance of the Statutory
Commission.' 1

Irwin further referred to the Princes' enthusiasm for action of
this sort, no doubt conveyed to him by their leading spokesmen Bikaner,
currently in residence at Viceregal lodge. The Political Department
had already undertaken some groundwork and Irwin considered enlisting
the services of a sub-committee of his Council.

The Viceroy's suggestions and preliminary measures elicited a most
guarded response from Birkenhead at the India Office. Evidently, in
terms of temperament and philosophy, the two had little in common.
Irwin later recalled 'how bloody it was serving under F. E.' 3 Nor
perhaps was Birkenhead's heart ever in his India Office appointment.

Certainly Birkenhead confessed to deliberately making dull
Parliamentary speeches on Indian affairs ostensibly to 'lower the
temperature'. He had taken the post against the advice of Austen
Chamberlain who thought it 'dangerous', but had been offered it by
Baldwin expressly for that reason in the hope that it would thereby
prove attractive. 5 Recent evidence suggests that the appointment was
not at all what Birkenhead wanted.

Virulent accounts of Birkenhead's hostility to things Indian
circulated in India. According to an anonymous observer it seemed

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, Ibid., p. 45
2. Ibid.
4. Opinion of Dr. J. R. Peddie, Secretary of Glasgow University during
5. Birkenhead to Irwin, 29th July, 1926, Hx.P., 4, p. 68
that the death of Birkenhead's father might be traced to weakness resulting from his service in the tropical heat of India. It followed that 'the dutiful son out of sheer filial piety, no doubt, has never forgiven India'.

Birkenhead's reputation, then, did little to ease Irwin's path in India. The Viceroy subsequently wrote to Baldwin of the damage done by Birkenhead's unfortunate attitude of mind 'one out of sympathy and rather disposed to despise'. Irwin frankly warned Birkenhead's successor that

'the Birkenhead tone is what we principally have to exorcise. But anyone with his temperament is of course congenitally incapable of appreciating the human problem at all, and every time he touches it he is bound to touch it wrong.'

In the summer of 1926 it is not clear how far Irwin was aware of Birkenhead's fundamental unsuitability for his office: but the ultracautious nature of Birkenhead's response to the proposed discussions of Princes' grievances gave every indication of a blinkered intellect at work which would resolutely refuse to see beyond the legalistic implication of a course of policy.

Birkenhead's reply stressed the delicacy with which such negotiations would have to be conducted and the unfortunate results which might follow from even informal conversations. He had discussed the position with Reading in the previous year, but no subsequent

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1. 'His Lordship's Boon Companion', Lord Birkenhead in Different Roles: A Critical Appreciation, Hindustan Review, Vol. 53, 1929, p. 425. This source also contains a string of anecdotes, attributed to the 'Pioneer' correspondent, illustrating the consistent humiliation of the India Council at the hands of Birkenhead. It was alleged that during his period of office, meetings lasted only a few minutes. One Indian member was said to have assured Birkenhead's successor in office, Wedgwood Benn, that his longest conversation with the former Secretary of State had lasted ten seconds. On another occasion Birkenhead was said to have mistakenly introduced to the India Council as a new Member, an Indian of several years' standing on the Council. See Ibid., p. 426.


3. Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 10th July, 1930, E.A., 6, p. 190.
formula had been produced. As to the value of discussions with the Princes:

'I feel at present somewhat doubtful. It is always a danger in discussion with the Princes that even the most informal remarks may be brought up again subsequently as 'pledges', and in a matter of this importance to the Princes we should have to be specially conscious of this point .... I quite agree that all conversations must be informal and on the basis of committing no one.' 1

Irwin met Birkenhead's misgivings with an undertaking to handle the subject 'with great caution'. By mid November the Secretary of State had advanced to a hesitant recognition that 'an entirely informal exchange of ideas at this stage may be useful'.

Irwin duly proposed to the Assembled Chamber of Princes in November 1926

'that the Chamber should authorise the Standing Committee to hold informal talks with me and my advisors, whenever I think this might most advantageously be done .... they would be merely exploratory in character and would pledge none of those taking part in them to any conclusion.' 4

One difficulty, which the buttressing of the Princes behind a legalistic wall of redefined treaty rights might bring in consequence, would be in a rash of enquiries into the administrations of the newly guaranteed Rulers. Possibly the Viceroy foresaw this development when he hopefully assured Birkenhead that

'the great reform, if we could get it, would be to induce the Princes to make an advance towards the principle of having a regulated Civil List for their private expenditure.' 5

It was not anticipated that this would be easy:

'We are not likely to get them all to adopt this principle very quickly and accounts could always be wangled.' 6

   Irwin to Birkenhead, 13th November, 1926, Ibid., 7, Telegram No. 218
3. Birkenhead to Irwin, 11th November, 1926, Ibid., 7, Telegram No. 223
4. Lord Halifax, Indian Problems - Speeches by Lord Irwin. (1932), p. 140
6. Ibid.
Still Irwin reported a very frank talk with Patiala and it was forcibly suggested to the Maharaja that two Princes of position should move the appropriate resolution at the next year's meeting of the Chamber. But at no point was it suggested to the Princes that concessions might be conditional on their accepting internal reforms.

Concurrently with policy-making in Delhi and London, a number of determined attempts were made to promote the Princes' case in both Britain and India in the latter part of 1926. At Parliamentary level, Colonel Wedgwood took up the cudgels in pointing out

'a growing interest in the position of the native states ..... the Indian Princes - certainly it is true of those whom I have met - can easily be made the most powerful agencies for the uplift of India. They represent something very deep-seated and fundamental in the Indian population. It is foolish to treat them as ornamental nuisances whose one function it is to provide shikar.... We must treat the Princes like men and not like schoolboys; respect their treaties, and not whittle their rights away because those rights may be inconvenient.'

Less comforting, from the Princes' viewpoint, was Wedgwood's reference to States' subjects 'deprived of all rights and back in the medieval age of Europe'; but, implied Wedgwood, such stains on Princely escutcheons could be removed consequent on a change of attitudes in the Political Department. He was not specific on how the Political Department should go about setting things to right.

Publicists were active in current British journals to promote knowledge of the extent of the Princes' sovereign powers and their general incompatibility with swarajist ambitions in British India.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 17th November, 1926, op. cit.
2. Labour (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 1919-42. Wedgwood had toured India in the early 'twenties; see Wedgwood, C. V., The Last of the Radicals; Josiah Wedgwood, (1951), pp. 140-6
4. Ibid., col. 1098
5. Ibid., cols. 1099, 1100.
It was emphasised that 'a fugitive offender can take sanctuary in a Native State as securely as in Foreign territory'. Nor were Princes likely to treat with British Indian politicians when hitherto they had dealt with European administrators representing the prestige of the British Government:

'the position will not be wholly unlike that of the Cavaliers to the Roundhead Government, or that of the Ancien Regime to the lawyer of Arras'. 2

K. M. Panikkar, in a more mundane analysis, stressed 'the undisturbed social harmony' which marked village life in Indian States.

He did concede, however, that

'this is obviously not due to efficient administration - for in many States such a thing is unknown - or as a result of a purposive policy for the rulers in many cases unfortunately have only their pleasures or their sport at heart'. 4

As Panikkar saw it, 'new currents of life' with their capacity for disorganisation had simply passed the Indian States by, undisturbed.

Specific grievances of Indian Princes were more precisely defined at Caxton Hall, again for the benefit of the East Indian Association, by Lieut. Col. C. E. Luard. Representing the views of the late Maharaja Scindia, Luard spoke of the unrest caused by lack of consultation with Princes in the Nabha case, the extravagance of British administered minorities, the inadequacies of Chiefs' Colleges and the practice of delivering formal and official complements to worthless rulers, thereby

2. Ibid., p. 678.
3. Subject of Travancore State; he distinguished himself at Christ Church Oxford by landing 'the best history first of his year' and by being whitewashed by recruits in uniform having previously insulted them. (See John Murray to Baldwin, S.B.P., Vol. 10A, pp. 67, 5); editor of Daily Swaraj, Madras
5. Ibid.
disheartening their more progressive fellows. "Princes' propagandists were also in evidence in the pages of Indian periodicals. One particularly fulsome panegyric told of 'the personal sympathy, generous and kindly attitude of the Ruling Princes': there followed the confident declaration that 'an Indian Prince would commit suicide rather than tolerate any bloody scenes, arbitrary proceedings or oppressions'.

Such optimism was roundly attacked by several Indian commentators and drew a measure of scathing comment from the veteran British correspondent, Sir Valentine Chirol, for whom the calibre of Ruler described by Ahmed 'surely represented his own ideals of what they should be rather than present-day realities'. Ahmed's defence rested on representing the scandals cited by Sir Valentine at Nabha, Indore and Hyderabad as 'unfortunate and are exceptions to an otherwise magnificent standard .... While British India may go on evolving its democratic form, the Indian States, indissolubly bound up with each other in the affectionate bonds of a strong and healthy Federation and loyalty and devotion to the British Crown, may seek the realization of their destiny along the well-tried paths of Oriental Government'.

In the wake of the exertions of Ahmed and his fellows, more positive moves developed in the Princes' camp in February 1927 with the convening of an informal meeting at Patiala. Its object was the formation

3. Ibid., p. 418.
Venkataaubbiai, V. 'Indian States and Ruling Princes', Indian Review, Vol. 27, October, 1926.
5. Sir Valentine Chirol, Diplomat, Traveller, former Director of the Foreign Dept. of The Times, Member of Royal Commission in Indian Public Services, 1912.
7. See Chapter 2, pp. 143-158, 171-177.
of an Indian States association 'for providing machinery for ventilating in a loyal and temperate spirit important questions affecting the States'. The proposed association would control the form of its agendas unlike the Chamber of Princes. A request may have been made for direct representation in London, apart from the High Commissioner, and the establishment of a publicity department in England was considered. Following a close consideration of certain aspects of the relationship with Delhi, it was decided to despatch Colonel Kailas N. Haksar and Mr. L. F. Rushbrook Williams to England to consult Counsel. Arrangements were probably settled during the Simla conference of Princes in early May.

What appeared to offend the Secretary of State were the stated objectives of the Haksar-Williams mission as conveyed by the Daily Telegraph's Calcutta correspondent:

'gauging opinion (in London), consulting proper authorities, seeking expert advice on the penal law position, and otherwise advancing the point of view of the Indian States and urging a full hearing of it before the Statutory Commission'.

'There two gentlemen will not help their masters' cause', Birkenhead wired testily: 'it seems to me of doubtful propriety that the Princes should try to go behind the Government of India in this matter'.

2. Ibid., curiously enough this final proposal had been suggested thirty years before by R. G. Tilak. See Narain, Prem, Press and Politics in India 1885-1905, (1970) p. 209.
3. President of the Council of Regency, Gwalior; Political member of Gwalior Durbar since 1912.
4. Foreign minister of Patiala; formerly Prof. of modern Indian History, Allahabad University, 1914-19; Director of the Central Bureau of Information, Govt. of India 1919; Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Patiala at the Imperial Conference of 1923.
8. Ibid.
In so far as the motive behind the mission was the consulting of a high legal authority on constitutional relations between the Government and Indian States, Irwin felt that there were no reasonable grounds for complaint. The Viceroy further stressed the innocuous nature of the venture, its exclusive concern with legal enquiry, and urged Birkenhead to grant an interview to the Princes' agents in question as 'an act of courtesy which would not be abused'.

A soothing statement by Col. Haksar on the arrival of the Princes' deputation in London attempted to disarm suspicion:

'the mission was not a formal one, entrusted with the duty of discerning definite proposals, or concerned in any sense with propaganda on behalf of the Indian States, but in the interests of the Empire, as well as of India as a whole, a fresh ventilation of the problems presented by the Indian States was a necessity'. 3

To this end, the services of Sir John Simon and Sir Leslie Scott were retained.

While Birkenhead deigned to grant Haksar an interview on 21st June, the atmosphere was hardly relaxed. In Haksar's account:

'he spoke with some annoyance and remarked — 'I can't think what the States are about, asking for a commission of enquiry, proposing terms of reference and taking legal advice as to their constitutional position, when everything is so obvious and needs no elucidation. They will only raise opposition and put ideas into people's heads which were not there'. 7

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 2nd May, 1927, ibid.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 8th May, 1927, ibid.
3. The Times, 9th June, 1927.
4. Liberal (Walthamstow) 1906-18, (Spen Valley) 1922-31; Fellow of All Souls; former Attorney-General and Deputy Leader of Liberal Party. Simon was not approached out of the blue. Though the episode is not recorded in his published memoirs he had, in 1925, defended the agents of the Maharaja of Indore on a charge of murder and attempted abduction of the dancing-girl Huntas Begam. See Abhyankar, G. N., Problems of Indian States, (Poona, 1928) p. 176.
5. Unionist (Liverpool, Exchange Division) 1910-29; former Solicitor-General 1922, and representative of the British Government at International Conferences on Maritime Law, 1909,10,13,22 and 1923. Perhaps in anticipation of enterprises in India, Scott had already struck a warm acquaintance with the outgoing Viceroy. See Reading to Scott, 28th April 1926, Leslie Scott Papers MSS 119/3/3/IN/2 (hereafter L.S.P.)
6. The Times, 9th June, 1927.
7. Strictly confidential note by Haksar of his interview, Hx.P., 21, No. 358.
Haksar, however, saw little hazard in publicising States' affairs and complained about the inadequacy of the Political Department in its advocacy of States' causes where they were opposed to the policies of the specialised departments of the Government of India. In response to the request for 'an authoritative assurance' regarding States' rights, Birkenhead frigidly remarked that 'one can't issue weekly bulletins in regard to these matters'. Finally, as a result of further prodding, Haksar was empowered 'discreetly' to inform Bikaner and the Chancellor of the Chamber, (the joint authority for the mission) that 'the States need have no care:' hardly a watertight guarantee.

It seems clear that in the rarified air of Simla, exposed to the representations of restless rajas in a way that Birkenhead was not, Irwin was moving towards a decision on an official enquiry. The informal conference of Princes which met at Simla on 1st May was reported as favouring

'an early and authoritative investigation to define the constitutional rights and privileges of the States'.

The leading Princes attending were those associated with the Chamber of Princes, Bikaner, Patiala, Kashmir, Jamnagar and various chief ministers. 'Informal' conversations were due to take place with the Viceroy on 4th May, while Bikaner and Jam Sahib, as house guests at Viceregal Lodge, were in a position to prepare the way.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 4th May, 1927.
As Irwin report it, the Princes began by putting in a paper of which the gist was that:

they wanted an early inquiry into the whole problem. They wish this to be a special enquiry, and the principal questions that they would wish it to expose are, firstly, ways in which the States can be enabled more effectively to safeguard their fiscal and other administrative interests as things are today, and secondly, to examine the position as it would be in the hypothetical case of the Secretary of States' functions being curtailed vis-a-vis the Government of India, and the Government of India itself being made more responsible to an Indian electorate.

Fruitful discussions were hampered by the Princes' "temperamental incapacity to agree among themselves", the only point on which they were unanimous, one Ruler let slip to Irwin, being 'cordial dislike of Alwar'.

Nor was the position clarified in Irwin's mind by the apparently contradictory nature of the Princes' ambitions, consultation on administrative matters of common concern, isolation from a British India advancing towards responsible government. Still, the Viceroy felt inclined to support the proposed enquiry: there was always the attendant possibility that the 'idea of a Kollverein .... might be very useful as an educative influence'.

In London, official policy played down the Simla conferences.

Earl Interton, questioned in the Commons first by Wardlaw-Milne, flatly denied that any representation had been received from the Chamber of Princes regarding constitutional safeguards. When further pressed by B. W. Gardner, Interton conceded that certain 'informal conferences' had

1. For full text of the Princes' Aide-Memoire, see Phadnis, U., op. cit. p. 44.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Proctor (Worcestershire, Kidderminster Division) 1922-45; former East India merchant and banker; member of Governor of Bombay's Council and Additional Member of Viceroy of India's Council.
taken place but declined either to reveal their outcome, or to comment on the competence of the forthcoming Statutory Commission to investigate the position regarding Indian States.

By late May Irwin, fortified through discussions with Sir Alexander 2 Huddiman, Sir Basil Blackett and Sir J. F. Thompson, came out strongly for an enquiry. Significantly, his motives were not solely concerned with the reassurance of nervous Princes, but to a substantial extent with British Indian fears lest the Princes be decked out as constitutional deadweights:

'...there is no question that they (Princes) are afraid and it would be a good thing to allay their fears .... but .... their fears have their counterpart in British India where the politicians are always suggesting that we shall use the States and the feelings of the Rulers as arguments to retard the political progress of British India. Even among people more reasonable than a good many of the politicians, there is anxiety lest we should drift into a position in which the States would in effect set the pace of progress in British India. It is desirable to do what we can to dispel this idea, while meeting the legitimate desires of the Princes.'

Irwin further suggested, as possible terms of reference for a Committee, a brief 'to report upon the existing legal and constitutional relations between the Paramount Power and the States'. The possibility of a federation was foreseen but there would be no initiative along such lines from Delhi:

Any overt suggestion of a Union, except for purposes of customs, would be likely to alarm the Princes .... there are even now some federationists in the States and I am not sure that similar ideas are not gaining ground, but I am perfectly clear that it would be a mistake for us to appear to be pressing at present.

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2. Service in Bengal as Assistant Magistrate and Collector; Member of Governor-General's Council 1924.
3. Secretary to Indian Finance and Currency Commission, 1913-14; Finance Member of Governor-General's Executive Council 1923.
4. Chief Secretary to Government of Punjab, 1916; Secretary to Government of India, Foreign and Political Department from 1922.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
As to the composition of the committee, 'it should be entrusted to three wise men, of whom one should be a jurist and one a financial authority of repute'.

At last Birkenhead began to give way, though he clearly still regarded the issue as something of a hornet's nest. Interestingly enough, he anticipated that this sensitive area would be bypassed by his Statutory Commission which, he expected, would produce very little of real substance. Birkenhead remained not at all sure that the Princes are not making a mistake in asking for an enquiry at all. They have their treaty rights, and it is inconceivable that the Statutory Commission should not save these rights if it makes any recommendations affecting their rights directly or indirectly - a very improbable contingency in my opinion, and I find it difficult to believe that the commission will recommend any radical alteration in the constitution or status of the Central Government.

There followed the grudging admission 'that in view of the nervousness of the chiefs, we should have to give them something'.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 26th May, 1927, EgP, 3, pp. 123-5
2. Birkenhead to Irwin, 16th June, 1927, EgP, 3, p. 65.
3. Ibid.
The Formation of the Butler Committee
The Formation of the Butler Committee

With the necessity for an enquiry now established in principle, the next task concerned the framing of the proposed committee's terms of reference. Birkenhead thought a decision should await the Princes' next move on the basis of the opinion of Counsel brought by Rushbrook Williams and Haksar from England. The Secretary of State mistrusted such phrases as 'legal and constitutional', being very loth to invite definition on juridical lines of rights and obligations arising out of suzerainty. The formula suggested by Birkenhead, and eventually adopted as the first part of the States' Committee's terms of reference, ran:

to report upon the existing relations between the Paramount Power and the States, with particular reference to the rights and obligations arising from:-

(a) treaties, engagements and sanads
(b) usage, sufferance and other causes.

Birkenhead proposed Harcourt Butler as a possible Chairman.

Butler had long been active as a champion of the native aristocracy both in British India and the States.

Butler was to publicly record his belief that 'personal rule is attractive to most Orientals'. "He was an Amir-parwa, a protector of the nobles", and such were the strengths of Butler's loyalties that a jealous colleague might compose malicious doggerel to the effect that

I tickled the tail of the Taluqdar,
And I tickled his tail so successfully
That now I am Sir Harcourt and the next L.G.  
Butler's earlier opposition to Dyarchy, which had attracted public
comment, might seem to have marked him out in the more traditionalist
official mind as a 'safe' man.

Certainly, Irwin felt uneasy regarding his candidature. Butler's
popularity with the Princes was not in doubt, 'but there are others who
might do as well and better'. What principally disturbed Irwin was the
close association of Harcourt Butler with the reaction against Curzon's
policy which set in under Minto, a reaction
clearly stated in the Introduction to the Political Department Manual
which I think goes too far. The Manual was first brought out in
Butler's time and I am told that the introduction appeared under
his signature. His popularity with the Princes was probably due
to a considerable extent to his association with the change of
policy, and I feel some doubt whether the selection of a President
who was associated so closely with the views expressed in the
Introduction to the Political Manual would be altogether good.

Irwin did favour someone with Indian experience, but thought Ronaldshay
to be 'as good as anyone'. Ronaldshay's name had also been suggested

1. Woodruff, Philip, op. cit., p. 89
3. The Times, 6th June, 1919.
4. Butler was never positively listed as an active diehard in the later
crisis surrounding the progress of the 1935 India Bill; see
Ghosh, S. C., Decision-making and power in the British Conservative
Party: a case-study of the India problem 1929-34, Political
Studies XIII, June 1965, No. 2, pp. 198-212. However he did refuse
to join the 'moderate Conservative Indian lobby'; the Union of Britain
and India in 1933: see Lord Butler, The Art of the Possible, (London
6. See Chapter 2, pp. 120, 1; 129.
member of Royal Commission on Public Services in India, 1912-15;
Governor of Bengal, 1927-22.
by Birkenhead and several of the Princes favoured a Chairman from outside.

Cecil's name had been mentioned but Irwin thought that he probably would not take it on.

The recruiting of a suitable Chairman fast developed into a problem. Birkenhead approached Robert Cecil, though not without reservation:

'I had some doubts as to whether he might not conceivably run off the rails'.

Professor Holdsworth was secured a Jurist; as an Oxford contemporary, Birkenhead could recommend him as 'an excellent fellow .... very quick and unobtrusive'. By early November it seemed assured that Harcourt Butler, the third choice, would land the Chairmanship. First Cecil and then Ronaldshay had refused. Irwin, for reasons which are not explicit, had undergone a change of heart regarding Butler's suitability. Butler, once approached, hesitated since acceptance of the terms offered might place him in a position in which his status (especially with regard to emoluments) would compare unfavourably with the Governorship which he had held for so long. Butler's expectation was that he would draw

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5. Sir William Searle Holdsworth, K.C., 1920; Vinerian Professor since 1922 in English Law, University of Oxford; Fellow All Souls College.
8. Birkenhead to Irwin, 4th November, 1927, Hx.E., 8, Telegram No. 300.
10. The same remuneration as members of the Statutory Commission, viz. Rs. 1,500 per month plus daily allowance of Rs. 15: see Birkenhead to Irwin, 10th December, 1927, Hx.E., 8, Telegram No. 371.
salary as Governor with travelling expenses or allowances. However clarification from the Secretary of State on the issue of 'compensatory allowances', considerably in excess of what Irwin had in mind, cleared the way for Harcourt Butler's acceptance.

The search for a third member eventually settled on the sixth choice. The nature of the criteria demanded suggests that anyone known to be critical of the Princes would be debarred. In the first instance, Birkenhead favoured Sir Louis Kershaw; 'he has been long enough out of India to have a mind detached from present controversy'. This selection was vetoed by Delhi, where it was felt in high quarters that Kershaw, though an Indian Civilian, would not fit since 'it is essential to have men on the committee who will carry with them the full confidence of the Princes'.

Birkenhead next asked Cunliffe-Lister to release Sydney Chapman, Chief Economic Adviser to His Majesties' Government. Cunliffe-Lister duly declined and suggested Sir Laurence Guillemard, who subsequently

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 8th November, 1927, Hx.P., S, Telegram No. 297.
4. Secretary, India Revenue and Agricultural Department, 1915;
   Assistant Under-Secretary of State, India Office, 1921.
   President of the Board of Trade, 1922–3, 1924–9.
    Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for Malay States, 1919–27.
excused himself on grounds of health. Walter Layton, next approached, found himself unable to accept. Irwin, by now pressing for a final decision on personnel, wired in support of S. H. Slater whose socialist tendencies were now reported to be 'intellectual and not aggressive'. However, one week later Birkenhead had appointed Sidney Peel. The Committee was now complete. Neither Holdsworth nor Peel had been in India before and Holdsworth in particular was to find the scale of Princely hospitality, notably in the matter of wining and dining, very difficult to adapt to.

Colonel Peel, as an 'old friend' of Leslie Scott, would doubtless be advised of the Princes' position by the latter, who following his professional activities on behalf of the Princes during the summer, had now been invited by the Jam Sahib on behalf of the Princes collectively, and by Bharatpur as an individual, to act as Counsel in connection with a Committee of Enquiry. Scott's opportunity to make preliminary soundings might well have arisen when he sailed with the two home-based members of the Committee, Holdsworth and Peel, on 30th December from Marseilles.

In any event, Birkenhead felt sufficiently uneasy to write that a very embarrassing situation might be created if the findings or recommendations of the Committee (which I assume will of necessity be both communicated to the Princes and published for general information) were not such as to commend themselves to the Government.

4. Samuel Henry Slater, C.M.G., C.I.E., one time Professor of Economics; Commissioner of Labour, Madras.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5th December, 1927, Hx.P., 8, Telegram No. 335.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
Birkenhead reiterated his doubts in stronger terms one week later: having only acquiesced in the Enquiry 'as a matter of expediency in order to show the Chiefs that we are alive to their doubts and anxieties', he feared that

a very awkward situation would arise if the Committee produced a theory of the relations between the Paramount Power and the States conflicting with past actions or decisions of the Government, or one which the Government found difficult to accept as a guide for the future .... at the best, probably, the Commission's findings will provide the 'advanced Princes' with a certain quantity of material for inconvenient argument. 1

A well briefed Chairman, of course, could be expected to run on the right rails:

'It seems therefore to be very important that, before the Committee begins its work it - or at least the Chairman - should be carefully instructed by you with your views, which I think are pretty much the same as mine'. 2

Having in mind Irwin's previous reservations regarding Butler, this seemed an obvious caveat:

He has been out of touch with the States for some time and may not realise that it was the policy of non-intervention which he initiated, and Montagu stimulated, which is largely responsible for the crop of evils which Reading and you have had to deal with. 3

Birkenhead's attitude in all this reveals a lingering fear that a strengthened Princely bloc might come to represent a form of menace to the British presence in India, albeit a vague one, and that the implementation of a counterweight policy might be taken too far:

Even granted that it may be in the interests of Great Britain (as many people think), no less than of the States themselves that they should be entrenched against an Indianised Government of India responsible to an Indian legislature, the dreaded day is remote, and we cannot afford in the meantime to entrench them against ourselves. Any weakening in the position taken up by us in Reading's correspondence with the Nizam - and I may tell you that I, no less than he, weighed every word that was said then - would be most unfortunate, and I hope that the Committee, though fixing its attention on the more distant problem, will not ignore the problem which is with us every day. 4

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
A pointed memorandum, under Birkenhead's own signature, outlining possible pitfalls was sent to Peel and Holdsworth before their departure. Relations with the States were only workable through 'elasticity' and the exercise of 'undefined reserves of power under the head of suzerainty': the serious 'embarrassment' which might follow from the production of a written constitution was stressed.

At the Indian end, steps had already been taken designed to bring about close cooperation between officials and the expected Committee, principally by involving the Political Department from the beginning. Irwin proposed the appointment of a Political as Secretary 'to prepare the ground'. The duly appointed officer, Colonel Ogilvie, though pronounced as popular with both officials and Princes, had apparently earned in some quarters, the sobriquet of 'Paramountcy Personified'. Ogilvie subsequently accompanied the Committee on its tour, quite possibly in the role of a Political Department watchdog. By the end of December, arrangements had been made for Butler to go through the papers with the Political Department, the Chairman having survived an attack on his life by a lunatic in Rangoon.

By mid November the terms of reference had been finally decided, and towards the end of the month the text of the Viceroy's proposed announcement to the Princes was settled. It was duly delivered at a

2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12th September, 1927, H.E.P., 8, Telegram No. 231.
5. Interview with L. F. Rushbrook Williams, 17th March, 1927.
6. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th December, 1927, H.E.P., 8, Telegram No. 249.
7. The Times, 16th December, 1927.
   Irwin to Birkenhead, 22nd November, 1927, H.E.P., 8, Telegram No. 309.
banquet at Rajkot on 22nd November and the agreed terms of reference 1 pronounced.

The Rajkot Statement evoked no immediate response in Britain. The announcement regarding the Indian Statutory Commission in November 2 had already prompted George Lansbury to table a written question in the Commons which asked whether the Commission would be able to consider

'the absorption of the Indian States into a federation representative of all India and the consequent abolition of all autocratic rule throughout India'. 3

But the Rajkot Statement had not been originally reported in The Times and the Parliamentary Questions which eventually appeared were largely concerned with the financing of the Committee. On the evening of 15th December the India Office had issued a communique reiterating the terms of the Rajkot announcement and naming the members of the State's 4 Committee, in order to head off a Question put down by T. E. Groves 6 for 19th December.

The Question did elucidate that the expenses of the Committee would fall on Indian revenues. Winterton later declined to give an estimate of costs. Lansbury, with his teeth into the matter, then tabled a Question requiring that the expenditure be submitted to the vote of the Indian Legislative Assembly. Winterton would not be drawn and refused to comment. Such Parliamentary pinpricks were unlikely to disturb the

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1. Part (1) followed the formula agreed on 28th July.
   Part (II) read: 'to enquire into the financial and economic relations between British India and the States, and to make any recommendations that the Committee may consider desirable or necessary for their more satisfactory adjustment'. See The Times, 16th December, 1927; Report of Indian States Committee, Cmd. 3312, p. 5.
2. Labour (Poplar, Bow and Bromley Division).
4. The Times, 16th December, 1927.
5. Labour, (West Ham, Stratford Division).
7. This was subsequently confirmed: see H.C.D., Oral Answers, Vol. 213, 22nd February, 1928, col. 1599.
8. Ibid., Vol. 214, 27th February, 1928, col. 3.
Princes unduly for whom 1927 had ended on a note of high hope. They had impressed the Viceroy as being 'quite pleased with the appointment of the Committee and with the Committee itself'. This sentiment was later confirmed in the proceedings of the Chamber of Princes the following February. Despite the exceptional difficulties in recruiting, Irwin himself appeared fully satisfied with the personnel of the Committee: 'I don't think it could possibly have been better'. The Princes could relax in the knowledge that much had been done to create a climate of opinion in Britain favourable to their position. Their Highnesses' case had been stated forcefully in the Commons by Lieut. Cdr. Kenworthy who laid particular stress on the difficulties, at the hands of an inert Delhi bureaucracy, encountered by States interested in industrial development. The summary procedure for deposition and the Europeanisation of Services in Indian States were objects of further criticism.

Both Rushbrooke Williams and Col. Maksar, while in Britain, took the opportunity to eulogise the achievements of the Princes. Williams underlined the close ties between Ruler and ruled,

'it must be remembered that in Indian States, the average man finds the kind of government that he understands controlled by an individual whom he has been brought up to revere'.

Williams commented on an atmosphere 'more cheerful and carefree .... an air of independence, a swagger if you like to call it so, rarely encountered in British India'.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th December, 1927, Hx.P., 3, p. 219.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th February, 1928, Hx.P., 4, pp. 31,32.
3. Birkenhead to Irwin, 26th January, 1928, ibid., p. 11.
8. Ibid., p. 374.
Haksar too dwelt on the personal veneration for a Ruler,

'one of the last sentiments that India will let die. If the Englishman loves a Lord, the Indian loves a Prince despite his occasional vagaries'.

Moreover, young Englishmen of the right type might find a lucrative career in Princely India which was

'still crying out for the services of the old fashioned Englishman of personality whom his more astute compatriots and contemporaries may regard as a back number'.

One consideration would be salaries 'as a rule far larger' than those drawn by civilians in British India. Readers of the authoritative 'Round Table' would be acquainted with the Princes' discomfort, the need for an authoritative inquiry, and the existence of a possible constitutional blueprint:

The Treaty with the Irish Free State shows that it is not beyond the ingenuity of statesmen to arrange for two species of Imperial connection within the confines of a single country.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer held up the staunch loyalty of the Princes during the war as 'a refreshing contrast to the attitude of most Indian politicians': the Princes represented their loyalty as personal to the King-Emperor, not to a Government in the abstract, British or Indian and this feeling 'it would be fatal to disregard'. Another former Governor, Lord Sydenham, also speaking with impressive weight of experience, protested against 'unjustifiable interference with the affairs of the Native States' by the Indian Assembly and warned that the Princes'

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2. Ibid., p. 379.
3. Ibid., p. 380.
4. 'India Reforms, the Princes' Standpoint', Round Table, Vol. XVII, pp. 710, 9.
anxieties and just claims 'must be taken into full account in any revision of the constitution'. One solution to the constitutional problem was projected with the aid of a Japanese model. Just as in the Japanese constitution, a provision withdrew the Army and Navy from popular control, so might the States be withdrawn from the control of a future Legislative Assembly: 'one thing is certain, that the prestige of the Princes ought to be enhanced rather than reduced'.

The success of the Princes' spokesmen and sympathisers in Britain cannot be calculated with any degree of certainty. What does seem clear is that Harcourt Butler, on whose shoulders rested the hopes of the Rulers, had categorically accepted the narrow limits within which London and Delhi demanded that he move. Irwin wrote reassuringly that the briefing sessions, which had taken place prior to the departure of the Committee to hear the Princes' side of things, had borne fruit and that Butler

'is quite alive to the undesirability and impropriety of the Committee attempting to define on any juridic basis the limits of authority of the Paramount Power'.

Butler had pledged himself not to

'go behind .... the position laid down in Reading's letter to the Nizam'

a position which in Irwin's view not even the most progressive Prince 'would really seek in the last resort to question'. The possibility of 'entrenching' the Princes should not arise. Butler's compliance with these preliminary instructions from the Secretary of State exposes

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4. Ibid.
the whole procedure of an itinerant Committee of Inquiry as something of a sham, a quite disingenuous undertaking to examine the Princes' case objectively.

Yet a measure of apprehension persisted in London. Seven weeks later Irwin felt it necessary to send further reassurance. Regarding interpretation of the terms of reference, he felt confident that Butler understood that clause (1) required a report on the actual position and not a recommendation in favour of some fresh style of relationship; as for clause (2) which definitely asked for recommendations, 'Butler and his colleagues are sensible people and are not at all disposed to run wild'. However comforting such information might appear, Birkenhead still felt constrained to telegraph instructions, while the Committee were actually on tour: Butler should be told again that on the first main term of reference his job was to report on fundamental matters of fact: 'it was for His Majesty's Government to draw the inferences'.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29th February, 1928, Ex.P., 4, p. 32.
2. Birkenhead to Irwin, 23rd March, 1928, Ex.P., 9, Telegram No. 880.
The Butler Committee on Tour
The Butler Committee On Tour

The Butler Committee, began its first tour on Sunday, 22nd January. Butler himself had been in good form on the eve, having danced six dances at a Delhi function 'a thing I have not done for over twenty years'.

The first stop, Rampur, offered 'a most hospitable welcome and every modern convenience that taste and luxury could supply'. This proved to be characteristic of the Committee's reception throughout their tour. Where Rampur excelled was in the provision of three Turkish baths kept up with female attendants. 'None of the Committee', recorded Butler, 'had a Turkish bath!' The interview with the Nawab turned out to be less than promising. From a viewpoint heavily laced with pessimism and suspicion, Rampur stated that it would be 'no fun' to be a constitutional ruler. It would be 'no fun' if Indian princes, who supported the British without conditions, were to be supported by the British only on condition of introducing reforms. Butler's gentle promptings in this direction considerably upset his Highness at the time but eventually by message and letter he answered me that his existing practice gave full effect to my advice.

After an interval at Simla for tea with Lutyens and a tour of Viceregal Lodge, Friday found the Committee at Patiala. There Butler

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1. See map of itinerary, facing page.
3. Meenan, H.B. Sir Sayed Mohammed Haider Ali Khan; Area 892 sq. mls.; pop. 500,000; 55 per cent Hindu, 15 per cent Muslim; Revenue £325,000.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 3.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Jat Kich, H.B. Sir Bhupinder Singh: Area: 5,932, sq. mls.; pop. 1 1/2 millions; 55 per cent Hindus; 22 per cent Sikhs; 20 per cent Moslems. Revenue: £1,250,000.
particularly noted

'the streets lined with respectful crowds .... the lucky dwarfs at the Durbar Hall .... His Highness, a magnificent figure set off by the 'Sans Souci'". 1

During their three day visit, the Committee viewed jails and hospitals, wrestling and an exhibition, a 'typical village', more wrestling, the magnificently equipped state kennels and the treasures of the Palace. Only on Sunday evening does there appear to have been any practical business done when the Committee met seven Princes from the Punjab and North Rajputana. Professor Rushbrook Williams, Col. Haksar and Sir Leslie Scott were in attendance, the latter expressly to explain the delay in presenting their case. Little was achieved.

At the banquet which followed, Patiala spoke pointedly to the effect that the control of the Government of India was passing more and more from the hands of the Power with whom 'sacred ties of obligation' had been pledged. The Maharaja let slip an interesting complaint to Butler privately the following day which sheds some light on the services rendered by States' judiciaries. Stressing the lack of quid pro quo in his dealings with Political officers, Patiala alleged that

'he was often asked to hand up or keep in confinement people whose cases were not covered by extradition, and he did so from comity, but his requests were not treated in the same spirit'. 6

At no point during the visit to Patiala, did Butler comment on His Highnesses' flagrant extravagance or his general reputation for dedicated and rapacious debauchery.

5. Ibid., p. 32.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
On Monday, 31st January, the Committee arrived at Bikaner where the extent of the popular welcome greatly impressed Butler:

'Crowds gave His Highness a wonderful reception. The salutation cry is Fhemen (mercy) . . . . the faces of the people and their enthusiasm showed how popular His Highness is, a semi-deity to them.'

In his speech at the customary State Banquet given in honour of the Committee, Bikaner reminded his audience that Sir Harcourt had 'rescued' the Princes before, and that now, as President of the Committee, his role would be 'once and for all, to lead to a rigid adoption for all time of the liberal, sympathetic and generous policy which Sir Harcourt was so largely instrumental in bringing about twenty years ago.'

In reply, Butler complimented in the very highest terms the administrative progress made, 'a record of which any administration in any part of the world might be proud'. It seems that Bikaner came to have symbolic importance for Butler and he went on to say 'I confess that my imagination is powerfully affected by the future of the Indian States'. This sentence was to be reproduced almost verbatim in the Report itself.

The Committee spent the next three days shooting, well fortified with champagne and fine old brandy. 'I like this simple camp life', wrote Butler, 'this roughing it a la Ritz'. Finally, on the Friday evening, discussions ensued with several Princes and Sir Leslie Scott. Proceedings took on a predictable pattern: 'all agreed that something should be done but no one seemed to know what was wanted'. Butler side-tracked Scott's wily ploy which invited the Committee to declare its understanding of a reasonable case for the Princes to put forward.

1. Hindu, Rahtor Rajput, H. N. Maharaja Sir Ganga Singhji. Area 23,000 sq.mls.; pop. nearly 1,000,000; 84 per cent Hindus, 11 per cent Moslems; revenue nearly £1,000,000.
3. Ibid., p. 37.
4. Ibid., p. 39.
5. Ibid. See Report of India States Committee Cmd. 3302, p. 52
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 10, 11
He referred Scott to Minto's Udaipur speech which defined 'good
government'. It was the opposite of 'bad government' and while no
general standards obtained, it was the expectation of the Political
Department that representative institutions would grow up from within.

On the following day, 4th February, the Committee departed for
Udaipur, already a little debilitated by Princely receptions:

'we feel it almost a relief to get away from the excellent cuisine',
Butler confessed,

'a continued course of Indian States hospitality is a severe strain
on the constitution'.

The next three days spent at Udaipur conformed in great part to the
now familiar pattern, the State Banquet and garden party, palace tours
and sight seeing, shikar. Monday morning proved to be the exception
during which the Committee drew up questions for the Political Secretary,
C. C. Watson. The European witnesses all testified to the effect
that while the administrative system had not really altered in twenty
years, it suited the people generally and they showed a marked preference
for autocracy. 'High rents', according to Cheuevix-Trench and others,
'made for hard work and a happy people'. Practical proof was provided
in the shape of a great gathering of women assembled at the Jai Suvand
lake to receive the Maharana's largesse 'very happy they all looked',
noted Butler.

3. Hindu. Sesodia Rajput. H. H. Maharana Sir Bhupal Bahadur Singhji:
area 12,691 sq.mls. pop. 1,500,000; 76 per cent Hindus; 13 per cent
Aminists (mostly Billis). Revenue: about Rs.40,00,000.
5. Charles Cunningham, C.S.I., C.I.E., Political Officer; Service in
Kathiswar and Rajpawana; Agent to the Governor-General Western
India States Agency, 1924.
6. The Rev. J. W. Runciman; Cheuevix-Trench, Charles Godfrey, B.A.,
retd. Indian C.S.; Settlement at Revenue Office Udaipur;
Mr. Kemne, one time Settlement Officer in Tonk.
8. Ibid., p. 22.
On Thursday, 9th February, the party arrived at Alwar, where the next three days were to be spent. Apart from two discussions, of an undisclosed length, with the Maharaja on Thursday and Saturday evenings, the customary succession of social rounds predominated. Shikar was arranged for every day, an ambitious palace-building programme had to be viewed, elephant and polo stables investigated, and the State troops inspected. The inevitable State Banquet was marked by the close attention paid by two dancing girls, described as 'very playful', to Professor Holdsworth. Indeed Butler humourously questioned the possibility of a safe return by Holdsworth to Oxford in view of his experience in 'Hell, the India States Committee!' The two short discussions with the Maharaja proved to be predictably unproductive. In Alwar's view it should have been possible to define the legal and constitutional position of the States in nine sub-paragraphs. On subsequent enquiry from Colonel Peel, His Highness was unable to state these himself. On Sunday afternoon, the Committee bid farewell to Alwar and thus ended the first tour. Butler noted with satisfaction that it had been 'very successful indeed, on the whole, especially in the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and understanding.'

Conscious of the apparently overwhelming weight given to social rounds in the text of his diary, Butler felt obliged to explain that it dealt "chiefly with the spectacular part of our tour and does not record the many interviews and private conferences which we held".
analysis of Butler's own detailed schedule does not make it clear when such business could have been fitted in. However, during the next fortnight, Butler did interview a number of witnesses in Delhi though perhaps his penchant for the whirl of society peeps through in his confessed distaste for office work during a Delhi season of balls, investitures, garden parties and 'fair polo'. Application to duty brought little tangible reward and even a mind, originally not at all unsympathetic to the Princes' cause, soured:

'I tell them that they have clamoured for a committee to redress their burning wrongs and that it takes them six months with the help of eminent counsel to find out what their burning wrongs are!' 2

For their part, the Princes possibly felt most comfortable in the role of host to a Committee whose powers of critical perception might be dulled by exposure to relentless hospitality. Butler noted, perhaps with a kind of trepidation that the Princes 'are most anxious that we should see the States and press us to see more and more of them'. 4

A second tour duly took place and the Committee reached Jaipur on 1st March. Here rather more work appears to have been done, two mornings being given over to discussion with Colonel Lawrence and his subordinates in the Council of Regency. No 'views of interest' emerged. Though an anonymous letter reached Butler which dramatically labelled 'Indian Chiefs as worse than wild beasts in England' the Chairman appeared more

2. Ibid.
3. The lavish scale of the various magnificent receptions given to the Committee did not go unnoticed in the Indian Press: see 'The Indian States Enquiry', Indian Review, Vol. 29, 1928, p. 355. It was generally recognised that the tour had been conducted with every attention to comfort: see Sir Leslie Wilson (Governor of Bombay) to Scott, 10th April, 1928, L.P.R. 119/3/5/11/7.
5. See map, facing page 285.
6. Hindu: Kochhwaha Rajput: H.H. Sir Man Singh: Area, 15,600 sq. mls.; pop. 2,500,000; 90 cent Hindu: revenue about £1,000,000.
7. Henry Rundle, C.I.E. Officer of Political Department; service in Gwalior, Bundelkhand, Hyderabad, Harat and Tonk, Amer-Harvara; on Foreign Service as President, Council of State, Jaipur, March 1927.
impressed by Jaipur generally - 'a perfect system of State socialism with
the inevitable autocracy at the top'. Butler had no comment to make
on the scale of Princely expenditure. In the context of polo
this was shortly to outrage no less a person than the King Emperor.
Nor did he refer to the existence of internal political tensions between
defacto autonomous nobles running two thirds of the State and the Durbar.
These ultimately resulted in widely publicised disorders which rocked
Jaipur for most of 1938.

Arriving at Jodhpur on 3rd March, Butler was at once struck by a
State 'perhaps the best administered in Rajputana'. However such
competence was not to be ascribed to any indigenous talent but rather to
a succession of minorities and the current employment of forty-five
British officers (twenty-five of whom were attached to the railway).
Significantly, His Highness himself declined to give evidence, professing
himself well satisfied and the principal witnesses examined were European.

At the next port of call, Palanpur reached on 6th March, the Nawab
proved equally evasive. While he asked to be excused giving evidence
on the grounds that his views were those of the Standing Committee of the
Chamber as represented by Sir Leslie Scott, he was prepared to discuss
general matters and future prospects. This he proceeded to do in a
markedly pessimistic vein, not perhaps out of place in a Muslim ruling over
a predominantly Hindu populated State where cow killing was permitted.

4. Hindu: Rathor Rajput: H.H. Maharaja Sir Ymed Singhji: Area 95,000
   sq.mls.: pop. about 2,000,000, 83 per cent Hindus, 8 per cent
   Moslems: revenue about £1,000,000.
6. Ibid.
7. Moslem: Lohani Pathan: Major H. H. Nawab Sher Muhammed Khan:
   Area 1,765 sq.mls.: pop. 250,000: 75 per cent Hindus: revenue £20,000.
The Nawab seemed particularly sensitive to the life style of many of his fellow Princes. He pressed for the establishment of some sort of machinery to prevent misgovernment and misbehaviour to an extent which brought Princes 'on the limelight' - His Highnesses' own expression as Butler wryly noted. A measure of reassurance from Sir Harcourt, intended to stiffen the Nawab's morale, emphasised that where five years before Princes had feared that they might be swamped by British India, Butler now noticed

'a turn of opinion and the expectancy that the autocratic rule of the Princes might outlive experiments in democracy'.

At Jannagar, which the Committee visited from 7th to 11th March, Butler and his colleagues encountered the by now familiar atmosphere of hospitable non-communication. At a meeting held on the afternoon of the 8th, the Kathiawar Princes, including the Jam Sahib, 'an old friend of more than a quarter of a century', declared their position reserved, preferring to present their case through Scott. Two days later, however, Butler was privately informed by the Thakore Sahib of Limbdi, that without the Jam Sahib, the majority of Kathiawar Rulers would oppose Scott's scheme. Sage old Limbdi's comments regarding the extreme divergence of view among Princes can hardly have surprised Butler.

On the lighter side, a very full social programme had slipped into gear like clockwork. During superbly organised shoots, Butler particularly noticed the Raja of Drohl, who shot at nothing except a big owl, and the Raja of Shore, both personages, Butler indicated, 'properly so called'. The Jam Sahib himself did not shoot due to a tendency, which he could not stop, to drive the birds towards him. At dusk, the

3. *Hindu: H.H. Sir Ranjitsinhji Vidhaji, Maharaja Jamnagar; area 3,791 sq.mls.; pop. 86 per cent Hindus, 15 per cent Moslems; Revenue, £450,000.
spectacle of numerous palaces illuminated with myriads of lights inspired Butler to write of 'Arabian Nights'. Lest however, the Committee should become insensitive in this atmosphere of Eastern splendour to the Jam Sahib's reverence for the British connection, Dame Clare Butt was on hand at the State Banquet and subsequent dinners to sing 'God Save The King'.

March 11th to 13th found the Committee at Baroda. Butler and the Gaekwar at once found common ground in identifying the main problems facing the Indian States as economic. The States were confronted with large demands, the people did not like taxation. Butler agreed that a simple form of administration, at any rate outside the big towns, was required. Democracy, however, made for large expenditure.

In general, Butler professed himself to be impressed by what was after all a progressive State especially in regard to social reform. Yet his fondness for traditional paternalism informs his sympathetic comment on a dispute regarding certain gold State guns drawn by bullocks—how much was gold, how much gun:

'there is much of the child-like about Indian States. This perhaps appeals particularly to the populace'.

Following a flying visit to Bombay, the Committee reached Hyderabad on 15th March. Butler's four day sojourn only served to produce a catalogue of complaints and forebodings ranging from the run down condition of the Residency to the future survival of the premier India State.

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1. Contralto of almost unexampled popularity: six feet two inches in height, appeared on concert platforms all over the British Empire; suggested 'Land of Hope and Glory' to Elgar.


3. Hindu: Maratha: H.H. Si Sayaji Rao Gaekwar: Area, 8,135 sq. mls.: pop. 2,500,000 mostly Gujarati Hindus: revenue £1,750,000.

4. H.B.P., p. 17


7. Moslem: Nizam H.E.H. Si Osman Ali Khan: area 82,000 sq. mls.: pop. 13,500,000, some 12,500,000 Hindus: revenue £7,000,000.
What interested the Nizam's Council most was the size of the British element in the future government of India. The proposal of a sollverein met with only a lukewarm reception. Butler carried away an overwhelming impression of oppressive decay, decay in the Ruler, decay in an effete old and worn out aristocracy, with a new university rising up that may give political trouble, with an army commanded by a dear old gentleman who cannot last long ..., and with a population 90 per cent of which is Hindu, coming strongly under Maratha influence.

From decadent Hyderabad to progressive Mysore, and here the Committee were lodged from 19th to 22nd March. Butler expressed himself struck by the contrast. The major claim made by the Dewan and his colleagues concerned the special footing on which Mysore should be placed owing to its advanced administration. Disputes between the State and the Government of India should be settled by an independent body. Canvassing of opinion, including that of representatives of the Kolar Gold Fields and various planting interests, elicited nothing but praise for the administration and Butler pronounced the electrically lit town of Mysore as 'the best kept place in India'.

From Bangalore to Bombay for a conference with a Bombay Government 'under the impression that they are universally beloved'. The Committee then moved on to Bhopal, a painful journey for Butler now

2. Ibid., p. 23
5. Hindu: Kshatriya: H.H. Maharaja Krishnareja Wadiyar: Area 29,464 sq.mls.: pop. 6,000,000 mostly Hindu, about 340,000 Moslems: revenue £3,000,000.
7. H.B.P., p. 26
8. Ibid., p. 28
9. Ibid., p. 27
10. Ibid., p. 30
11. Moslem: Afghan, Orakzi: Lt.-Col. H.H. Nawab Sir Hamidullah Khan: Area 6,000 sq.mls.: pop. 750,000, 73 per cent Hindus, 13 per cent Moslems: revenue £500,000.
1. Butler felt that he had seen enough to be impressed by the scale of social services in the State, understood to be the product of public spirited spending by both the Nawab and the former Begum. More dramatically impressive was the rapturous reception given to the Nawab by his Hindu subjects during holi. Butler rejected out of hand an anonymous petition to the effect that the Hindus in question had been coerced.

Both the Nawab and his mother, the former Begum, complained of a deterioration in the treatment meted out to the Princes and indeed in the type of Englishman with whom they had to deal. While Colonel Ogilvie was constantly on hand to put the Political Department case should a Prince speak out, it may be that it was in possible anticipation of complaints at Bhopal, that R. E. F. Clancy descended on the State to reinforce the official position. He assured Butler that, excepting Hyderabad, the States had much improved in the last twenty years. The Princes wanted the Viceroy to be in charge of the States, not a Political member. There was no possibility of unity among the States or of forming groups of States geographically contiguous. Such views did not fall upon unresponsive ears as the findings of the subsequent report indicate. In particular the notion of progress had caught Butler's imagination. A judiciously timed telegram from Kashmir.

1. H.B.P., p. 30
2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 31, 32.
5. Ogilvie's watching brief extended to London where he attended the sittings of the Committee in July and October of 1928. See The Times 16th October, 1928.
6. Reginald Isodore Robert, C.S.I.; C.I.E.; B.A.; Political Officer; Service in Punjab, N.W. Frontier, Hyderabad; Agent to Governor-General Central India since 1924.
(still to be visited), announcing the separation of judicial from
effective function there, inspired Butler to write 'verily the States
are moving .... some already in advance of British India'.

North to Gwalior and on 1st April Colonel Haksar, arguing for the
special position of Gwalior, made a thoroughly unfavourable impression.
In pressing for the codification of political practice he revealed, for
Butler, 'the inability of a certain class of mind to connect words with
things'. On the social level, the routine of banquet and shikar, and
the blandishments of a very old friend, Her Highness the Maharani,
worked their spell.

Following a brief interlude at Dholpur, where His Highness arranged
a later meeting in Bombay, the Committee pushed on to Kashmir, viewing
en route the Pearl Mosque and Font at Agra. Beyond the excellence of
the Maharaja, a further instance of Butler's poor judgement in view of
the Maharaja's extremely chequered career, little was recorded of
Kashmir except its scenic beauties. At last Butler found time to draw
breath:

'We have travelled over 8,000 miles in exactly 100 days, a distance
about equal to the diameter of the earth. I can write no more'.

In truth the tours had resulted in exhaustion. Butler had written as
much to Hirtzel: 'they seem in India States to think that every hour of
the day must be filled up with something'.

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   pop. 3,500,000; 84 per cent Hindus, 6 per cent Moslems, 7 per cent
   Animists; revenue £1,800,000.
4. Ibid.
5. Hindu: Dogra Rajput: H.H. Maharaja Si Hari Singh Bahadur: area
   84,258 sq.mls.; pop. 3,750,000; revenue £2,000,000.
7. See Chapter 2, pp. 188-193.
9. Sir Frederick Arthur, K.C.B., M.A.; India Office, Permanent Under-
   Secretary of State.
In his travels, Butler had done little to prejudice his reputation as champion of the native aristocracy. Though empowered by his terms of reference to proceed in an investigatory capacity, Butler had rather chosen to interpret his mission as one of the reassuring angel. Where a Prince showed signs of buckling as at Falanpur, Butler stepped in to stiffen a flagging will. His diaries contain precious little in the way of objective criticism of States' Administrations. Save in the case of Hyderabad, they came in for more or less unstinted praise and the British public was so informed on Butler's return. Butler fully supported the Gaekwar's argument for a 'simple form of administration' and both had agreed regarding the unwarranted expense of democracy.

Time and time again one is reminded that as often as not the tours came to represent Butler's reunion with very old friends as at Nawanagar, Bhopal and Gwalior especially. Butler's enthusiastic recording of the tumultuous popular welcome at Bikaner, and the radiant throngs at Udaipur, is in strong contrast to the observations of a perhaps more penetrating witness, the Viceroy himself, who had written only the previous summer of 'tawdry glamour and the sense of somewhat superficial unreality' frequently met with in visits to States. A still earlier visitor, himself by no means immune to the play-acting of Princes, had noted

'I don't think one realises or can ever possibly get at life in a Native State whilst one stays with the Prince'.

Early reports, published in both Britain and India, indicated that the Princes feared for an eventual document in the form of a superficial

2. The Times, 7th May, 1928.
pronouncement that all was well in the present system. Still, with Butler as author-in-chief, the Princes might rest assured that cupboards, in some cases bulging, would rest unopened, the skeletons therein to rattle unheard. Few in India could be certain about the precise nature of the plan taking shape in the minds of the Committee. The Governor of Bengal expressed the fervent hope that it would not correspond to the version being hawked around by the Chief of Bhor,

'a kind of genealogical table with the Viceroy as the head of the family - then a mixed Council of Princes, 2 laymen and then the Political Secretary!!.' 2

Nothing could be said to be really settled. From the viewpoint of an already unenthusiastic Secretary of State, events took a decided turn for the worse when it became clear that Butler would be unable to wind up the Enquiry in India. To hustle the Princes, the Chairman advised, would be to disturb the existing good feeling. Birkenhead argued that the translation of the Enquiry to England would raise problems, notably in that a delegation of Princes might regard itself as composed of plenipotentiaries. He was not prepared to receive representations from any such body while the Committee was sitting, and on hearing that Patiala and Kashmir were to head a deputation from the Chamber of Princes, Birkenhead baulked at the concommitant social obligations, 'one wishes to avoid a series of advertised banquets in London'. The spectre of a Princes' delegation alarmed Irwin for rather different reasons. He thought the situation might almost call for a public announcement.

1. The Times, 23rd April, 1928.
3. Irwin to Birkenhead, 18th February, 1928, Hx.P., 9, p. 43.
to calm the anxieties of Indian politicians who possibly
suspect us and the Princes of initiating large constitutional
changes behind the back of British India. 1

Still, an arranged Parliamentary Question which stressed the unofficial
nature of the Princesly delegates' mission, might ride easier on the
Princes feelings. Irwin's caveat carried enough weight in London for
an arranged Question to be duly put by Sir Alfred Knox. In the
desired answer, Winterton stated that the Princes would be in London
 unofficially to consult counsel and not to discuss with the India Office
or His Majesties' Government, matters still sub judicia.

It may be that Irwin contemplated the departure of the Princes'
delegation to London with a certain wry satisfaction. Hirtzel, apparently,
'looked forward with scant pleasure to many hours occupied in
to the idle conversation'. But as the Viceroy gently pointed out to
Birkenhead,

'there seemed no greater hardship in him and his Office being
occasionally called upon to endure this kind of penance than
that it should be the common lot of the Viceroy'. 6

That the Committee had not been able to finalise its task in India
was in no small way due to 'the rather ample constitutional plans';
of the Princes' leading Counsel, Sir Leslie Scott. Privately, Irwin
agreed with Butler that

'veanity and the capacity of being a bore are both strongly
developed in his make up'. 8

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 14th March, 1928, Hx.P., 9, p. 73.
3. Conservative, (Wycombe Division of Bucks) 1924-45, late Indian
Army.
6. Ibid.
8. Irwin to Butler, 24th April, 1928, H.B.P., 85.
By late March Scott had hatched a scheme amounting to, in Butler's estimation, 'the practical abolition of the Political Department and of the Paramount Power'. As to Scott's motive, Butler entertained no shadow of doubt: 'he has got an enormous fee and he had to put up something for it'. Hirtzel, at the India Office, has assured that the scheme 'would die a natural death' and with it Scott's coalition of Princes, 'who by their nature never hung together for long'.

Irwin saw Scott's scheme as the product, on the Princes' side, of ideas 'as you may guess both various and inchoate'. Although briefed by Butler as to the limitations of Scott's support - both his scheme and fee had been rejected by Baroda, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin; his formula ridiculed by such prominent Indian jurists as Slnha, Sarpu and Sivaswami Aiyer - the Viceroy persisted in his sensitivity to reaction in British India.

Patiala was warned unofficially over lunch regarding the charges which the Princes would run if they 'put up concrete schemes as cockshys for British Indian politicians'. Rather the Rulers should concentrate on what really mattered, a constitutional guarantee in the event of a Swaraj government.

1. Butler to Geoffrey Dawson, 10th May, 1928, H.B.P., 85
2. Ibid.
3. To deal with Stokes' affairs, Scott proposed a Viceroy-in-Council to consist of three Princes and their Ministers, two Englishmen without previous experience of India and a Political Secretary. See Butler to Hirtzel, 22nd March, 1928, H.B.P., 85
4. Ibid.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 10th May, 1928, H.P., 4, pp. 97, 8.
6. Harcourt Butler to Irwin, 22nd March, 1928, H.B.P., 85. By the time the Report came to be submitted the original dissenters had been joined by Rampur, Junagadh and other States in Kathiawar and elsewhere who submitted their case independently. See Report of India States Committee, Cmd. 3302, p. 7.
7. Irwin to Birkenhead, 10th May, 1928, H.P., 4, pp. 97, 8.
As to Scott's fee, Irwin dryly commented '£100,000 .... sounds a sufficiently handsome amount'. A further bill for £10,000 was later submitted to Bharatpur for advice never actually given.

1. Irwin to Birkenhead, 10th May, 1928, Ex. B., 4, pp. 97, 8.

2. Ibid. Scott had calculated his fee on a basis of 200 guineas a day in addition to the sum of £30,000 guineas to compensate him for the break in his practice at home. This Irwin described as 'indeed extortionate', and the Bharatpur fee 'savour of extortion'. In the latter case, Irwin advised a daily fee of 250 guineas for 'a very liberal assumption' of 4 days work. See Irwin to Birkenhead, 10th June, 1928, Ex. B., 4, pp. 129, 132. Some inkling of the full magnitude of the fee may have publically circulated in India. One estimate published noted 'a record fee of £53,000, with a daily refresher of £200', citing as authority the 'Daily Mail'. See 'The Indian States Enquiry', Indian Review, vol. 29, 1928, p. 353.
The Report of the Indian States Committee
The Report of the Indian States Committee

The Butler Committee sailed for England on 21st April in company with the enfant terrible, Sir Leslie Scott, and a number of Princes headed by the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar. 3rd May saw the arrival of the party at Victoria Station; Patiala, Kashmir, Bhopal and Kutch were expected to follow shortly. Scott was due to begin the presentation of his evidence in mid July. A longish voyage had in no way dampened Scott's enthusiasm. His longstanding friendship with Peel may now have extended to Holdsworth. An 'indiscreet tip' from the latter resulted in an application by Scott to the Indian Office for documents supplied to the Butler Committee. In recording his terse refusal, Birkenhead wearily referred to Scott as 'a bit of a handful for the Committee' and likely to prolong its sittings well into October. From India, Irwin, worried by the possibility of harmful publicity, continued to impress upon London the harm which would result from Scott's schemes by way of crystallizing opposition in advance to any new constitutional structure. Commenting on the Government of India's denial of access to its records to the Special Organisation of the Chamber, a shrewd agent of the Princes could see that there was little merit in opening up confidential files on States' affairs

'because every self-respecting family has a complete right to keep locked the door of the cupboard where its skeletons were kept'. 6

Such caution did not weigh with the Princes in London and both Birkenhead and Butler had to resist the strongest pressure, particularly

1. The Times, 23rd April, 1928.
2. The Times, 7th May, 1928.
4. Ibid.
5. Irwin to Birkenhead, 6th June, 1928, Mx.P., 4, p. 121.
from Patiala, directed towards publicising Scott's 'great display' due to begin on 16th July. The Princes' request that their case should be publically stated was denied. As it happened, Scott was not the man to be easily muzzled. In perhaps his boldest move, Scott arranged a luncheon party at the Commons in late July at which fellow Conservative M.P.s might meet the Maharaja of Kashmir as principal guest and learn something of the sense of injustice felt by intensely loyal Princes in a tale richly spiced with instances of autocratic behaviour on the part of the individual Political Officer. Birkenhead erupted on hearing of this initiative and administered a violent dressing-down to Scott which railed against 'an extraordinary confusion' of functions as a Conservative M.P. and as advocate for the Princes: Birkenhead threatened to refer the matter to the Prime Minister and Chief Whip.

Scott had already ensured that members of his profession were advised of the unique character of the relationship between the Crown and the Indian States and alerted to the imperative need for 'a statesman-like treatment of the Princes'. A wider public might read in at least three important London dailies on 4th July a long reproduction from the Calcutta Statesman setting forth Scott's scheme in studied detail. Should Butler decide that the plan fell outwith the scope of his Committee, the reports ran, then it would be submitted 'in higher quarters'.

So, in the event, Scott with the assistance of Rushbrook Williams, 'an extremely tiresome combination', had been able to engineer, according to a fuming Birkenhead, 'quite sufficient publicity for his schemes despite Butler'. Scott's tour de force was reserved for the autumn

1. Birkenhead to Irwin, 28th June, 1928, Hx.®., 4, p. 93
6. Birkenhead to Irwin, 28th June, 1928, Hx.®., 4, p. 93.
session of the Butler Committee when it reconvened on 15th October after an interval of three months. With consummate skill, Scott led off for four hours on various infractions of treaty and sovereign rights. For fourteen successive sessions, he continued to draw the Committee's attention to points raised in his printed material submitted. This may have run to five volumes and certainly filled four, covering 3,000 foolscap pages of documented instances of the defective working of the regulating machinery for relations between the Princes and the Paramount Power.

A third and final stage of the hearings began on 22nd November. In the three sessions before the Enquiry closed finally on 27th November, Scott attempted to draw general propositions from the opinion of Counsel. In essence, he and his legal associates argued that an analysis of the relationship in question demanded that legal principles be enunciated and applied; that the Indian States possessed all original sovereign powers, except in so far as they had been transferred to the Crown; and that such transfer had been effected with the consent of the States concerned, and in no other way. Yet at the end of extended legal perorations, the Princes in London may have wondered if they had spent wisely. In a press statement, given on his departure from Victoria, Patiala expressed his disappointment that the session had taken place in camera; regretted a non-committal attitude on the part of the Committee; and (a reminder

1. V. P. Menon, _op. cit._, p. 22.
2. Present in support at Montagu House, Whitehall, were Patiala, Kashmir, Bhopal and the Jam Sahib with several of their ministers. See _The Times_, 16th October, 1928.
3. _The Times_, 26th October, 1928.
4. Phadnis, _op. cit._, p. 45: the Committee themselves refer to 5 volumes; see Butler Committee to Peel, 11th February, 1929, _H.R.P._, 85.
5. _The Times_, 19th October, 1928.
6. Scott's legal assistants were Mr. Stuart Bevan, K.C., Mr. Wilfrid Green, K.C., Mr. Valentine Holmes, Mr. Donald Somerville: see _The Times_, 15th October, 1928.
perhaps of the timelessness of the past) feared that

'we have not been able in the time at our disposal to make a really adequate presentation of our case'.

With the Chamber of Princes Delegation once more preparing for the high seas and rapturous homecomings which would take the shape of public holidays, salutes and illuminations, the debate which focussed around their purpose passed into the arena of Parliament. The interest of Labour Parliamentarians may well have been stimulated by the presence in London of a deputation from the All India States' Peoples' Congress, which had been barred from either submitting oral evidence to the Butler Committee or attending its sittings. When questioned on this procedure by Gardner, Winterton pronounced in favour of the discretion of Butler's Committee in the matter. He absolutely declined to answer a question from Rennie Smith regarding publication of the eventual Report and the competence of the Indian Legislature to examine the Committee's findings on financial and economic aspects.

In the Commons one week later, Winterton found himself pinned down by several awkward inquiries as to the extent of British responsibilities in the States. Saklatvala asked regarding the responsibilities of Political Agents in the Western States Agency, in parts of which their function might be more directly administrative. Ernest Thurtle

1. The Times, 29th November, 1928.
2. Ibid., 27th December, 1928.
3. It consisted of Dewan Bahadur Ramchandra Rao (President), Professor G. R. Abhayankar (General Secretary), Amritlal D. Sheth and Shri P. L. Chudgar; see Phadnis, U., op. cit., p. 67.
8. Shapurji, Communist (North Battersea) 1922-3, 1924-9; Member of Lincoln's Inn; former association with family firm of Tata Sons.
wanted to know which steps had been taken to investigate conditions of government in the States before the issue of fresh guarantees to Rulers was considered; was the Under-Secretary aware that no channel of complaint existed through which States' citizens could reach 'the responsible authority'. In each case Winterton declined a direct answer and when asked point blank by Rennie Smith whether basic conditions of life, (in the sense of liberty of person and freedom of speech, meeting and association), obtained in the States, he lamely regretted that such information was not to hand. For a statement of the Paramount Power's responsibilities, Labour M.P.s were referred to Reading's celebrated letter to the Nizam. In this manifestly unconvincing style, Winterton attempted to parry a difficult supplementary question from Thurtle which asked whether a State's Citizen, with a grievance against his Ruler, might approach a Political Officer.

Further pressure was maintained on Winterton the following Monday when Wedgewood, Kenworthy, Wilfred Wellock and Thurtle spoke out in favour of granting facilities for States' subjects to enable them to express views: they also pushed for the eventual publication of the Butler Report. Winterton expressed some doubt as to whether Their Highnesses would permit the publication of their evidence. The House was reassured that up to 70 or 80 million States subjects could hold public meetings and write to newspapers.

Such an answer was unlikely to satisfy the States' Subjects' Deputation and indeed a good many more besides, among whom could be

2. Ibid., col. 1355.
4. H.C.D., Ibid.
5. Labour (Stourbridge) 1927-31.
7. Ibid.
numbered Lord Olivier who put down a Motion in the House of Lords for 5th December. In his view, not only was Winterton's response 'sketchy', his reply was really 'rather derisory and did not deal with the question at all'. Olivier pointed out that Princes were protected to a degree against writings in newspapers and the limited scope for constitutional agitation in Indian States was well known. He drew the attention of the House to Ramchandra Rao, 'a very distinguished Indian servant' and his delegation and 'the temperate manner' in which their criticism had been made 'upon the present constitution of Indian States which render misgovernment always possible and sometimes inevitable'. The nub of Olivier's Motion lay in his request to know whether His Majesty's Government had in mind a plan for dealing with the Ruling Princes in view of possible constitutional changes in British India suggested by the Simon Commission: and should the autocratic power of the Princes be in some degree restricted?

Two very considerable broadsides followed, delivered from the eminence of former Viceregal status. Lord Hardinge solemnly reminded the House that

'the Ruling Princes are one of the most loyal and devoted elements in India. Their loyalty to the King and to the Government is unsurpassed'.

As for States' administrations, 'the tendency in these States is towards progress, not unwisely rapid'. Reading followed up in the same vein, dwelling on the loyalty of Princes and the scale of their war services.

2. H.L.D., Vol. 72, cols. 401,2.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., cols. 395,6.
6. Ibid., col. 401.
7. Ibid., col. 403.
8. Ibid., col. 404.
9. Ibid., col. 405.
The hopes of the Government of India rested on a gradual 'reform of the Indian States from within the States'; the view that the British Government, through the Government of India, should place the internal sovereignty of the Princes upon a constitutional basis seemed 'a very grave departure to take'.

Peel too, as Secretary for India, had every confidence in the Princes:

'I need hardly say that the Rulers of many of the States have already shown that they appreciate modern ideals of good administration and strive within the resources at their disposal to attain to them'.

No, the Government had no scheme in view for dealing with questions arising in regard to the States consistent with amendments to the constitution of British India: as Peel further stated both publicly in the House and privately in correspondence to India, 'the question was speculative and hypothetical'. In the face of such an impressive battery of support for the Princes, Olivier capitulated and withdrew his Motion, having paid due tribute to the 'admirable rule' of many Princes, though he did claim to draw the line at the systems of absolute monarchy implicitly endorsed by Hardinge and Reading.

Irwin thought the debate had been handled 'with great discretion' and in truth the States' Peoples' Deputation could take little comfort from its substance. Beyond the brief interludes at Question Time in the Commons and the occasion of Olivier's debate in the Lords, there was nothing to show that the Deputation's influence had penetrated to official circles. The circulation to M.P.s of allegations of gross maladministration in Native States continued, in the face of which

2. Ibid., col. 415.
3. Ibid., col. 413: Peel to Irwin, H.L.P., 4, 5th December, 1928, p. 198.
5. Irwin to Peel, H.L.P., 4, 12th December, 1928, p. 273.
Pinterton characteristically declined 'to give an answer upon matters of great constitutional moment in reply to supplementary questions'.

Even an observer, sympathetic to the cause of the Deputation, saw little point in the circulation of its manifesto.

By and large the more prestigious press in Britain favoured the Princes. A *Times* leader set the general tone by finding in an increasing number of States:

'a loyalty to the Ruler and to the dynasty, a tradition of allegiance, a keen interest in the fortunes of the realm and a human delight in the pomps and ceremonies of the Court which Englishmen and Indians too often miss in the shadow of a vast, precise and austere governmental machine'.

The presses of Printing House Square faithfully reported loyalist speeches by Kapurthala, Bhopal, and of course Patiala. From Manchester, the Guardian did express some doubt about the will or the capacity of Princes to put in train administrative reforms. A spokesman for States subjects argued that 'not half-a-dozen' States fulfilled the universally accepted standards of a civilised administration. But, in the main, the views of Princes and their supporters, as expressed in the hospitable columns of leading periodicals, continued to predominate. Patiala appealed to 'the plighted faith of the British Nation' to uphold the Princes' treaties. Similar rallying calls dominated his address to the Royal Asiatic Society. On another occasion, the Maharaja fell back on the sympathetic attitudes of such celebrated founders of the Indian Empire as Vonro, who had spoken out against

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dictatorial Residents in 1817 and Metcalfe who extolled the merits of non-interference in 1835.

A most distinguished India-returned administrator saw in the 'very gradual' response of the Princes to administrative reform, an instance of commendable restraint:

'they move like the sageous elephant and feel the ground. No democratic mahout can force them into a quagmire'. 2

Lawrence went on to depict the role of the Princes as potential statesmen of all-India status:

'Men who are to the manner born, who have ruled and maintained discipline with perhaps a lighter hand and an easier touch than their colleagues in Empire in British territory .... the most obvious and suitable of Indians to blaze the way for all India into the comity of nations.' 3

In another account, support for the Princes as 'natural leaders' led, in a logical extension, to the revived of the proposition that the new India should be based on an extension of the Indian States system:

'in which greater elasticity could exist as regards races, customs and religions than is possible under the beneficient but rigid system obtaining in British India'. 4

As well as providing an attentive audience for Patiala, the Royal Asiatic Society heard papers from Colonel Hakser on the economic difficulties under which the States laboured, and from Rushbrook Williams on the accumulation of Princely discontent which had directly led to the institution of the Butler Committee. A detailed catalogue of encroachments upon the sovereignty of States in the economic sphere was

published immediately following the presentation of the Butler Report.

All in all, the Princes Organisation for Publicity in England had achieved a good deal. It claimed credit for Sir Sidney Low's colourful accounts. Low's alarmist article in the Daily Mail made a banner headline 'Rights that cannot be Ignored', drove home an ominous if fanciful reminder that

'The Native States include the cream of the Indian fighting races - Sikhs, Marathas, Northern Wahomedans, Rajputs and others. Without British and British-led troops no Indian government could stand against them'.

In late January 1929, the ultra conservative Morning Post launched a series of articles putting the case for the Princes who were after all 'more friendly in policy and interest than the British Government of British India'. Readers were reminded that 'the Indian Princes are very much liked over here'. Prominence was given to a letter from Lord Sydenham which spoke of 'an obligation of honour'. The Princes' cause continued to be argued very forcibly under such headlines as 'Taxation without representation', 'Double contribution to Defence', 'Princes War Services', 'Treaties Often Ignored', 'Trust of their Peoples'. The Morning Post sadly concluded that the Princes were 'vilified and slandered because of their obstinate and devoted loyalty to the Crown': another example of sacrificing friends to placate enemies.

5. Ibid., 29th January, 1929.
7. Ibid., 26th January, 1929.
The Butler Committee submitted its Report on 14th February, 1929. 

The Committee enclosed an introductory letter which stressed the difficulties and procrastinations encountered in dealing with their Highnesses: 'No Chief offered himself for examination either in India or in England', though opinions were expressed in conversation; the original intention to conduct the enquiry on the round table system 'ceased to be possible when the Princes said they could not commit themselves'. The absence of a prepared case and the divergent views of the various Princes were duly referred to in the Report. Lord Peel offered some preliminary thoughts to Delhi, having mulled over a sketch of the document passed on to him by Butler who, as self-confessed author of the Report, 'seemed to be satisfied of its artistic merit'. 

The 'paramountcy principle' had been maintained 'of course', and the Scott-Rushbrooke Williams theory of a contract between equal partners duly rejected. In this respect Butler had certainly redeemed official confidence:

'Imperial necessity and new conditions may at any time raise unexpected situations. Paramounty must remain paramount; it must fulfil its obligations, defining or adapting itself according to the shifting necessities of the time and the progressive development of the States.'

Scott's position that

'the Crown has no sovereignty over any state by virtue of the Prerogative or any source other than cession from the rule of the State',

merely found its way into the Report as part of an appendix.

1. Phadnis, U., op. cit., p. 46, cites the date of submission as 4th February but documentation in H.B.P. s and Hx.P. s points to 14th February.
2. Butler Committee to Peel, 14th February, 1929, H.B.P., 85.
4. Peel to Irwin, 14th February, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 32.
5. Peel to Irwin, 14th February, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 32.
Peel also remarked on 'the suggestion for placing Ruling Chiefs under the Viceroy'. Butler had based his recommendation, that the Viceroy, not the Governor-General in Council, should be the agent for the Crown in all dealings with the Indian States as 'a practical necessity to recognise the existence of two Indias'. The Princes might certainly draw comfort here and Butler intimated that on the whole the Report would be satisfactory to them.

Irwin felt inclined to agree:

'they get an expression of opinion on what is their principal concern, namely, the ethics of handing them over to a possible Indian administration responsible to the Assembly'.

In constructing this safeguard, Butler had borrowed an 'ingenius suggestion' from Sir Leslie Scott:

'we agree that the relationship of the States to the Paramount Power is a relationship to the Crown'.

It followed that Butler would

'record our strong opinion that, in view of the historical nature of the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes, the latter should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian Legislature'.

As items of additional gratification for the Princes, the Viceroy picked out the clause recommending that they have direct relations with the Viceroy and 'suggestions for equitable economic adjustment'.

In making this last point, Irwin showed puzzling and unwarranted optimism. While Butler had conceded to the States 'a real and substantial grievance' in respect of maritime customs, only distinctly

1. Peel to Irwin, 14th February, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 32.
3. Peel to Irwin, 14th February, 1929, on. cit.
4. Irwin to Peel, 6th March, 1929, Ibid., p. 49.
5. V. P. Menon, on. cit., p. 23.
7. Ibid., p. 32.
8. Ibid., p. 36.
hazy solutions were proposed: a very guarded revival of Reading's sollicerein proposition; the appointment of an 'expert body' to investigate 'reasonable claims' of States to a share in Customs revenue; the prospect of round after round of consultation and discussion, 'such a procedure would no doubt take time'.

In respect of jurisdiction and profits attached to railways, the imposition of imperial currency at the expense of States' mints; the Government of India's salt monopoly, States' claims in regard to posts and telegraphs, the Government of India's sanction on external borrowing, the Butler Committee ruled solidly in favour of a status quo which had been the economic basis of the Princes' complaints. To this extent the findings of future 'expert bodies' were already prejudged. In the case of another old sore, opium, the Committee warned that 'the State must bear their share of an imperial burden imposed on India as a whole in the interests of humanity and civilisation.'

The Committee slipped round an entire graveyard of bones of contention, restrictions on the supply of arms and ammunition, the employment of non-Indian officers, extradition grievances, cantonments within State territory, on the grounds that such issues lay out with its terms of reference: the cause celebre, concerning the Kathiawar ports and the Virangam customs line, was pronounced sub judice.

2. Ibid., p. 44.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 45
5. Ibid., p. 47.
6. Ibid., p. 48.
7. Ibid., p. 49.
8. Ibid., p. 47.
9. See Chapter II
11. Ibid., p. 51.
12. Ibid.: see too Chapter 2 where the Ports controversy is fully discussed.
All this hardly amounted to a new deal in the field of financial and economic relations with British India and the Princes in general, however jealous of privilege, were unlikely to be won over by the suggested extension of a personal exemption of customs duties to all Princes and families who qualified for membership of the Chamber of Princes.

It seems that these unpalatable fiscal and economic morsels had escaped Irwin's notice and the only proposal which he speculated might stick in their Highnesses' respective gullets was the Committee's conception of Paramouttoy and even here the Viceroy waxed optimistic:

'as far as I have been able to gauge their thought, I doubt whether they really set much store by Leslie Scott's theory of contract'.

A comforting note in identical terms was later sent to Butler. This was realistic comment in view of the fact that the Princes generally were quite incapable of understanding legal and constitutional complexities: this became very apparent during the framing of the 1935 India Bill.

Nevertheless, such optimism in Delhi surprises, since Patiala had hoisted an obvious storm signal, at the session of the Chamber of Princes which met at Delhi on 15th February, 1929. In his address to the Viceroy, Patiala led off with the by now customary catalogue of complaints regarding the shortness of the time allowed for the presentation of the Princes' case, the failure of the Committee's procedure to operate on the round table principle, the absence of publicity. In the passage to which Irwin took particular objection, Patiala thanked the Viceroy for his reassurance that

'we in the Chamber should not only have an opportunity of expressing our opinion on the document itself, but should also have an adequate occasion for examining any proposals for action which His Majesty's Government may decide to formulate'.

1. Report of the Indian States Committee, Cmd. 3302, p. 45: the existing right was confirmed to nineteen and twenty one 'gunners'.
2. Irwin to Peel, 6th March, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 49.
5. The Times, 18th February, 1929.
6. Irwin to Peel, 26th February, 1929, Hx.P., 10, Telegram No. 81.
Characteristically in search of a silver lining, Irwin interpreted a proposal that the Princes should get their case stated before the Princely Council as a hopeful development:

'they realise the inutility of further argument with us on whatever views the Committee may express regarding Paramountcy and the constitutional position'. 1

By contrast, Peel reacted sharply to Patiala's speech:

'You should take every opportunity of throwing cold water on any disposition to re-open discussion. Princes should not think that we are going to proceed by rejoinders and counter rejoinders ad infinitum'. 2

Nor did the Secretary of State relish the immediate prospect of meeting more Princes:

'I hear that they propose flocking back to England in Spring to open discussions with me that would be equally infructuous and I cannot countenance any such idea'. 3

M.P.s were reminded of the points raised in the Princes' debates at Delhi by Brigadier-General Clifton Brown who sought a reassurance from the Under Secretary regarding the Princes and the British connection, the treaties made with the British Crown and opportunities for the Princes to comment on the forthcoming report before legislation was passed.

Suspense ended with the laying of the Report before Parliament on the evening of 16th April. The Times commended the 'great wisdom' with which the Committee had adhered to limited terms of reference; the 'prudent' refusal to define Paramountcy; and the 'clear advantage' in the recommendation that the Viceroy, in his own right, should represent the Crown in dealings with the States. The leading headlines read, 'The Two Indias' and The Times concluded that schemes of a federal nature were indeed 'premature'. Neither the India Office nor Harcourt Butler himself could have hoped for more helpful coverage. The

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1. Irwin to Peel, 26th February, 1929, H/P., 10, Telegram No. 81.
2. Peel to Irwin, 7th March, 1929, H/P., 10, Telegram No. 136.
3. Ibid.
6. The Times, 17th April, 1929, 17 b.
Manchester Guardian struck a note of quick approval in commending 'a cautious and common-sense conservatism' which had preserved the statesmen from 'the subtleties of the jurists'. As the Guardian had it, the Report 'will go a long way to removing great ignorance'.

The Morning Post, as might have been expected, read much more into a document of which 'the recommendations suggest that the righteousness of the case presented by the Princes and their Counsel has prevailed with the Committee'. We may therefore hope that it will also prevail with the Government.

The next day's edition carried the headlines 'Princes gain their Wish'.

Harcourt Butler would have looked kindly on the Daily Mail account which spoke glowingly of 'one of the most romantic and beautifully written Blue Books ever published by the Stationary Office'.

With an ear to the ground at Delhi, Irwin held to his optimistic view of the Princes' response to the Report. Though Haksar at Gwalior had attacked it as manifestly unsatisfactory, Bikaner was said to have argued that 'the Princes had got all they could rightly expect'.

Two of Patiala's Ministers were reported to have condemned the document, but in this instance Irwin had heard it alleged that the principal purpose was to discredit, in Patiala's eyes, Rushbrook Williams as the person associated with the general Leslie Scott policy and expense.

1. Manchester Guardian, 18th April, 1929.
2. Morning Post, 17th April, 1929.
3. Ibid., 18th April, 1929.
4. Daily Mail, 17th April, 1929.
5. Irwin to Peel, 1st May, 1929, H.C.P., 5, pp. 128, 9.
6. Ibid. Whatever doubts may have been entertained privately by Princes about Scott's efforts, the Chancellor of the Chamber together with the Standing Committee, chose to formally acknowledge in the most extravagant terms, his 'unsparing labour' and 'profound legal acumen', in a letter which held out the prospect of his further employment. See Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes et al to Scott, 19th February, 1929, H.C.P., 11.
The position promised to clarify itself with the arrival in Bombay on 20th June of the leading members of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes. The group included representatives of important States who would normally have held aloof from the Chamber 'set'. Baroda and the Dewan of Mysore attended, an indication perhaps of a new sense of cooperation growing in the shadow of the Butler Report. In all, about sixty Princes and their representatives met. The avowed object of the gathering was to discuss the Butler Report and to appoint a sub-committee under Bikaner to prepare suitable representations to be submitted to the Viceroy at Poona prior to his departure for England. In this way, it was hoped that the Princes' views would be made known to the Home Government.

Predictably, the assembled Princes were of the opinion that Butler's recommendations could be neither wholly accepted nor rejected. Two principal points which emerged in discussion held that

'Paramountcy should only be exercised on lines affecting treaties and engagements with the States ...... all matters in dispute should be referred to a tribunal whose decision would be final'.

Naturally, the clauses which enjoined that there be no transfer of States to an Indian Government, without prior consent and those which recommended that the Viceroy stand alone as Crown Agent were well received.

Soothing words from Irwin attempted to draw the heat from Princely anxieties and in a public statement the Viceroy reiterated the pledge that in any proposal affecting the position of the Indian States,

2. Ibid., 21st June, 1929, *The Times*, 22nd June, 1929.
7. Ibid., 29th June; for a comprehensive list of outstanding grievances see Sinh, R. *op. cit.*, p. 96.
'it is essential on every ground of policy and equity to carry
the free assent of the Ruling Chiefs'.

States' affairs were akin
'to the knot of a boot-lace which becomes intractable if
roughly and brusquely handled'. 1

Having met the Princes' deputation at Poona and subsequently given some
thought to their draft resolution, Irwin felt that differences could be
ironed out in India, that the idea of an appeal to the Privy Council
had been abandoned.

'Their principal apprehensions seem to centre on the wide terms
of conditions justifying intervention .... they admit the necessity
of the ultimate discretion of the Paramount Power to decide,
but ask that guiding principles should be laid down after full and
free discussion with themselves on which decisions will be founded
as far as possible'. 3

The Princes, then, were left to nurse mixed feelings: probably
'keen disappointment' did dominate, especially for those who had to
foot Scott's bill. All would rejoice with the Nawab of Rampur that
they were 'not left at the mercy of the Swarajists'. Yet most might
feel, like Patiala, that they could only proffer qualified congratulations
to Sir Harcourt Butler:

'regarding the Report I recognise that your personal position
was extremely difficult and in consequence of it you could not
very well go further than you did.' 7

It may well be that Butler genuinely saw himself as the saviour of
the Princes through his inclusion of the non-transfer clause. But
he had also run true to form as an Old Political through his dogged
refusal to define Paramount:

1. The Times, 21st June, 1929,
2. Irwin to Peel, 29th June, 1929, H.E.P., 10, p. 265.
3. Ibid.
4. See Sinh, B., op. cit., p. 96; Panikkar, K. N. The Indian Princes
8. The opinion of Professor Rushbrooke Williams, interviewed 17th March, 1972.
'Usage springs up naturally to supply what is wanting in the terms of treaties that have grown old. Usage, in fact, lights up the dark places of the treaties'.

A theory which convinces holds that Butler had set about his task in a frame of mind 'broadly sympathetic' to the Princes; that he had 'radically disapproved' of the tremendous rap on the knuckles administered to the Nizam by Reading. But as the Enquiry progressed the Old Political 'turned very cross indeed' at the way in which the Princes' grievances were projected and amplified by Counsel. Yet given the nature of the undertakings solemnly agreed to by Butler prior to beginning his tours of investigation, it seems unlikely that, whatever his personal inclinations, a report substantially altering the status quo in favour of the Princes could have been produced.

As a blue print for the future, the Report could justly be labelled 'colourless and inconclusive'. Its failure to break new ground, where the terms of reference permitted, in the sections dealing with financial and economic relations, has been discussed. A striking instance of the Report's negative character was the failure to give a lead on a question shortly to assume major importance, that of the federal union of India. Butler and his colleagues only confessed to having 'left the door open'. To others it might seem that it had been firmly slammed shut. In the Committee's own terms 'no help can, in our opinion, be derived from any such scheme'. As Birkenhead had foreseen, some eighteen months before, any attempt to define the relationship of the States and the Paramount Power could impede the adjustment of the former to future development in British India.

2. The opinion of Professor Rushbrooke Williams, interviewed 17th March, 1972.
3. Thompson, Edward, op. cit., p. 182.
5. Ibid., p. 35.
Butler's frequent invocation of the theme of the 'Two Indias' could be taken by a senior Anglo-Indian administrator to represent a belief in 'the permanent division of India'. And to some purposes: as Keyes went on to observe:

'the impression that the Government is using the States to slow down the approach of Swaraj will be very difficult to eradicate. One must confess that it is founded on fact and that the cat was let out of the bag by the Butler Report.'

Reviewing Butler's career as a whole, it may well be true that:

'the more than most should be held guilty for that increase in the prestige of the Princes that was so fatal to Indian Unity'.

Butler had never been noted for his enthusiasm for constitutional concession:

'I distrust long views as to the good of British rule. I would take it that it is good enough for us, in the words of the Te Deum, to govern them and left them up for ever'.

Much would now hinge on the degree to which the more influential Princes, drawn perhaps from that 'new class of Westernised educated ruler', would remain content to trot along on a Political Department leading rein. It might have been anticipated that shrewder members of the Princely Order would come to resent depiction as stooges of the British in more radical British Indian circles. As the year 1929 mellowed into Autumn and hardened into Winter it became clear that several Princes intended to move in a direction which had not been foreseen by Sir Harcourt Butler, nor Colonel Sidney Peel, nor Professor W. S. Holdsworth.

3. Keyes to Nizam, 30th June, 1930, K.P., 28
Chapter 4

The Emergence of the Federal Ideal

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The new prospect which opened up in front of the Princely order brought into view the goal of All India Federation. Strictly speaking, the novelty of the Federal ideal remains questionable. A form of federation had been adumbrated by John Bright as early as 1858. At the 1904 session of the Indian National Congress, Sir Henry Cotton in the presidential address had spoken loosely of a 'United States of India'. But British administrators of the Harcourt Butler stamp, immersed in the concept of the Two Indias, took little serious interest in the likelihood of such a development.

It had long been official policy to isolate the Princes from British Indian affairs: though some seven Princes out of forty-five Indians in all had been appointed as Additional Members of the Supreme Council between 1862 and 1892, none were Princes of the first rank. Few attended save Jaipur and of these Princely legislators some 'tried to go back to their own territory at the earliest opportunity'. It may be that Indians generally found the social atmosphere at Simla distasteful, and there were other inhibitions; one Prince attended Council who could not understand English.

The interest in appointing Princes ended with Ripon's arrival as Governor General.

3. The most prominent were Maharaja Sir Narendra Singh of Patiala (1862), Nawab Muhammed Yasef Ali Khan of Rampore (1863-6), Nawab Muhammed Qasib Ali Khan of Rampore (1867), Maharajadhiraj Savi Sir Ram Singh of Jaipur (1869-75), Sir Sham Sher Prakeesh of Simur (1872-79), Raja Raghubir Singh of Jind (1880-82). Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 333.
5. Ibid., p. 334.
Whatever the showing of Princes in Council, the 'Two Indias' policy had to reckon with, in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth century, a widespread interest inside British India in the affairs of the Princes largely due to:

'their condition as fallen heroes who in any age or clime would have excited sympathy and attracted popular gaze .... people were emotionally inclined to look to some ruling houses for deliverance though few Princes would answer to the hopes of the people'. (1)

This was a romanticised picture which faded with time. By the end of the First World War a former Commander in Chief doubted whether the Ruling Chiefs carried much weight outside their own States, though he did except the great Rajput Chiefs of purest blood whose lead might be followed on social matters. Even the 'national spirit of Narathas found little if any encouragement in Indian States.

Faith in the Princes found confused not to say irrational expression, as in the case of

'a fond hope that an English prince might marry an Indian princess and then with that prince as emperor of India, the country will be united with England like Scotland; and, with a ruler permanently residing in the country, India will be the Germany of Asia and together with England might dominate the whole world.' (4)

Strange to say, a similarly bizarre solution was resurrected by a prominent Congressman, Dr. Ansari, in March 1929 and relayed to the Viceroy by the Nawab of Rampur. The Government had only to do one thing:

'Let the Prince of Wales marry an Indian and all the troubles will disappear; for the next heir will be half Indian and half English; thus India will have attained equal terms in the Empire with England and Swaraj will be unnecessary'. (6)

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5. Ansari, Dr. A. V., one-time house surgeon in a London hospital; President of A.I.C.C. 1923, 27; 'a brilliant academic'; see Nehru, J., Autobiography, passim.
As to the delicate matter of whether the bride would be Hindu or Muslim, the selection would be made from the ranks of the Brahmosamaj and indeed the lady designated was the Maharani of Cooch Behar whose activities in London had been responsible both for the Prince of Wales being asked to visit East Africa and herself being recalled to India.

The probability was not that the 'Two Indias' would draw together through the agency of a dynastic fairytale but rather that the more astute Princes might find common cause with British Indian leaders to resist what was conceived as the alien rigidity of the Government of India; traditionally, links did exist. On one level the bigger Princes represented a considerable source of patronage at all times in British India. Not the least pressing of the beneficiaries were the proprietors of the vernacular press who 'looked to the Princes for financial assistance to tide over their financial difficulties mostly borne out of poor circulation'. In their turn, early nationalist groups in British India interested themselves in Princes' affairs. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha 'always espoused the cause of the Indian Princes' and it was believed by members of the Sabha that the States afforded scope to Indian statesmen such as Salar Jang to display their constructive ability, the top positions in British India being closed to them. At this stage,

1. Ibid. For an account of the Maharani's London career and her reputation as 'the Princess of the One Thousand and One Nights' see chapter 2, pp. 250, 1.


4. The most famous political body of the Bengali, prominent in the mid 1870's.

the major identity of interest between the Princes and British Indian leaders lay in exposing and publicising the domineering styles and on occasion allegedly immoral activities of the Political Agents and Residents, a code of practice captured in the epigram 'the whisper of the Residency is the thunder of the State'.

In 1891, the Bengal Government remarked that whenever the relations of the Indian Government with any Prince attracted public attention, 'the sympathies of the Press were strongly on the side of the latter'.

In this climate it was hardly surprising that some rulers should interest themselves in the development of the early Congress, much to the alarm of Dufferin who warned the Princes against subscribing to Congress funds'. Mysore, as one of the most progressive and influential Princes, was expressly cautioned: 'it was not desirable for the Princes to interest themselves in political activity outside their States'. Mysore preserved a degree of sympathy towards British Indian political aspirations which in the fullness of time extended to a friendly welcome for Gandhi.

However, from the outset, the premier Indian State, Hyderabad, faced the other way. Dufferin, apparently more interested in maintaining the isolation of the States than in undermining Congress, censured

1. Barton, op. cit., p. 276. For the alleged transgressions of Sir Lepel Griffin, Colonel Nisbet and Mr. Grimwood, see Narain, op. cit., pp. 195-218; the consequent disorders in Bhopal, Kashmir and Manipur are discussed in chapter 2, pp. 117, 8.


6. As early as 1892, Indian nationalists were prepared to air the grievances of Hyderabad subjects against the regime at Parliamentary level through the medium of the British Committee of the Indian Congress. See Secret Political Letters from India, no. 572, cited in Butt, op. cit., p. 208.
the Nizam in 1888 for contributing to anti-Congress funds.

The sum involved was described as huge. While Lansdowne, on the whole, was inclined to ignore payments to Congress, even contributions by the Princes, British unease returned with the instigation, by Secretary of State Hamilton in 1899, of an enquiry into the sources of Congress finance. It elicited the names of several Princes prominent, among them Kolhapur, Gondal and Baroda who admitted that he had given £1,000 towards Naoroji's election expenses and subscribed Rs1,000 annually to Congress funds.

Curzon spoke forcibly to the Gaekwar on the subject, Baroda's defence being that the Congress was a social and not a political movement which was supported by the bulk of educated Indian opinion.

The Olympian reply stressed that Congress was in the last resort animated by hostile feeling towards the Government. Baroda, taken aback, said that other Chiefs did the same. An interesting illustration of the solidarity existing between some Princes and British Indian leaders at this time is the drift of a much publicised speech by the redoubtable B. G. Tilak delivered in 1897; in vivid language it outlined the events leading up to 'the pitiable condition of Indian Princes and suggested that the Princes set up a political agency in England to guard their rights and independence'.

6. Ibid.
With the acceleration of nationalist activity in the twentieth century, the more astute Princes drew back from what they conceived to be the position of stalking-horses for British diehard opinion. While entertaining Bikaner for a week at Viceregal Lodge in the summer of 1909, Countess Minto recorded in her journal:

Bikaner told me that he had heard that people in England had criticised the Native Member on the Viceroy's Council and were saying that the native Princes would not consort with a man of inferior caste. (1)

It was made clear to the Vicereine that both Bikaner and Gwalior had called on Sinha the first day they were in Simla after his appointment and Bikaner had dined with him. Perhaps Baroda was alone, in this period, in being suspected of harbouring seditionists, but doubts came to be expressed about Bikaner’s liberal views on constitutional progress. Montagu, on tour in 1913, wrote disapprovingly to the Secretary of State:

'I do not think Bikaner as attractive in his own country as he is in London. He would be a terrible Congress wallah if he wasn't a Rajput Prince'. (5)

But in general Montagu hit it off well with the Princes: 'they talk to me as they never dare talk to anybody else', and the eventual Montagu-Chelmsford Report opened up certain possibilities to the Princes:

'the idea of India being governed otherwise than in two water-tight compartments was tentatively broached'. (7)

However vaguely expressed, 'the external semblance of some form of federation' became an official prognosis for the India of the future,

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1. Minto, Mary Countess of, India, Minto and Morley 1905-10, (1934), p. 299.
2. Sinha, Baron of Raipur 1919, F.C., K.C.S.I., the first Hindu to sit upon the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; sometime Governor of Bihar and Orissa and Under-Secretary of State for India.
4. Crewe to Hardinge, 29th March, 1912, No. 10; Hardinge to Crewe, 17th April, 1912, No. 16; Crewe to Hardinge, 10th May, 1912; see Har.P., vol. 118.
5. Montagu to Crewe, 8th January, 1913, C.R., Box 1/5 (10)
given the extensive areas of common interest to the British provinces and the Indian States, 'defence, tariffs, exchange, opium, salt, railways, posts and telegraphs'. So it could be said that the Report contained the origins of the federal ideal. Not only did Montagu meet strong protagonists of the federal form in British India but it was 'vigorously canvassed by the Princes as well'.

The spectacle of the Princes boarding, if not rocking, the constitutional boat rang alarm bells in both Delhi and London. The Viceroy protested that:

'Alwar went rather far in the matter of post-bellum constitutional reforms .... Bikaner dallied with the subject and perhaps you could say a word to him about holding out encouragement to the political extremists'. (4)

The prospect of Princes as champions of reform stung Chelmsford:

'They are all the same these Indians, Princes or politicians; they are mortally afraid of the Press, and so they make statements in public which they would absolutely repudiate in private conversation'. (5)

Within the privacy of the India Office, Austen Chamberlain subjected Bikaner to some straight talking. The Maharaja reiterated that

'he was anxious to make it clear that the Ruling Princes were not opposed to progress in British India, because some writers, notably Sydenham, [6] were using them as sticks with which to break down reform'. (7)

Chamberlain promptly gave hint of the mailed fist by reminding Bikaner how much he said he disliked interference in Native States affairs:

'I drew his attention to the fact that a policy of non-interference was reciprocal, and that if he and his brother Chiefs did not want the Government of India to interfere in their States, they must be very careful to refrain from any interference in the affairs of British India'. (8)

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5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
The Secretary of State drove the lesson home by emphasising the bleak prospects for the Princes under a reformed Indianised administration:

"no possible Government of India would be so tender of the rights of Native Princes as was the present administration, and that if, and when, the wide reforms which he had advocated took place in the Government of India, he would find the Government as it became more popular would also become more interfering .... if ever the goal of self-government were reached, it was likely to claim a right of control and interference in the Native States far in excess of anything ever exercised or contemplated under our present system". (1)

The belief that the Princes collectively were interested in British Indian politics on the side of reform drove Chamberlain to view with some caution the proposed formalisation of Chiefs' Conferences:

"the great difficulty which I see about acceding to it is their (the Princes') tendency to meddle with the affairs of British India and, when collectively at Simla, to become the tools of opposition to your Government". (2)

Certainly there appears to have been, in the Princes' camp, a gathering awareness of the possibilities of Federation. The Dewan of Baroda recalled discrete investigations into federation taking place under the auspices of the Chamber and individual Rulers from 1918 onwards. On the public platform momentum was maintained by the irrespressible Maharaja of Alwar who, having 'thoroughly disgusted', Chelmsford by pressing federation at the January 1919 Chiefs' Conference, took up the same theme in his particularly extravagant and idealised prose on the occasion of a visit by Reading to his State in March 1922:

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 105, 6.
4. Chelmsford to Montagu, 29th January, 1919, Ch., 5, p. 16.
"My goal is the United States of India where every Prince and every State working out its own destiny in accordance with its own environment, its own tradition, history and religion, will combine together for imperial purposes, each subscribing its little quota of knowledge and experience in a labour of love freely given for a high and noble cause'. (1)

Of much more practical bent, Bikaner was the Prince most likely to pursue federation with serious intent. Possibly fortified by the prestige accruing to his attendance at the Versailles Peace Conference, he had not been intimidated by Chamberlain's strictures. He recognised that the Princes might conveniently align themselves with British Indian ambitions through a bridging figure, Sapru, who in early 1921 had undertaken legal duties for the Maharaja in connection with 'willpapers'. By mid 1924 Bikaner pressed Sapru for a meeting at the Bikaner residence, Mount Abu, saying that it was:

'all the more urgent now .... to discuss with you the question of the position of the Indian States and the protection of the rights of Princes and the future preservation and integrity of the States when, as every true Indian patriot must desire, India attains full nationhood and Dominion Government'. (5)

1. Sinh, K., op. cit., p. 107. The speech received a good deal of publicity at the time and indeed several years later, see The Hindu, 26th April, 1928: it came to be cited as a proof of the sterling character and farseeing statesmanship of Indian Princes generally; see Sutherland, J. M., India in Bondage, (1932), p. 270.

2. Reporting a farewell banquet given to Bikaner on 7th March, 1919, The Times gave prominence to 'a glowing speech' by Bikaner which contained 'the most emphatic and authoritative denial to the allegation that the Princes of India were hostile to the proposed reforms. This statement was 'gross misrepresentation'. The Aga Khan spoke in similar vein and The Times felt satisfied that 'when the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Aga Khan make a declaration on such a matter they unquestioningly speak for all the Princes of India and their words will silence controversy'. See The Times, 10th March, 1919.

3. Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, K.C.S.I.; Advocate, High Court of Judicature at Allahabad; President of the Indian Liberal Federation. Sapru's career had covered the gamut of Indian politics; as a young man a staunch Congressman, he had also a close understanding of the Princes' position. Bikaner apart, Sapru became legal confidant to many of the more important Princes, notably the Nizam, Kashmir and Patiala. See Low, P. A., op. cit., pp. 224, 297.


5. Bikaner to Sapru, 12th May, 1924, Ibid., 2193, S172.
In reply, Sapru could not have been more reassuring:

'No Government whether it is official or popular can afford to ignore treaty obligations and from the point of view of British India itself, I think it would be a mistake on our part to attempt to enforce our ideas on Indian States when we know they are not prepared to accept them'. (1)

In general Indian Liberal leaders continued to adopt a most conciliatory stance in their dealings with Princes through the 'twenties, especially following the emergence of States' Peoples' organisations. In regard to the suggestion that States subjects should be invited to a conference in Delhi in February, 1930, a prominent liberal wrote to Sapru in terms of strong disapproval:

'It is constitutionally a wrong position, for all we are at this stage concerned with are the relations of the States with British India and for that purpose the Princes must represent the States'. (3)

However slipshod administrative standards might be in individual States, without the Princes' good will at future constitutional conferences, the moderate movement would fail:

'It would be most unwise, and a great tactical blunder for us to call in representatives of the States' subjects. The moment we do that we destroy all chances of the Princes entering into any negotiations with us for the settlement of the All-India Constitution, and unless they are prepared to negotiate we will come to a standstill'. (4)

Sapru emphatically endorsed the bar: 'I have most carefully avoided any reference to this controversial subject'. (5) With the Congress split, the moderates were looking around for new support. Given this sympathetic predisposition towards the Princes' sovereign status

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4. Ibid.

on the part of influential Indian liberals, it is not surprising that fruitful cooperation between the two interests should have produced a dramatic constitutional advance before 1930 had ended.

The attitude of Congress to Princely initiatives remained much more uncertain. Indeed, a former Governor of the Punjab recorded with zest a rumour retailed to him by an 'American journalist' to the effect that highly placed Congressmen were set against the Princes and planned to 'wipe out the swine'. However, the realists in the nationalist ranks recognised that the problem represented by the Princes' ambiguous status — Bikaner might be taken as a patriot or a fifth columnist — would have to be met, not least because it might act as a bar to constitutional advance in British India, a possibility succinctly outlined in the Legislative Assembly by the Home Member of the Government of India in 1924.

Again, the rising tide of disaffection among States' subjects required a response from Congress. In 1920, for the first time, it called upon Princes to grant responsible government in the States. The progress of the national movement in British India could only stimulate a States' Peoples Movement which culminated in the first

1. O'Dwyer, Sir W., 'The Relationship of Indian States to British India', Fortnightly Review, June 1927, p. 765. The probable source of this bon mot did subsequently publish an account of a little private dinner party in Delhi during which she questioned some Home Rule politicians, mostly of the Western-educated professional class, about their plans for the Princes: 'We shall wipe them out!' exclaimed one with conviction. And all the rest nodded assent. See Mayo, W., Mother India, (1924), p. 294. Virtually the same story was retailed by Sydenham along with details of a 'vile leaflet' campaign waged against the Princes from British India; see 'The Future of Indian Native States', Nineteenth Century, June, 1927, pp. 335-6. A dire fate for the Princes at the hands of the nationalists is also forecast in 'A Chota Sahib', India in the Melting Pot, (1933), pp. 35, 6.


3. Ibid.

All India States' Peoples Conference in December 1927 at Bombay, a major gathering attended by over 700 delegates from all over India. A final exhortation from this Conference urged:

'that for a speedy attainment of Swarajya, as a whole, the Indian States should be brought into constitutional relations with British India'.

The scheme was recommended to the Congress All Parties Conference for adoption, and in the Congress High Command it attracted a certain measure of support. Some national leaders had themselves been States' subjects, and perhaps the most vociferous critic of the princely order, Jawaharlal Nehru, came from Kashmiri Brahmin stock.

The full blast of Nehru's invective against the Princes was released in


4. Gandhi's father had been Prime Minister of Barbander in Kathiawar and it was anticipated that Gandhi himself might follow on as dewan. This background provided ample opportunity to experience the mysterious powers of the Rajkot Residents, and Gandhi suffered a personal affront at the hands of one Political Officer. See Waddock, C., *Gandhi*, (1972), chaps. 2 and 3 passim. The Ali brothers hailed from Baroda where Muhmmad had held the office of Chief Education Officer from 1904-10. The home of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was in Hyderabad city, from where she was excluded for a substantial period.

5. Motilal Nehru spent the first 10 years of his childhood with his elder brother, Nanaklal, tutor to the raja in the small Hindu State of Nhatri. Jawaharlal's antipathy to the Princes may have been implanted from early days at Harrow; when first the Prince of Gaikwar and then Kapurthala's son nobbled the best room in the Headmaster's house, young Nehru felt 'gravely wronged'. See Pandey, B. N., *Nehru*, (1976), p. 34.
his Presidential Address to Congress at Lahore in December, 1929:

'The Indian States, even for India, are the most curious relics of a bygone age. Many of their rulers still believe in the divine right of kings — puppet kings though they be — and consider the State and all it contains to be their personal property, which they can squander at will'. (1)

In a later stage, the speech struck a decidedly threatening note:

'The Indian States cannot live apart from the rest of India, and their rulers must, unless they accept their inevitable limitations, go the way of others who thought like them'. (2)

However the official stance of Congress on relations with the Indian States was a good deal more ambiguous than Nehru's Lahore address would suggest. The Nehru Report commissioned by the All Parties Convention in 1928 deplored the Butler Report as an attempt 'to convert the Indian States into an Indian Ulster'. Stress was placed on the natural affinities which existed between the peoples of both Indias, and hence an Indian Federation was proposed as the logical and legitimate foundation for fully responsible government. In anticipation of princely distrust, generous assurances were given that British India would welcome the Princes' participation in federation and guarantee their treaty rights and privileges. Such sentiments could be expected to make an appeal to the more progressive Princes; the Nehru Report did include among its signatories even extreme left-wing British Indian politicians. Nevertheless,

2. Ibid. One of the few commentators to enjoy the confidence of both East and West, thought that these strictures against the feudal character of the rulers were somewhat at variance with Nehru's own style of leadership when he was observed to lead the procession of the National Congress into Lahore mounted on a white charger, followed by thirteen elephants and a khaki-clad army. See Thompson, F., The Reconstruction of India, (1930), pp. 213, 4.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
conservative Princes could still find grounds for suspicion in the Report, in particular in those clauses which suggested that membership of the federation might be conditional on the adoption of modified government and administration within individual States.

There could be little ambiguity about the position of the dominant influence in the Congress High Command:

'Gandhi gathered a novel policy on the Congress in regard to the Princes - the policy of non-interference in the internal administration of the States'.

In 1920 and again in 1927 Congress had passed a resolution which stated that while States' people could become members of the Congress, they could not interfere under a Congress umbrella with the internal affairs of the States. Such restrictions infuriated the Congress left wing and at the Calcutta session in December 1928 it forced through an amendment to the Congress constitution which removed them. None the less, the moderate and right element in Congress pursued a policy of rapprochement. Irwin knew of this development, but it was relayed to the Secretary of State in sceptical vein:

'C.R. Ramaswami Aiyar told me yesterday that there was some talk going on of an attempt to have some informal discussions between British Indian politicians and some of the Princes. I don't think however these will mature'.

In January, 1929, Motilal Nehru, as Chairman of the All Parties Convention, pressed the Princes to attend a bipartite conference on

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3. Phadnis, U., op. cit., p. 34, 5. Gandhi had not always been so fastidious in his solicitude for princely independence. Fresh from South Africa in February 1916, he addressed a gathering which included large numbers of Princes at the Hindu University in Benares. As Jawaharlal Nehru dryly recalls the occasion: 'Earnestly and with a prophet's fire he addressed them and told them to mend their ways and give up their vain pomp and luxury. 'Princes! Go and sell your jewels!' he said; and though they may not have sold their jewels, they certainly went. In great consternation, one by one and in small groups, they left the hall'. See Nehru, J., op. cit., p. 533.
4. Ahmad, W., op. cit., p. 98.
5. Irwin to Peel, 27th December, 1928, H.P., 4, p. 280.
federal structures. It appears that Bikaner, Bhopal and even Kashmir were interested in attending, but the Princes generally were warned off by the Political Department. The official note advised that it would be 'unwise' for the Princes 'to take part in a political conference in British India except under the aegis of the Government of India'. However, informal contacts were made in February, the location being Vallabhbhai Patel's residence, and Government of India participation was ensured by the presence of no less a person than the Viceroy. Irwin found himself sitting between Kashmir and Gandhi, 'a good pair' as he put it, and clearly thought it to have been an innocuous assembly, the conversation running on 'non-controversial topics'; Bikaner and Bhopal were other Princes present.

Once again in August 1929, Motilal Nehru unsuccessfully renewed his formal invitation to leading Princes to appoint representatives to confer at a round-table conference on 'the constitutional position and status of the Indian States and the Central and Provincial Governments of the Commonwealth'.

This move was eventually outflanked by Irwin's proposal of 31st October, 1929, to call a Round Table Conference, a tripartite arrangement which would include the representatives of British India and the

1. Phadnis, U., _op. cit._, p. 52.
2. Ibid.
3. Irwin to Peel, 21st February, 1929, _Hx.P._, 5, pp. 36, 7.
4. _The Times_, 14th August, 1929. Bikaner offered a belated explanation for the refusal of the Rulers to participate on the grounds that the British Government who were a party to the Princes' treaties would not be present; also, an invitation had been sent to the so-called representatives of the Indian States' subjects, a move which 'struck at the root of the relationship between the Indian rulers and their subjects'. See Statement by Bikaner given to the Associated Press, 2nd November, 1929, cited in Abhyankar, Prof. G. B., _Rejoinder to the Ruler of Bikaner_, (Poona, 1930), p. 1C.
Indian States: the accompanying reference to 'Dominion status' with its many implications distracted Congress for the time being from the immediate problems associated with federation. However, the left-wing elements retained their suspicion of the federal ideal which they understood as, in the definition of one tribune, 'an unholy alliance between the British Government and the Indian Princes in order to thwart the mass awakening of India'. Broadly speaking, this interpretation held that a new policy with regard to the Princes had been evolved by the Government of India since the Prince of Wales' tour in 1921 when boycotts in British India had thrown into sharp relief the enthusiastic welcomes encountered in the Indian States.


2. Ibid., p. 92. According to Bose, following the Prince of Wales' return, Lord Minto, the Under-Secretary for India, had been dispatched to India to impress upon the Viceroy and the presidency Governors what their new attitude should be and henceforth 'the representatives of the Government of India began to sing the praises of the Princes whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself'. Ibid.
British Responses to the Concept of Federation
Contrary to Bose's suspicions, neither His Majesty's Government nor the Government of India possessed a clear-cut plan at this stage to introduce the States as 'constitutional deadweights' inside an All India Federation. Indeed the Secretary for India who was to preside over the bulk of the Round Table and subsequent constitutional planning sessions confessed himself to be baffled as to the identity of the originator of the federal scheme, 'no one knew exactly who it was'.

A pamphlet dealing with federal constitutions had appeared early in 1926, the author Sir Frederick Whyte having been sponsored by the Government of India much to the chagrin of Birkenhead, who queried the 'excessive fee' for a 'not very exacting task' which was 'hardly essential'. Reading, very much on the defensive, thought the 'book' justified through its special merit in clearing up loose ideas about federalism and its implications for provincial autonomy.


2. Birkenhead to Reading, 23rd March, 1926, R.D., No. 162. To some extent Birkenhead's anxiety was misplaced: the terms of reference did not include the position of the States, see Ahmad, K., op. cit., p. 101. But at one point Whyte, the President of the Legislative Assembly, did state that 'if India is about to move towards the goal of federalism, the Indian States may well claim a share in the discussion and a place in the eventual federation'. See Chudgar, P. L., op. cit., p. 207. To another States' Peoples representative, Whyte's thesis did seem to have a positive value in suggesting that uniformity in administration and constitution was not an absolute prerequisite to the formation of a Federation. See Pathik, B. S., op. cit., p. 162.

3. Reading to Birkenhead, 26th March, 1926, R.D., No. 485.
While little was taking place in high quarters in London and Delhi to clothe the fears of Bose and his associates with substance, on an unofficial level the Princes were spotlighted as the men of the future by a distinguished and articulate Indian civilian of the old school:

'It has always seemed to me that the way to Imperial Federation should be blazed by the Princes .... they are the recognised leaders of Indian society and fashions, who could most safely guide the march of social reform. It will be wise to enlist them as leaders of the advance: unwise to estrange those loyal colleagues by asking them to follow the bidding of a Brahman oligarchy or the behest of the lawyers and financiers of the Bazaar'. (1)

But in the main, the conservative approach deprecated federal schemes, what one ex-Governor scathingly referred to as 'some loose talk about Federation'. (2) For British readers with a taste for fast-moving fiction a federation drama was played out on the pages of Blackwood's Magazine. (3) The ultimate in propaganda acting to reinforce the Princes' position was published in March 1930, a work which made a


3. An anonymous author set an example to flesh and blood Princes through the sterling character of his fictitious Nawab of Dauletabad. This Prince stoutly rejected the siren appeals directed towards his order from British India: 'why not stand in with us' Federation is the word! standing aloof as you are doing looks bad. We want what Ireland wanted, a Government'. To this the rulers of Native States are replying in effect - 'Yes - and we've got what Ulster wanted, a Government, and we'll put up a Carson for your De Valera'. See 'Anon' 'The Two Indias', Blackwood's Magazine, June, 1929, p. 876.
case for treating with Indian States as one would with independent European States.

Although it has been suggested by an early biographer that Federation was 'frequently urged upon the Princes' by Irwin, in reality Government of India policy reflected a desire to maintain the 'two Indias'. A major enquiry in which the States were bound to have considerable interest was specifically limited by its terms of reference to British India. Irwin in person is alleged to have rejected the proposal that States' representatives be included. At heart Irwin did not anticipate a drawing together of British and Indian India: 'the truth, I think is', he confided to the King, 'that while the more far-sighted of the Princes recognise that it is a problem which is likely to become increasingly important and are anxious to find a solution for it, the desire of the great majority is to be left alone'.

1. Nicholson, A. P., 'Scrapes of Paper': India's Broken Treaties, her Princes and their Problems, (1930). The book produced consternation in the Political Department where it was considered to be 'little short of a libel on the whole policy of the Government of India in regard to the States for the last 100 years'. See Political Department Note on 'Scrapes of Paper', L/195/10/1214. Nicholson, a freelance journalist, was described by the Politicals as 'very unbalanced'. Ibid., but the book was favourably reviewed generally. See The Times, 7th March, 1930, Daily Chronicle, 3rd March, 1930, Daily Mirror, 28th February, 1930, Law Quarterly Review, October 1929, pp. 422-5.


Nor did the Viceroy consider that the Princes felt themselves to be under mounting pressure through the pace of political development beyond their frontiers: 'they scarcely have any appreciation of how closely public opinion is bound to react within their States'.

Irwin's scepticism regarding the building of common ground between Congress and the Princes was reinforced by the deliberations of the All Parties Conference on States Affairs in August, 1928.

Writing to Birkenhead, the Viceroy revealed that:

'the problem of the States has caused the authors of the Constitution some concern, as is evident from the attention they have devoted to it .... On this the general line of comment in the Indian papers is that the States ought to choose between white masters or brown comrades, but I doubt if this argument will be very convincing to those to whom it is addressed'. (2)

Once the full text of the Nehru Report had been published, Irwin could write to London in a mood of evident satisfaction:

'the All Parties people have really played their cards in the two tricks that it was vital for them to win, namely the Moslems and the Princes, with quite incredible gaiety'. (3)

Congress difficulties in resolving internal faction and arriving at compromise resolutions further acted to convince Irwin that the Princes would draw back from involvement in All-Indian policies.

He informed Birkenhead's successor Peel of accentuated divisions in Indian politics, of

'a strong movement to the left among advanced Hindu opinion ... the gulf between the Princes and British India, as might be expected, being dug daily deeper by the extremism of British Indian politicians, and I shall be surprised if the Princes do not give vent to their feelings in some form when their Chamber meets'. (4)

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1. Ibid.
2. Irwin to Birkenhead, 28th August, 1928, Hx., 4, p. 169.
4. Irwin to Peel, 17th January, 1929, Hx., 5, p. 15.
This was scarcely a rash prognostication; the Government of India continued to influence very directly the proceedings in the Chamber. During the February session of 1929, the Chancellor, having spoken vaguely about relations with British India, went on to warn British Indian politicians off anything approaching complete independence lest such a political goal might hinder 'the cultivation of those closer ties designed to lead up to the equitable adjustment of the interests of British India and Indian States on a federal basis'.

The Princes duly moved a resolution, stage-managed by Irwin; an ostensibly spontaneous act, but the Secretary of State was admitted to the secret:

'for your confidential information I suggested the idea to them and repeated to them, what I have no doubt is true, that by moving such a resolution they would certainly do themselves good in England and would do something to recall people here to a sense of reality'.

The Princes were not inclined to resist; indeed

'they jumped at the idea, and I think it has gone quite as I expected and I feel pretty sure that it was quite worth suggesting to them to do it'. (2)

It would also be to the satisfaction of the Government of India that, in the Spring of 1929, the British Press generally viewed schemes of Federation as 'premature', and talk of it as inopportune since Princes 'set so much store on their distinctiveness from British India'. Nor could the Simon Commission be expected to upset the applecart; it neither visited Indian States nor heard Princes' representations. Nevertheless published correspondence from Simon to the Prime Minister in October 1929 did explore the possibility of extending the Commission's terms of reference;

2. Irwin to Peel, 21st February, 1929, H.C.P., 5, p. 36.
3. The Times, 17th April, 1929.
4. The Spectator, 18th April, 1929, leader, 'The Indian States'.
'we cannot afford to ignore the reactions of the presence of the States on the problems we are studying in British India or the possible repercussions on the former of any recommendations we might frame regarding the latter'. (1)

Simon envisaged that what would be required would be the setting up of some sort of conference after the publication of reports, at which His Majesty's Government would meet representatives of British India and the States.

In the event, Simon's proposals were to be dramatically upstaged by Irwin's Round Table proposal of 31st October, 1929. The shrewder Princes welcomed this development. Bikaner gave a public and enthusiastic assurance that the Princes

'have for long been anxious for an equitable and satisfactory settlement as regards the future position of the States in the polity of the India of the future'. (3)

Three years previously, an eloquent statement from the Princes' camp had stressed that

'the only future we can visualise for India is as a congeries of internally autonomous States united together under a strong central government, strong in its connection with the British Government and in the political freedom it guarantees to the people of India'. (4)

1. See Sir John Simon to the Prime Minister, 16th October, 1929, Cmd. 3568, pp. xxii-iii; The Times, 31st October, 1929.

2. Ibid. It has been suggested that the real initiator of the change of tack was Irwin, not Simon; see Ahmed, H., op. cit., p. 102; Halifax, The Earl of, Fulness of Days, (1937), p. 118.

Certainly, it was anticipated in a public statement by the Viceroy on 1st July when he referred to the Simon Commission's future recommendations on relations between the Indian States and British India and the 'clear desirability' of involving Princes in 'subsequent discussions in London'. See The Times, 1st July, 1929, leader, Lord Irwin's Leave. It does seem likely that the first suggestions about a round table conference emerged during London discussions on the delicate question of relationships between the Indian States and British India. See Low, T. A., 'Sir T. B. Capru and the First Round Table Conference', in Roundings in Modern South Asian History, (1965), p. 305.


This positive interest within the States in federal schemes had struck Harcourt Butler when on tour. At one point he noted Scott's involvement with 'some large schemes for federating the States with British India'. There is strong evidence of a growing inclination among Princes and their spokesmen in both Europe and India to have given public notice of their interest in Federation. The Standing Committee of the Chamber took quite a committed line at its June meeting, 1929. The assembly pronounced its 'sympathies with the legitimate aspirations of British India and is willing to open the avenues of negotiation with a view to the closed association of the two Indias in the future'.

Straws of this sort in the federal wind appear to have weighed little with Irwin. In the weeks following the celebrated 'Announcement' the most important consideration was to ride out the political storm and to test the style and aspirations of a Labour Secretary of State for India, Edgwood Benn. This association was likely to be less strained than had been the case with Benn's predecessors.


2. See Bannerjee, D. N. 'The Indian Commission and its Tasks', Contemporary Review, vol. 113, 1928, p. 15. Statement by the Maharaja of Patiala at Montreux, 'the solution lies along federal lines', see The Times, 26th September, 1928, Maharaja of Patiala, Contemporary Review, vol. xxxiv, 1929, p. 567. The assurance given by the Nawab of Bhopal, at a banquet to mark his return from Europe, to the effect that the Princes had no proposals prejudicial to welfare and political development of British India; see The Times 11th January, 1929, Maharaja of Patiala, 'The Indian Princes and the British Empire', Nineteenth Century, February 1929, p. 189.

3. The Times, 26th June, 1929.

As the new man wryly reminded Irwin, the crisis over the 'Declaration' was largely produced by Birkenhead and other ex-Secretaries of State for India. Benn felt, through some rather oblique reasoning, that the ferocity of the parliamentary debates might yield positive results. As one Prince had it,

"Alwar told me he wished the debate in the Commons had gone on, and I have heard from other quarters that perhaps the best thing that could happen would be to have it all out, so that the Indians could understand that they definitely have friends in this country". (3)

Where Irwin, and beyond him the Princes, might have felt a degree of trepidation was with regard to the attitude of a Labour Secretary of State for India, the representative of an administration with a theoretical commitment to socialism, to the entrenched autocratic status of the Princely order. His Majesty's Government, in its newly constituted form, could be expected to show its colours on the vexed issue of Indian States' Peoples' representation at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. The new Secretary's first letter to Delhi after assuming office did much to reassure Irwin and indirectly the friends of the Princes:

1. Benn to Irwin, 14th November, 1929, Hx.15*, 5, p. 146. At a later stage, Irwin gave full vent to his appreciation of Birkenhead: 'The Birkenhead tone is what we principally have to exorcise. But anyone with his temperament is of course congenitally incapable of appreciating the human side of the problem at all, and every time he touches it he is bound to touch it wrong'. See Irwin to Benn, 10th July, 1930, Hx.15*, 6, p. 190.

2. He judged Reading to be behind the ultimatums demanding abandonment of the Irwin Declaration: see Benn to Irwin, 14th November, 1929, Hx.15*, 5, p. 146. As to the diehard support, Benn took little account of their convictions about India's political progress: 'It appears to me no more in some cases than a miserable way of playing the future of India as a pawn in a party game at home': Benn to Irwin, 24th October, 1929, Hx.15*, 5, p. 143.

3. Benn to Irwin, 21st November, 1929, ibid., p. 150.
'some people I should like to meet I can't. I feel sure, for example, that Chudgar of the Indian States Peoples Delegation could give me masses of information, but I have replied to him very firmly but kindly that the constitutional objection to receiving him is insuperable'. (1)

Chudgar, denied a personal interview, did what he could by mail to apprise the new Secretary of conditions in the States: 'he sends me a good deal of lurid reading on his particular subject'. But it was in Manchester rather than London that the press responded to Chudgar's campaigns.

By way of contrast, ready access was granted to the agent of Patiala and Nawanagar, Rushbrook Williams, of whom Benn formed a very favourable impression:

'in the two interviews I have had with him, I have been much struck by his well-informed and broad outlook and he appeared, to me at least, to be a very useful man'. (4)

Rushbrook Williams' London mission required him to sound out the Secretary of State about the details of the forthcoming Conference on behalf of the Princes, and to suggest a way round the sensitive question of States' subjects' representation. He introduced

1. Benn to Irwin, 19th November, 1929, Hx.P., 5, p. 119. Supporters of Chudgar's cause may well have felt that few avenues were open to them. As J. G. Wedgwood put it in his preface to Chudgar's book (10th October, 1929): 'the Ruling Chiefs want no change; the British Bureaucracy wants no change; the Indian nationalist turns away his eyes; statesmen in England put 'Safety First': and Labour Party and British democracy do not know that millions of their fellow-subjects have no right to person and property in that most mysterious patch of the very mysterious East'. See Chudgar, P. L. Indian Princes Under British Protection, (1929), p. viii.

2. Ibid.

3. The Manchester Guardian did publish some disturbing features of the Bikaner budget (see the edition of 4th February, 1930), and while noting the loyalist tone of the 1930 Chamber of Princes proceedings, the Guardian warned: 'it is necessary to be cautious about accepting too unreservedly the alliance which the Princes offer us .... in the long run our greatest interest must be a stable and prosperous India, and this end would not be achieved by an alliance with the Princes which, in order to uphold this autocracy, led us into permanent opposition to the will of the peoples of British India'. See Manchester Guardian, 4th March, 1930.

'the possibility of meeting the claim .... by the nomination to the Conference, on the initiative of the Princes themselves, of some person who, presumably, would be principally interested from the point of view of the subjects'. (1)

Although he had declined to meet Chudgar, the thorny problem of States' representation did exercise Benn's mind to the degree that he asked Irwin to consider the benefits of 되Submitting the Princes as a more democratically-minded order:

'it has been suggested to me that, if the present opportunity could be taken by some important Prince, through the good offices of the Political Department, to announce a forward move in the direction of progressive reform in his State, and if this course were publically welcomed by you, the minds of the Indian States' subjects might be relieved'. (2)

Hardly a very revolutionary nostrum, but it appealed to Benn who held that

'the right course to pursue in dealing with States' subjects' grievances is a general encouragement of more representative institutions in the States rather than paternal warnings in the individual cases of wrongdoing'. (3)

Irwin no doubt influenced by the Political Department's affection for laissez faire, was less than enthusiastic:

'the Princes have seen the difficulties in representative institutions exemplified in British India during the past ten years, and justify their natural hesitation to concede power by saying they wish to see whether our experiment is a success or a failure in securing stable government'. (4)

Habitually optimistic, the Viceroy saw the future sorting itself out:

'when once the future constitution of States vis a vis British India has been settled we can probably leave it to growing public opinion within and without the States to force such reforms gradually on the Princes. It seems undesirable at the moment, with the Conference in view, to frighten them by giving the impression that we are ready to encourage against their agitation which they believe to be engineered by other than their own subjects'. (5)

2. Benn to Irwin, 12th December, 1929, [X. II., 5, p. 167.
3. Ibid. For a discussion of Government of India policy regarding States' administrations see chapter 2 pp. 123-142.
5. Ibid.
The other aspect of Indian States' representation at the Conference which plagued the new Secretary of State was the application by no less a person than the Chief Justice of the High Court, Allahabad, to act for the Princes: there were echoes here (1) of the Leslie Scott affair and a possible indication of the buying power of the Princes. Benn revealed that (2)

'I had a long letter from Grimwood Mears repeating the suggestion which he made when he saw me that he should be permitted to retire, or alternatively, be granted leave of absence, in order to appear as advocate for the Princes at the Conference, and that his service with them should count towards his pension'. (3)

Benn's doubts, as revealed to Irwin, did not concern Mears' worth as a negotiator, 'he seems to me to be bien vu in many quarters', but rather the vulnerability of the Government to a charge of partiality in the Princes' favour:

'is there not a danger that some parties might declare that to allot, as they would say, so eminent and experienced an official to press the Princes' case is not fair (especially if, as I imagine would be impossible, his pay were continued whilst other parties are not similarly provided for'.

As Benn bluntly put it to the Viceroy,

'it would never do for it to be credibly suggested that we were attempting to assist specially any section of the Conference which we thought might emphasise our side of the case'. (4)

Although Irwin did not view Mears as another Leslie Scott, Benn dug his heels in and the affair became something of a trial of strength between London and Delhi. At one point Benn brought up the standing of the judiciary:

'it would do small good to the reputation of the Bench if a person actually occupying the position of Chief Justice were to be engaged in this political work'. (5)

1. See chapter 3 passim.
3. Benn to Irwin, 24th December, 1929, £K.X., 5, p. 103.
4. Ibid.
Irwin becked Pears' capacity as a linking agency between British India and the Princes, Benn swiftly returned to the theme of Pears' personal interest:

'it seemed to me a pity that his interest was so directly related to a highly remunerative job'. (1)

As reinforcement to his position, Benn consulted Sankey and concluded:

'the proper thing is that he should drop the negotiations and have nothing to do with the Princes and remain as Chief Justice'. (3)

Benn found particularly offensive Pears' professed intention to manipulate the Princes' interest:

'I didn't like the way he argued, the way he attempted to represent the overtures as coming from the Princes; the way he suggested that the Princes might turn away from the Conference if he was not employed: the way in which he suggested that, whilst being an employee of the Princes, he would be able really to serve the turn of the other side'. (4)

If the Princes did need an advocate, then Benn had his own suggestion, one which would not be much to the liking of the Political Department:

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1. Benn to Irwin, 20th February, 1930, Hrs. 6, pp. 37,8. The implication from London was the Pears looked like an opportunist: 'he is a man who, throughout his career, has been to say the least, very much on the spot and no doubt saw new opportunity in the Round Table Conference'. Undoubtedly, the financial implications of Pears' proposition stung Benn to the quick, the Chief Justice's interest in 'a very fat job for himself' and his 'grotesque plea which he had put in as coming from the Princes, that he should receive Government pay while discharging these new functions'. See Benn to Irwin, 27th February, 1930, Ibid., p. 47.

2. Sankey, John, Baron 1929, educ. Jesus College Oxford; called to Bar, Middle Temple, 1892; Lord Chancellor since 1929; future Chairman of the Federal Structure Committee of the First Round Table Conference.

3. Benn to Irwin, 20th February, 1930, Hrs. 6, p. 42.

'the Princes have an organisation of their own which has engaged very astutely in propaganda here through the mouth of Rushbrook Williams, (1) and he also, like Mears, professes great sympathy with the constitutional patriots and I should have thought such a man, and perhaps many others, might have served as well as Mears'. (2)

Faced with such uncompromising opposition, Irwin gave way, though not too readily: regarding Mears

'I don't think I should modify anything I have said about him, more particularly about the unique position that, so far as I can discern, he does in fact hold between the different parties. But I do also admit ... that I feel he was keen on getting the job than a Chief Justice ought to have been'. (3)

The Mears' episode is instructive in two ways: it illustrates the interest in Delhi in promoting a safe and flexible negotiator to handle the Princes' case, ever mindful of a first loyalty to the Government of India; it sheds light on a commendable reluctance in the Labour Secretary of State to countenance yet another exploitation of the Princes at the hands of a legal adviser in the grand tradition, (4) whose first interests were largely pecuniary. However protective

1. Rushbrook Williams' propagandists provoked the India Office into cautioning Dawson and the Sunday Times against printing a 'ridiculous' article contrasting conditions in British India with those in the Indian States to the advantage of the latter; it appeared under the name of a prominent public man, Sir Reginald Mitchell Banks. See Minute by E. Haward, 11th February, 1930, 1/765/10/1214. Haward thought that the Morning Post, a regular forum for Princes' propaganda, should be warned off, but the prevailing view held that because of the nature of misleading Administration Reports from the States, eventually first-rate British journalists would investigate at first hand 'and if they find that the Indian Rulers resist enquiry they will draw their own conclusions'. Political Department Minute, F. Patrick, 11th February, 1930, 1/765/10/1214.

2. Benn to Irwin, 27th February, 1930, Hx.F., 6, p. 47.


4. See activities of Sergeant Sullivan in Baroda, Salisbury to Northbrook, 18th June, 1875, Sal.P., C/2-4; Irwin's strictures on Sir Leslie Scott's fees, chapter 3 P. 40; Sir Francis Wylie's exposures of 'a whole battery of lawyers including some very loud American experts'. See conclusion, p. 558.
of the Princes' interests at a distance, Benn may have looked forward to his dealings with Princes at first hand with some trepidation. Inevitably, his impressions were coloured by Irwin's correspondence which was initially guarded on this subject.

Very occasionally the Viceroy might meet a Prince with a realistic viewpoint, as happened in the case of his visit to Baroda (rather to Irwin's surprise). But by the end of his term of office, Irwin felt he could write frankly to the Labour Secretary of State about the tedium of a week with the Princes at their annual session:

'it is without exception the most wearisome and monotonous task which any Viceroy can engage'. (2)

Prior to the first Round Table Conference, Irwin played no very positive role. His major interest lay in playing down rumoured rapprochements between the two Indies. After all, the Political Department, while conscious of a 'certain change of outlook' by the Princes, saw little cause for concern. His speech at the Delhi session of the Chamber of Princes reiterated the confidence felt by the Government of India in the Princes' order; it acknowledged 'the invariable readiness with which the rulers had listened to any advice which he had felt it his duty as a friend to offer'. (4)

1. Privately, the Gaekwar forecast that 'under the pressure of improving standards of administration, many of the small States will have to go under .... whatever temporary success any Government might have in introducing the Mussolini touch, no enduring solution was to be found on those lines'. See Irwin to Benn, 23rd January, 1930, Ibid., p. 18

2. Irwin to Benn, 16th March, 1931, Ibid., p. 421.

3. L/PAS/10/124, Political Department Minute Paper P6240, P. J. Patrick, 22nd October, 1929.

4. The Times, 26th February, 1930.
However, the Chamber felt obliged once more to emphasise its sympathy with 'the legitimate aspirations of the leaders of British India'. An indication of the growing sense of urgency and corporate spirit among the Princes, was the substantial financial contribution towards the Chamber's expenses made by the Nizam who hitherto had kept quite aloof. In part, the Princes' sensitivity might have been explained by the events in Malia State, little more than 100 miles west of Baroda, where skirmishes had taken place between Gandhi's 'volunteers' and State police, an ominous portent and the first official intrusion of this nature under Gandhi's direction.

Perhaps the most clear-cut indication that the Princes entertained any bonafide interest in British Indian aspirations came with the participation of leading Princes in Saprur's All Party consultations organised in Delhi in early March, 1930. Irwin was suitably soothing; Alwar had told him that the British Indians did all the talking after the first evening:

"it all seems to have been very friendly, but I doubt if it got very far. The upshot was that they adopted a small committee of Ministers and British Indians to examine the whole thing further and report to some subsequent meeting of the whole body in June". (5)

1. See Kapurthala's speech, The Times, 27th February, 1930. The customary safeguards, i.e. the condemnation of independence in the sense of separation from the British Empire, were pronounced by Alwar, but he too spoke of "the unanimous welcome of the Conference for the prospect of early attainment by British India of its due place among the Dominions of the British Commonwealth". See The Times, 3rd March, 1930.


3. The Times, 22nd January, 1930.

4. A large number of Indian political leaders, representative of all parties, did attend though it is not clear how much progress was made on constitutional issues over two long sessions. See The Times, 3rd March, 1930.

5. Irwin to Benn, 3rd April, 1930, Hx.D., 6, p. 69.
In his usual confident fashion, Irwin predicted that these discussions would not produce 'anything very precise'; he would in any case be meeting, 'any Prince who happened to be there' in Simla during the summer, the intention being to steer the Princes onto the right ground for the Conference.

Of his ability to direct the Princes' delegation, Irwin had few doubts: the 'undue complication which did cause 'considerable concern' pertained to 'the cloud which has blown up over Patiala'.

Following the publication of the Simon Report, Irwin duly met a deputation of Princes at Simla in July in a strictly confidential session. Once more the Viceroy credited himself with persuasive powers in steering the Princes off the sensitive issues:

'they are not going to raise paramountcy and intervention when they come to London at the Conference and have left it over for further discussion with us when they get back to India .... they fully realise that Leslie Scott led them wrong when he suggested that they could get things onto a strict legalistic basis'. (4)

As forthcoming events showed, Irwin's confidence in his influence was quite misplaced.

Whatever was said behind locked doors, the Princes and their advisers in India and overseas strove to eradicate in public the suspicions of S. C. Bose and like-minded commentators that the Rulers would play the role of British stooges at the forthcoming Conference.

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. For an account of the Patiala scandal and the findings of the Fitzpatrick Enquiry see chapter 2 pp.
3. The Times, 15th July, 1930.
4. Irwin to Benn, 18th July, 1930, HkP5, 6, p. 196.
5. See Princes' demands regarding paramountcy made to Benn in London, chapter pp.
Writing to The Times, Leslie Scott reminded interested opinion that the

'Princes are essentially Indians, loyal to India, and are anxious to do nothing in any way to impede the development of British India in accordance with its own genius'. (1)

In New York, Rushbrook Williams was saying much the same thing to an American audience. Taking up the cue, the Maharaja of Kolhapur seized the opportunity of his birthday durbar to rouse Indian leaders in the cause of unity:

'Let there be no conflicting interests between British India and the States...... the clouds will soon pass and before another year is out the States and British India will be firmly established in an enduring partnership'. (4)

Accusations of a loyalist counterpoise in preparation were met head on by Bikaner when he referred to 'recent not very generous remarks that the Princes' attitude at the London Conference regarding British Indian affairs would be the chief test as to whether or not they would agree to serve as the Ulster of India'. For Indian patriots, the Maharaja could not have been more reassuring: there were 'no grounds for alarm'.

Another straw in the wind could be seen in the proceedings of a miniature Round Table Conference of South Indian States held in Bangalore in late August, 1930, which made it clear that Mysore and the South States generally were keen to join in a Federation or

1. The Times, 18th June, 1930.
2. Yorkshire Post, 29th May, 1930, L/PE5/10/221L.
3. His Highness Sir Rajaram Chatrapati, assumed the gadi in 1922.
4. The Times, 29th July, 1930.
5. Statement given to the Associated Press of India, see The Times, 19th August, 1930.
6. Bikaner stressed how glad he was to feel that the cloud of suspicion and distrust against the Princes had been removed, and it was at last realised that the Princes 'had no intention of standing in the way of British India'. Ibid.
alternatively a Council of Greater India. In an unambiguous concluding statement, the influential Dewan of Mysore emphasised the positive intentions of the Indian States' delegates bound for London:

"they will enter the Conference in no spirit of hostility to British India but with the fervid desire to cooperate wholeheartedly with their colleagues from British India in exploring every avenue leading to a really satisfactory solution". (2)

The Government of India, with much of its energies consumed by the Civil Disobedience disorders, paid little heed to what one Political Department official referred to as a Princely policy of 'coquetting with British Indian politicians'. After all, Princes had a weathercock reputation generally and Bikaner's first statement to The Times on reaching London was informed by much more loyalist sentiment. Fitzc was responsible for 'the lengthiest despatch ever sent by the Government of India to the Secretary of State', an official response to the Simon Report which reiterated the Political Department belief that

"the time had not yet come when the general body of Indian States would be prepared to take a step so far-reaching in its character as to enter into any formal relations with British India". (6)

The official damper on Federation stood in contrast to the outspoken advice being tendered in all directions by the Resident at Hyderabad, the premier Indian State. Keyes warned the Nizam in

1. The Times, 22nd August, 1930.
2. Ibid., 23rd August, 1930.
5. Fitzc, op. cit., p. 77. It covered 72 foolscap pages and 31 pages of annexures: see Coen, T. C., op. cit., p. 100.
June that unless the division of India reinforced by the Butler Report was bridged,

'the friction and ill will that would be generated would undoubtedly lead to frequent military demonstrations within India and in the end to regular civil wars'. (1)

In protest against his exclusion by the Political Department Secretariat from the Princes' Simla conference, the maverick Keyes wrote directly to the Viceroy's Private Secretary to sound a warning note:

'I don't think anyone in Simla can realise how far the feeling against the States is rising all over British India and at home among the people that really matter'. (2)

Both the attitude of the Princes to the Conference and the composition of their representation worried Keyes:

'unless the Princes declare now, with some appearance of sincerity, that they stand for an All India Federation under due safeguards, I don't think there is the slightest chance of any Congressmen or liberals consenting to sit down at the same table with them'. (3)

As to the character of the States' delegation,

'if they send to the Round Table Conference a solid phalanx of Rolls Royce Rajas (as they are called in the Deccan) headed by Fatiala, the Conference is very unlikely to arrive at any agreement'. (4)

Certainly the constitution of the Princes' delegation and indeed the timing of the Conference itself were both a source of some anxiety

1. Keyes to Mizam, 30th June, 1930, Ke.4., 28.
2. Keyes to George Cunningham, 5th August, 1930, Ke.4., 28.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
to the Viceroy. And the inclusion of Patiala, still in the shadow of the Fitzpatrick Enquiry had given the Secretary of State grounds for concern,

'you know of course of the very strong feeling which has been exhibited in some quarters here as to his behaviour'.

Keyes waxed a good deal fiercer regarding the 'whitewash, a hundred coats won't stick on him and confidence in the Viceroy, as standing for something that all parties respect, has been shaken by his support of Patiala'.

Unless Federation was taken up seriously, Keyes foresaw a grim future:

'the alternative is not a British India and an Indian India with a Council of Greater India and the Viceroy holding the balance, but a Swaraj India and a Rajas India with friction at every point of contact, and the Viceroy's authority continually strained to the breaking point'.

1. Irwin supposed that if British India sent 30 representatives, then the Princes should think of 7-10, 12 at the outside. See Irwin to Benn, 6th March, 1930, Ex_P., 6, p. 52. In the event, the Princes secured the inclusion of 10 Princes, 6 senior Dewans plus 12 supporting advisers, rather a handsome proportion given that the British Indian delegation totalled 57. For a full list of the Indian States' delegation see appendix 2. Predictably, many Princes were keen to appear, even quite minor chiefs could see themselves as All India statesmen: the Chief of Bhor travelled to London to press his case in person over tea at the India Office with Benn who subsequently complained, 'he was so eager, as they all are, to be a representative at the Conference'. Benn to Irwin, 4th July, 1930, Ibid., p. 137. The proposal of a Conference of 3 months duration from October did stand though it alarmed some Princes who did not relish a London winter. The reluctance to urge a Spring Conference publically reflected the pressure from British Indian politicians who pushed for an early start least the Labour Government should fall meantime. See Irwin to Benn, 6th March, 1930, Ibid., p. 52.

2. Benn to Irwin, 4th July, 1930, Ex_P., 6, p. 138.


4. Ibid.

It was in this respect that the Simon Report had done great damage through its easy acceptance of a Federation in the distant future, a recommendation that had already caused the Nizam's Council to reverse their policy:

"H.R.H. will now direct his delegates to pursue that policy of wait and see which the Report indicates for the States". (1)

Keyes' alarming prognostications made little impact on the Viceroy:

'he was rather disturbed at the impression that had got abroad that the Government is using the States to slow down the approach of Swaraj, for as you know it is an entire misconception of the Government's actual policy'. (2)

The composition of the Princes' Delegation fulfilled Keyes' worst fears, though in some traditional quarters the representation was thought to be 'admirable', even if the British Indian list showed 'a decided tendency to the left'. (3) Headlined in The Times as a 'Strong Team', that august journal proffered a special advance welcome to those Princes who on account of the Conference had delayed their annual visit, thus depriving the past London season 'of its most picturesque feature'. (4) A sequence of pen portraits describing the Princely delegates in glowing terms followed.

2. Cunningham to Keyes, 12th July, 1930, K.S.P., 28.
3. On the night of the publication of the Round Table Conference list, the author of a work hostile to the Princes was dining at the Cecil Hotel, Simla: 'the names of the delegates and the prospects for the Conference were on every lip'. The outlook was not an optimistic one. It was generally felt that on the question of the Princes, the fair hopes of the Conference would be wrecked'. See Gauba, K., H.H. or the Pathology of Princes, (1930, Lahore), p. 298.
4. O'Dwyer, Sir M. F., letter to The Times, 15th October, 1930.
5. The Times, 13th August, 1930.
6. Thus Patiala, 'well known as a soldier, sportsman and imperial statesman ... his States' resources being scientifically developed for the benefit of his peoples'; Baroda's 'progressive views' were extolled as was Bikaner's 'personal magnetism'; Bhopal stood as 'energetic and resourceful'; Alwar (shortly to be deposed) was hailed as 'one of the cleverest men in India', and special mention was made of the Jam Saheb's 'great attention to the education and medical welfare of his people'. The eulogies ran on to include Sanghai, Dholpur, the leading ministers not forgetting the special merits of the various advisers. Ibid.
Keyes expressed his dissatisfaction with the delegation in characteristic manner to a distinguished old Foreign and Political stalwart in London as a member of the Council of India. He deplored the prospect of his

'Rolls Royce Rajas, with Nakaar in tow and two or three subservient ministers to represent the States in London'.

A well-meaning Viceroy had been captured by the Political Department:

'It makes one mad to see the way he is being manœuvreed into so derogatory a position. The Standing Committee of the Chamber stands for all the worst in the States. It stinks of corruption, tyranny and the wildest extravagance'.

It staggered Keyes that despite Patiala's disgrace the Political Department had connived at his re-election as Chancellor, and he was not a solitary offender:

'the Jam Sahib's indictment has probably been seen by every M.P., Hari Singh is no better than Ranjit and his escapade as Mr A(4) has not been forgotten. How can a delegation headed by these creatures cut any ice with anyone but the maddest die-hards like old flurry Knox (5) ....... if the States' delegation doesn't cause the Federation to be still-born, it will certainly make it abortive'.

With some degree of prescience, Keyes was driven by a concern for the unity of the Indian sub-continent. He suspected the Chamber of Princes Special Organisation of hatching a plot to refound a Maratha Brahmin-run confederacy:


3. Ibid.


'most of the Bombay Deccan States are Maratha or Brahmin survivors of the Peshwa's jagirdars; and their scheme is to unite them with the Maratha-speaking parts of the Berars and Central Pramnoes'. (1)

However, Keyes' general credibility is somewhat lessened by his extravagant claims for the Hyderabad State, surprising in view of Harcourt Butler's critical observations when there. In Keyes' view

'Hyderabad represents something very real - the Mughal dominion that took the first step towards making India a nation, that introduced much of permanent value into the life of the Peninsula in the art of governing, in virility and in the arrest of the decadent trend which Hindu philosophy was imposing on the life of the people. This leaven is still working and the blood of Islam and Hinduism is essential to the growth of Indian Nationality and consciousness'. (3)

Much of Keyes' animus was centred on

'that charlatan Haksar, one of the Brahmins behind the so-called Maratha movement aimed at the break-up of Hyderabad'. (4)

In the case of Keyes, it seems clear that regardless of the official Political Department position, one of its senior officers in the field, sited in perhaps the key State, was working actively for the adoption of Federation prior to the Conference:

'I very nearly got a solid block of the Southern States, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin .... to declare for immediate federation'. (5)

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1. Ibid.
2. See chapter 3 p. 184.
4. Keyes to Barton, (former Resident at Hyderabad), 30th September, 1930, Ibid.
5. The Hyderabad Council were most sluggish and Keyes felt little confidence in the State Dewan: 'Hydar won't be much of an asset at the Round Table Conference. He is so faint-hearted than even his greed, which is great, and his fanaticism, which is perhaps greater, won't make him stand up to either the Swarajists or to any reactionary Princes'. See Keyes to Watson, (Political Secretary to the Government of India), 6th July, 1930, Ibid.
But Keyes' pungent analyses were not taken up with any enthusiasm in London; *The Times* refused to publish a piece from him (anonymously). (1)

Perhaps the sole influential political figure with an understanding of dominion affairs, to take the Hyderabad Resident seriously was Lord Lothian, who found Keyes' memoranda 'extraordinarily interesting ... I wish he were here to advise us on the spot'. (2)

From the viewpoint of the Indian delegates, much appeared to rest upon the supposedly enlightened style of the MacDonald ministry. Certainly, the establishment of the Labour Government did hearten the leading agent for liaison between Princes and British India, T. R. Sapru. His assessment of the new administration was confirmed by a well-placed London observer:

'you are right to emphasise the importance of the absence of Birkenhead, Peel and Winterton at the India Office. It would be unfair to assume that the Labour Government is not friendly'. (3)

Indeed a good deal of sympathy might be expected from 'a very sincere and hard working' Secretary of State 'who is endeavouring to create confidence in his own good-will and that of his colleagues and he desires to make Indians feel that the India Office is their office and not the sort of thing it used to be'. (4) For their part, the Princes had little to fear from a Secretary whose ideological convictions could best be described as fluid. As Benn assured a Member of the Gwalior Council towards the end of the Conference:

1. See F. S. Oliver to Keyes, 30th October, 1930, *ibid.* Dawson thought the material 'too general and retrospective for *The Times*. See Dawson to F. S. Oliver, 29th October, 1930, *ibid.*

2. Kerr, Philip Henry, a member of Milner's Kindergarten in South Africa 1905-8; editor of the Round Table 1910-16; Secretary to Lloyd George 1916-21; Parliamentary Under-Secretary, India Office 1931-2.


4. Polak, H. S. L.; one of four members of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Imperial Affairs, a regular contributor to its reports, and an old intimate of Gandhi since his South African days. See *too Woolf*, L. *Downhill all the Way* (1970), p. 224.


of course I believed in democracy, but that, if autocracy could show better results, I was quite prepared to let it have the opportunity to do so."

It may well be that Labour leaders generally credited the Princes with a political prestige that did not in practice possess. There is a degree of unreality in the exaggerated respect accorded to the Princes collectively by Benn as the Conference neared its conclusion:

"the influence of all these Chiefs and Princes has been invaluable in London in the last six weeks. I only fear that when they depart, as they all threaten to do in three weeks time, there will be no one this side to bring home to public opinion the real state of affairs."

One Labour Privy Councillor and enthusiast for empire, J. H. Thomas, seized the opportunity offered by the Conference to junket with the Rulers, as Benn observed,

"winning golden opinions among the Princes, laughing, joking, talking cricket at the Hyderabad Dinner." (5)

Should any sort of constitutional breakthrough surface during the Conference, it was most unlikely to emanate from a Labour Cabinet. (6)

As one well-qualified observer recorded:

"among the Labour leaders inside and outside Parliament there was very little knowledge or understanding of the Indian situation." (7)

3. Benn to Irwin, 22nd December, 1930, Hx.E., 6, p. 299.
5. Benn to Irwin, 11th December, 1930, Hx.E., 6, p. 284.
The Prime Minister had been a Member of the Royal Commission on Indian Public Services in 1912 and had written on the 'awakening' of India, so he 'posed as the expert in chief'. MacDonald's subsequent handling of the Princes moved one representative of the Political Department to hilarity. The only other front rank Labour leader who knew much about India was Attlee, a Member of the Simon Commission, and he failed singularly to impress Woolf. Various promptings were directed into this apparent vacuum on the eve of the Conference, the most outspoken of which reached the Prime Minister in the form of a memorandum from a disgruntled Political Agent. Federation was dismissed as 'a sort of mystic face-saving word'; if the Princes were flirting with nationalists, it was because 'they feel that at any moment they may be thrown to the wolves'.

1. Ibid.
2. It came to be decided that the Prime Minister should evade the heavy programme of Princely social functions planned for the Conference except in the case of the invitation to the Hyderabad Dinner. But MacDonald succumbed to the appeals of the flamboyant Alwar, shortly to be deposed and hardly a fit subject for the distinction. A visiting Political Officer assumed that the Prime Minister's acceptance of the Alwar invitation masked the intention to deliver some tactful warnings on State administration, an impression reinforced by an approach to Fitze for help in preparing the Prime Minister's speech: 'it was difficult to keep a straight face when we were informed that the only point on which Mr. MacDonald desired enlightenment was as to whether it was from the sun or the moon that the ancient dynasty of Alwar claimed to be descended'. See Fitze, op. cit., p. 79. Benn felt that the subsequent Alwar banquet showed up the Prime Minister at his best, 'he has the grand manner if any man had, 'Auld Lang Syne' just after midnight was very appropriate and the Prime Minister and Alwar indulged in an entertaining reciprocation of compliments as between Rajputs and Highlanders'. Benn to Irwin, 10th December, 1930, Ms.1., 6, p. 220.
4. Wingate, R. E. L., C.I.E., Secretary to the Agent to the Governor General in Rajputana, 1924, Baluchistan, 1927; Political Agent and Deputy Commissioner Quetta-Pishin, 1928.
Wingate's solution envisaged the placing of the Ruler of a State and the Viceroy of British India on level terms vis a vis the Crown. "This would secure the States to us for a very long time ... certain Indians will say 'it is handing over the people to autocrats unfitted to rule' but is it? ... many parts of British India are now worse misgoverned than any Indian State". Wingate's final advice to MacDonald was couched in terms which he might have hesitated to employ to an aristocratic Viceroy:

'awkward questions may arise. Let them - use your imagination and be prepared to take a risk. Look at Iraq'. (2)

An altogether more sober and searching analysis of the pre-Conference prospects, which outlined certain possible developments favourable to a very gradual transfer of power through the involvement of the Princes, was also put up to the Prime Minister.' The document emanated from the India Office, perhaps the only quarter in which any serious thinking on a constitutional role for the Princes was taking place. An exploration was made of the States' British connection:

'if the States are making common cause with British Indian politicians, they may find it difficult to go far in this direction. Ordinary Indian opinion is now so firmly entrenched in a democratic position that the idea of a small 'aristocratic' assembly would be desperately opposed'. (4)

Still, if Federation did look like getting off the ground,

'a consideration of fundamental importance is that their inclusion might add an element of stability to an Indian Government and thus allay apprehension in some British minds about a transfer of power'. (5)

Much would depend on the source of such an initiative:

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. The lucid style and measured sophistication of the memorandum suggest that it is the work of Sir Findlater Stewart, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for India and Clerk to the Council of India, 1924-30.
4. Memorandum on Indian Affairs, R.M.P. 30/69/1/578.
5. Ibid.
'it would be very valuable to get these ideas advocated from the Indian side. If they were proposed from the British side, they would be condemned at once'. (1)

It was not even certain that the British Indian politicians would raise Federation though the 'communal' Hindu element (Jayakar and Moonje) were thought to have tried to make preliminary secret arrangements with the Princes; but, should federation come up, the memorandum urged British encouragement in view of the possibility of a 'safe constitution' emerging. Yet even the relatively perceptive India Office team confessed itself to be unprepared for the emergence of federation:

'...this plan has never been studied and worked out by our experts'. (2)

It seems clear that on the British side a process of drift was in evidence; initiatives, when they came, would be Indian in origin.

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
The Prince in London:
the First Session of the Round Table Conference
It is within the ranks of the Princes themselves, or at any rate their more intelligent advisers, that proposals for federation took shape. It has been suggested that the 'crucial discussions on which everything hinged' began in the relaxed atmosphere of the S.S. Viceroy of India which carried the main Indian delegates to London. There Haksar and Panikkar had convincingly outlined the prospect of federation as an escape route from Political Department 'leading strings'. Perhaps this was so, but the drift of Princes' public statements and the outpourings of Rushbrook Williams' organisation in the previous twelve months or so suggest that federation had been under close consideration by the Princes for some time. Indeed, the Hyderabad delegation had sailed in possession of a detailed federal scheme, and as Hydari put it, 'when we set out for England, we were fully prepared for the question': a tribute here perhaps to Keyes' efforts. Mizra Ismail of Mysore had a different scheme in draft form for an all-India Federation worked out prior to arrival in London which may have been modified but was not conceived en route. The shrewder Princes may have felt that the time for a rapprochement was right before antipathy in British India reached a peak. Bikaner would be aware of a public challenge published shortly before his embarkation:

3. Ahmad, W., op. cit., p. 116.
4. Ibid., p. 112.
6. At least Bikaner was able to board his ship at Bombay with a semblance of dignity; Patiala was forced to take a launch and join the mailship in mid-stream to avoid hostile demonstrations on the pier. See Ramusack, B.N., The Indian Princes as Imperial Politicians, 1914-39, Ph.D., thesis, (Michigan 1969), p. 255.
if the Ruler of Bikaner is under the impression that the selfgoverning units of British provinces would ever be united with the dark spots saturated with unadulterated autocracy of the States, I have only to state that the Ruler is practising self-deception'. (1)

It seems most likely that the Princes as a body crystallised their attitudes on federation into a positive commitment during certain 'joint informal meetings' which took place in London between the Indian States and British Indian delegates in the three weeks preceding the Conference. Not all the key States' delegates had travelled in the 'Viceroy of India'; the Hyderabad delegation arrived in advance and several Rulers chose to sojourn on the continent of Europe first; Kashmir, Dholpur and Alwar did not arrive in London till November 21st and, given Princely self-esteem, they would have been reluctant to endorse a federal commitment arrived at in their absence.

The most publicised delegation was that of Hyderabad, a State which had not sent an official mission to Britain since the reign of George III, though Sir Salar Jang's visit over the Berars wrangle in 1876 was recalled. It was explained that Hyderi's presence was due to an established tradition, the person of His Exalted Highness the Nizam being 'too precious' to leave India. Hyderi's brief statement on arrival was delphic in content:

'the representatives of the Nizam might be relied upon to pull their weight for the good of the Empire'. (5)

2. The Times, 20th October, 1930.
3. The Times, 22nd October, 1930.
4. Ibid., 6th October, 1930. The Berars Case is examined in chapter 2 PP. 211-216.
5. Ibid.
His Majesty's Government made considerable efforts to accommodate the Indian delegates in comfort and style. The formal meetings of the Conference were to take place in St. James Palace in Queen Anne's Room where an elliptical table containing an inner table had been specially made for the occasion.

The social dimension of the Conference was likely to be the forte of Princes 'whose talents and resources in such matters had always been unrivalled'. While the greater Princes kept open house at the Carlton and other luxurious hotels, 'even the least opulent of them all gave a Christmas tea-party at which it was good to see him basking in the smiles of Cabinet Ministers and pulling a cracker with the Lord Mayor'.

The social rounds of the Conference were launched in style at an informal dinner given to them by the Prince of Wales on 21st October. Predictably Alwar, with his aptitude for self-publicity, absented himself from the gathering, much to the annoyance of the Prince of Wales, 'on account of the bereavement he had suffered on the death of his guru'. This solecism did not prevent Benn from holding the notorious Maharanja in quite high regard:

'I gave Alwar lunch today at the Athenaeum and we had three hours intimate talk. He is a useful critic and observer'.

1. The premises at 8 Chesterfield Gardens were secured as a 'Social Centre' for delegates, extensively refitted and the decoration included some of the art treasures of the nation. See The Times, 7th October, 1930.

2. The Times, 22nd October, 1930. An imaginative observer might have noted symbolic overtones in the assignment of the Guard Room to the potentially less manageable British Indian delegates as an office, and the Picture Gallery to the more ornamental Indian States' representatives.

3. Fitzme, Sir H., op. cit., p. 78.

4. Ibid.

5. The Times, 22nd October, 1930.


7. Ibid.
So Benn followed on from Mountbatten in the tradition of Secretaries of State hoodwinked by this unprincipled sadist.

Benn's initial problems with the Princes' delegation concerned questions of precedence. But in general he was impressed by their cordial style:

'Bikaner is helpful and friendly and all the Princes, with each of whom I shook hands, and with most of whom I now have personal acquaintance, were friendly to the last degree'.

Very occasionally, Benn allowed to himself a hint of misgiving as to a Prince's spending facility:

'I am dining with Bikaner tonight (a party of 65. What is the average income of the Indian peasant?)'.

This 'immense dinner party at the Carlton last night for Princes and Advisers' gave Benn an opportunity to weigh up Bhopal, 'at first glance I very much like the cut of his jib', but, with important constitutional issues looming, Benn's mind continued to be plagued with the trivia of precedence controversies, notably the seating plan for the Princes at the forthcoming Lord Mayor's Banquet.

However, with the forming of the Round Table Conference Agenda Committee, the real issues began to emerge. The Princes' representatives were respectively Bikaner, Alwar, Akbar Hydari, Nakaar and Mirza Ismail. It was at an early meeting of this committee that

1. For an account of the deposition of Alwar see chapter 2, pp. 158-163.
2. Objections were raised to the proposed presence of Hydari at the Ceremonial Opening of the Conference, on the grounds that he was not a Prince. Kashmir in particular had to be talked round. See Benn to Irwin, 7th November, 1930, Hx. E., 6, p. 272.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid. On the night of the banquet, leading Princes stayed away and the Aga Khan who was not admitted to the secret, was left isolated alongside nine vacant chairs - to his intense annoyance. Benn had considerable difficulty in keeping the demonstration out of the newspapers and positively fumed at Alwar's impertinence in courting congratulations on the success of the boycott. See Benn to Irwin, 13th November, 1930, Hx. E., 6, p. 241.
Sapru introduced the crucial question:

'did we want a federation of All India. That was a big conception and the first thing we had to decide. It would depend on the attitude of the Princes - and Bikaner agreed'. (1)

The full import of this historic move was not lost on Benn, and he stressed its possibilities to the Viceroy:

'the important point here is this, that the feelers which have been put out by the Princes about some form of Federation have turned the minds of Reading and the others in the direction of the possibility of a much more complete scheme in which I assume they would be willing to give more power to the Central Government'. (2)

News of the Princes' initiative cut little ice with Irwin:

'the ideas of immediate federation on what Hydari and Uysore would consider safe lines were a good deal in advance of what would be the general body of opinion prevailing among the States'. (3)

The lukewarm attitude of the Government of India was reflected in the Viceroy's forecast that

'when the Princes really get down to appreciating what sacrifices of sovereignty any federation must involve, they would want a bit more time to think it over'. (4)

An inevitably there was a variation in levels of support for Federation:

'Bhopal seemed not quite as keen on immediate federation as some of the States .... the Princes are in deep meditation on the subject'. (5)

Still Benn noted, at least in the short term, 'the interesting thing about the Princes' delegation is the way in which they are managing to act together'. (6) What does seem clear is that it would be a mistake to see Sapru and the Liberals as the major architects of the

1. Ibid., p. 236.
2. Ibid.
3. Irwin to Benn, 10th November, 1930, Hk.£., 6, p. 330.
4. Ibid.
5. Benn to Irwin, 8th November, 1930, Hk.£., 6, p. 237.
6. Ibid.
rapprochement on Federation; much of the initiative appears to have come from the Princes themselves, and the India Office had been caught on the hop. Sastri told Benn that,

'the Liberals were rather unprepared for the Princes' Federal proposals and want to examine them closely in a friendly way. The conception of an All India Dominion attracts them greatly'.

In Mirza Ismail's recollection, he was the instigator of the Princes' forthcoming public declaration in favour of an All-India Federation, a development which 'greatly surprised' the British Government.

For the British public at large, events got under way with the official opening of the Round Table Conference in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords on the morning of 12th November. Great care was taken to generate a solemn and impressive atmosphere:

'His Majesty began his speech, which was broadcast throughout the world, via a gold and silver microphone, as the first stroke of noon sounded from Big Ben'.

In a short address, the King Emperor emphasised that:

'never before have British and Indian statesmen and Rulers of Indian States met, as you meet, in one place and round a table, to discuss the future system of government for India'.

The theme of unity was followed up by the Prime Minister who suggested, in his characteristic full-blown prose, that

'the association of the Princes for the first time in joint conclave with the representatives of the people of British India is symbolic of the gradual moulding together of India into one whole'.

The Princes were given disproportionate prominence in the First Plenary Meeting; four of the eight speakers to follow the King

6. Ibid., p. 18.
Emperor were drawn from the States' delegation and the speeches of Patiala, Baroda and Hydari were the subject of especially warm commendations in a Times leader. (1) It was felt that the Conference had opened auspiciously, 'the friendly conversations between representatives of all sections' were commented on even if 'people who had come primed with stories of Eastern pageantry that they would see may have felt a trifle disappointed .... various splashes of colour did remain - the vivid green of the Maharaja of Alwar's turban'.

Benn's impression of a sense of solidarity among the Princes proved to be short lived. Patiala, the nominal Chancellor had found himself to be effectively deposed; during his absence in Paris the delegates had placed the Gaekwar in the chair, and Patiala,

'reather a pathetic figure, not in good health and very worn down nervously by the attacks that had been made upon him', (3) asked Benn to intervene. The Secretary of State stalled, his stated intention being

'to prevent a public row among the Princes that would be most derogatory to their dignity'. (4)

Apart from this consideration, if the Princes were to emerge as All-India statesmen, their habitual dissensions should be swept under the carpet. But Benn continued to be plagued with protests from Patiala, ostensibly it was 'the honour of the position of Chancellor that was worrying him'. (5) Not that the new Chairman of the States' delegation cut an especially impressive figure: Benn reported a talk with the Gaekwar 'which amounted to very little .... he is thoroughly friendly, hardly very constructive'.

1. The Times, 13th November, 1930.
2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 238.
Speculation about the Princes' initiative began to appear in the press. Commenting on a conference held in Bikaner's suite at the Carlton on 14th November, *The Times* reported that 'various federal schemes were being discussed'. The Gaekwar delivered a strongly nationalistic address to the East Indian Association on the following evening. Reviewing the events of the first week, Benn noted that 'the surprise for British opinion in the Conference has been the support given by the Princes to the national claims; and the surprise to the Indians has been the apparent willingness of the princes to come at an early date into some federal system'. (3)

He proposed a possible plan:

'to announce that the States' schemes of Federation introduce a new element into the problem, that we are now possibly in sight of a Federation of All India, whereas, in the Preamble to the Act of 1919, we merely referred to the realisation of responsible government in British India'. Implicit here was a desire to discount His Majesty's Government as an initiator of Federation;

'it should be added that this possibility has come on us so suddenly that time is required to explore it'. (4)

Thus the ground had been carefully prepared in advance when the morning dawned of the historic Plenary Session on 17th November, 1930. A thick frost enveloped the neighbourhood of St. James Palace, giving some of the delegates their first taste of an English winter. Events within soon warmed up the Indian participants when the constitutional fog which had long enshrouded India's political future


2. Ibid., 17th November, 1930.


4. Ibid.

thinned as if by magic. In 'the speech of his lifetime', the
first speaker, Sapru, demanded responsibility at the Centre, and asked
the Princes to support a Federation:

'May I make a very respectful appeal to some of my illustrious
countrymen who are patriots first and Princes afterwards?.....
I think the Indian Prince is every inch as patriotic as one of us .... I would welcome the association of the Indian States
with British India mainly for three reasons. I say they will
furnish a stabilising factor in a constitution. I further say
that the process of unification will begin at once. I lastly say that in regard to matters of defence, they will furnish a
practical experience which is yet wanting in British India.
For all these reasons I invite them to join the bigger
federation'. (2)

Bikaner responded in very encouraging vein: as regards the States'
position, he made the predictable points about

'unqualified loyalty to the Throne and Person of His Majesty
the King Emperor .... the kingly idea and monarchial system
are bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh'; (3)

to this was linked

'an unflinching adhesion to the British Commonwealth of Nations
..... and thirdly we stand without compromise on our treaty
rights and all that they involve'. (4)

Then, on Dominion status Bikaner spoke unequivocally:

'Let us hitch our wagon to that star .... I am convinced
that we can best make a contribution through a federal
style of government .... the Princes and States realise
that an All-India Federation is likely to prove the only
satisfactory solution of India's problems'. (5)

It held 'no terrors for the Princes and Governments of the Indian States'.

One considerable clue as to the Princes' motives in boldly entering
the arena of All India politics is supplied by the final section of
Bikaner's speech which contained a thinly veiled attack on Political
Department practice as upheld by the Butler Report, and an

3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Ibid., p. 35.
5. Ibid., pp. 33, 37.
anticipation of British Indian support for Princes' grievances.

As to the infringement of Treaty Rights,

'... an arbitrary body of usage and political practice has come into being. The time has passed when issues of this importance can be decided ex parte by any government. We therefore attach the utmost importance to the establishment of a Supreme Court .... a principle to which the leaders of political thought in British India have, I believe I am right in saying, lent their full support'. (1)

Thus, 'the most striking feature' of the Conference, the declared commitment of the Indian States to a new federal constitution, came about. Contemporary opinion was much impressed by the Princes' gesture and from now on events advanced at a pace too sharp for Benn, with the Conservative interest making a volte face overnight.

Benn, presiding over the business Committee established at the Opening Session, was shaken to hear Hoare now call for a concentration on the 'central question' when established Conservative policy had hitherto called for discussion on Provincial autonomy: 'it shows how greatly Conservative opinion has been affected by the Princes' scheme of Federation'. Benn disliked this unforeseen change of direction which might bring up the 'sharp issues' on the Centre too early.

1. Ibid., pp. 38, 39.

2. Ibid., Introductory note, p. 7.

3. It was left to a distinguished veteran of the Political Department to point out in retrospect that of the four Princes concerned in the public acceptance of Federation - Bikaner followed by Alwar, Rewa and Sangli - two i.e. Alwar and Rewa had later to be deposed for gross misrule and all were essentially princelings ruling over 'tiny principalities each with less than one million inhabitants'. See Wylie, Sir F. (Indian Political Service 1919-38; Governor of Central Provinces and Berar 1930-40; Political Adviser to the Crown Representative 1940-41 and 1943-45; Governor of the United Provinces 1945-7). 'Federal Negotiations in India 1935 and After' in Philips, C. H. and Wainwright, W. D. (eds.), op. cit., p. 526.

4. An indication of the increasing momentum is Benn's practice of writing long daily letters to Irwin which begins during this period.

5. Hoare, Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel John Gurney; P.C. 1922; LL.D. Cambridge; M.P. (Con.) Chelsea since 1910; Member of Indian Round Table Conference; Secretary of State for India, 1931-5.

The momentum continued with 'a very high-flown oration' from Alwar to lead off the Plenary Session of 18th November. The Maharaja of Rewa contributed 'a very attractive little speech stating what he called the conservative point of view which he said had great value ('Hear, hear' from Peel').

There was certainly much material here to underline the Princes' reputation as natural conservatives. This was not lost on Peel who, in the following speech, while not neglecting to stress the importance of the Services and British trade, nevertheless 'wound up in a sympathetic strain'. Most hopeful was Peel's observation that 'we should attempt perhaps to lay some stones immediately on which the great federal idea can be built.'

Benn felt obliged to reiterate almost daily the shattering effect of the Princes' initiative: 'so far the Princes' schemes have completely altered the situation. Conservative opinion in this country is much impressed and willing to go far if a good federal scheme can be devised'.

Presiding over the Business Committee session on the following day,

1. Benn to Irwin, 18th November, 1930, ibid., p. 247. The address was stuffed with dramatic and unconnected imagery, 'the seeming corpse appears to be awakening .... it's a long way to Tipperary'. See Cmd. 3778, pp. 46-51.

2. H.H. Maharaja Sir Gulab Singhji, State area 13,000 sq. miles; population 1,500,000; revenue circa £500,000.


4. Rewa's emphasis lay very much on gradualism: 'I feel certain that not only among the millions who till the soil of India, but among all sober-minded politicians and statesmen there must be a large amount of support for, and sympathy with, those who counsel a cautious advance and preach the dangers of precipitation and shortcuts'. Cmd. 3778, p. 57.

5. Benn to Irwin, 18th November, 1930, Hs.P., 6, p. 247.

6. Cmd. 3778, pp. 67, 8. On this occasion Peel seemed very favourably disposed towards Federation. He recognised 'that the idea of some sort of federal union between the Princes and the Provinces has grown rapidly and has enlisted a large amount of sympathy from great sections of opinion. That seems to be a tremendous gain, because it is very difficult to see how it is possible to get an organised unity in India except on some Federal basis'. ibid.

Benn was staggered to find Reading, who had hitherto established himself (with Birkenhead) as the most raucous opponent of Indian political advance, pressing for discussion on responsibility at the Centre:

'at first I thought he was merely preparing for a battle royal; but from what I learn now it is clear that Reading and many Conservatives are prepared to do a good deal for responsibility at the Centre if only some Federal system with the substantial element which the Princes would contribute can be introduced'.

In general, Benn had come to feel that Federation was a real possibility:

'British India would be tempted to be concassive by the hope of the greater powers which a Federal Government would enjoy and the Princes might be attracted ... by the possibility that their position as to paramountcy might be favourably reviewed'.

Not that formidable hurdles in the path towards Federation did not exist; some were clearly foreseen by the Secretary of State, some less so. The acquiescence of British traditionalist interests could not be assumed. The relatively enlightened style of the Conservative position was largely due to the attitude of Peel and Hoare, both of whom were impressed by the Conference to date but concerned about carrying their party. Nor was it clear how a Federal plan would be received in India. Benn understood that

'our primary task is to send men home with something worthwhile to face the jibes of Congress'.

Yet Benn was in possession of a most depressing report from a leading radical author and political commentator currently sojourning in Bombay:

'no one, not even Liberals, hopes for anything from the Round Table. No one, not even Liberals, has any respect for the Indian Delegation barring Sastri, Sarup and three or four more. In the present mood of exasperation, even a good and generous compromise will be scouted'.

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1. See Benn's condemnation of Reading's 'terrific rhododendrond' in the Lords during the debate of the Irwin 'Declaration'; Benn to Irwin, 14th November, 1929, Hx. P., 5, p. 148.
2. Benn to Irwin, 19th November, 1930, Hx. P., 6, p. 249.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 251
5. Ibid., p. 250.
The Times correspondent in New Delhi reported 'great interest' in the federal initiatives particularly as interpreted in an article by Sastri in the 'Hindustan Times'. Although Sastri offered some comfort to the conservative Princes through the implication that a democratic Government of India would not pursue an interventionist policy in the same way as the Crown, he did refer ominously to 'the clamour' of Indian States subjects for reform. Much food for thought here for Rewa and the ultra conservative Rulers.

A further formidable obstacle was sited inside the Government of India itself. The crystallisation of Federation into a practical scheme with positive and recognisable advantages for the Princes would depend to a large extent on the good offices of the Political Department. Keyes was not alone in his doubts here. Long before the Conference set, Sapru had received a gloomy prediction from a self-proclaimed architect of Princely rapprochement with British India:

'if British India's applecart is eventually upset, the persons really responsible for that catastrophe will not be the Princes themselves but the Political Officers who will give the wrong lead with the object of retaining their authority'. (3)

While Irwin's bona fides were not questioned, 'I doubt if H.E. the Viceroy knows the extent of the Political Officers' shortsightedness and I am quite clear that if he wants - and undoubtedly he does - a satisfactory of the Round Table Conference, amongst other things he must solemnly charge this class of his officers to be loyal to the policy of the present British Government'. There was substance to Haksar's anxieties; as early as August, 1929 the Political Department had warned Princes off Federation, 'a matter for decades'.

1. The Times, 20th November, 1930.
2. Ibid.
3. Haksar to Sapru, November, 1929, Sapr, P. 2190, p. 43.
4. Ibid.
The Political Department was represented at St. James Palace;

'it was of course in the nature of things that the Government of India should depute some of its own officers to observe, or even to participate in the Conference'. (1)

The Government of India officials were not impressed with Benn; they repeatedly complained that he spent more time with the Indian delegates than with them. Benn felt that he got on well with Fitz, 'you have sent us some splendid advisers', but the latter appears to have experienced little exhilaration during his attachment to the Secretariat, time hanging 'rather heavy on our hands'.

The Princes' Federal initiative came as a rude shock:

'it was of course somewhat disconcerting that the representatives of the Princely Order unexpectedly and, as it subsequently appeared, with a quite inadequate appreciation of the commitments involved, pronounced themselves at the very outset of the proceedings to be in favour of a Federal constitution for India, thus rendering out of date not only the despatch upon which I had lavished so much time and labour, but also a great part of the monumental Report of the Simon Commission'. (5)

The Political Department would also be disturbed by the re-emergence of the paramountcy issue, despite previous assurances from the Viceroy. It was introduced by the Jam Sahib during the Plenary Session of 20th November:

'while asking for Federation, we also ask for the 'judicial' ascertainment of the rights of the States. The present position that the Paramount Power can at will over-ride the treaties is extremely unsatisfactory'. (6)

Benn expressed interest in the renowned cricketer's speech,

'delivered in cultivated English style, but he repeated what has already been stated by Patiala and other Princes, namely, that the internal rights of the States must be protected and by this I understand they are after something in substitution for autocratic rule by the Political Department'. (7)

1. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 77.
4. Fitz, Sir K., op. cit., p. 78.
5. Ibid.
Not much of this was to Irwin's liking and he continued to
discount prospects for Federation:

'I still cannot believe that immediate federation, when the
Princes understand its implication, will be found practical'. (1)

To explain away the Government of India's failure to forecast the
Princes' initiative, Irwin brought up, rather lamely, the danger in
any official association with federation which might

give grounds for the assertion that we were seeking to side¬
track British Indian aspirations by introducing the conservative
element of the States at the outset'. (2)

Winding up the first phase at the Plenary Session of 21st November,
the Prime Minister dwelt in the most fulsome terms on the Princes'
Declaration which had

"revolutionised the situation. Supposing we had met here
without the Princes, supposing the Princes had come and had
said nothing, or supposing they had said 'we are merely
spectators'. That a different situation would have presented
itself to us!" (3)

In Benn's version, the Prime Minister's leading point ran that the
Conference's status was assured:

'what we had to do now was to get on to practical questions,
bearing in mind the great help we have received from the
Princes' Federal proposals'. (4)

The Conference expected to deal with 'practical questions' by
resolving itself into a number of committees, the key body being the

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1. Irwin to Benn, 17th November, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 335.
2. Ibid.
3. Cod. 3778, p. 104.
Federal Structure Committee. Its formidable brief included such 'Heads of Discussion' as the component elements of the Federation; the type of Federal Legislature required and its powers, its membership and the distribution of representation among the federating units; methods of choosing representatives. For Princes

'perhaps disposed to feel more at home in the banqueting hall than in the Conference Chamber' (3)

this was a daunting prospect and by now some may have felt more comfort in commitment to an ideal rather than a reality. As a Times editorial put it,

'the sceptics are already asking if the great ideal of these last few days will survive the next stage of the Conference ... will the Princes and Dewans be as jealous for it when it comes to be translated into a certain surrender of sovereignty'. (4)

Then, too, the rift between Patiala, in practical terms deposed as Chancellor, and Bikaner, the Federal man of the hour, had become much more difficult to conceal.

However, Benn was determined throughout to represent the proceedings to Delhi in an optimistic light. Not only had the Princes' entry secured 'the interest and even active support of a great many Conservative elements', but the press had fallen into line:

1. This much is clear from the calibre of its membership drawn from the most influential of the delegates:—
   Indian States: Bikaner and Bhopal, Hyderi, Ismail and Naksar.
   Britain: Leas Smith (Labour), Hoard and Peel (Conservative), Reading and Lothian (Liberal). See Cmd. 3778, p. 209.
2. See Ahmad, W., op. cit., p. 119.
3. Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 73.
4. The Times, 22nd November, 1930.
5. Benn to Irwin, 20th November, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 251. Bikaner was a Member of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, Patiala was not.
'Gervin who, I suppose, invented the phrase 'United States of India', which Alwar collared, is sympathetic. Dawson has been sympathetic throughout; Peel is moving, and Reading, it is not too hard to say, is on the run'. (1)

Keen to maintain momentum, Benn took a positive hand in the direction of affairs through his chairmanship of a Federal Relations Committee, a large affair comprising 32 members with 10 of the 16 Indian States' delegates represented. This gathering became the forum for various federal schemes:

'Akber Hydari has now become the exponent of a Central Authority for British India only, with a Federal authority above it for British India and the Indian States; but Sapru has become the advocate of one Federal association without a separate assembly for British India'. (4)

As discussion continued Benn felt increasing confidence in the nationalist representatives:

'the British Indians appear to be showing a great deal of common sense and whilst they are pressing for unified currencies, posts etc., they are quite willing to concede small points which touch the dignity of the Princes, such as the effigy on the stamps and so on'. (5)

One nagging difficulty for Benn lay in dealing with the Princes' persistent demands for a move on Paramounty. At a secretly convened meeting between Benn, the Prime Minister and leading Princes, the British ministers sat through a harrowing succession of Princely grievances against the Political Department,

1. Certainly The Times to date, bar the odd sceptical comment, exuded enthusiasm for the achievements of the Conference: frequent references were made to 'high levels of debate .... of vision and reality'. Of the Indian delegates themselves, 'they have been able in the last five days to give British opinion an object lesson in the solidarity of Indian nationalism'. See The Times, 20th, 21st, 22nd November, 1930.

2. The initial committee formed on the conclusion of the General Discussion phase: it then delegated the key issues to the Federal Structure Sub-Committee. See CRD, 377, pp. 7, 8.

3. The Times, 24th November, 1930.


some of which, just by the evidence they themselves produced, seemed to provide excellent examples of the need for some sort of control, though, whether in future it would come from below, instead of above, is an open question'. (1)

Benn and MacDonald affected to remain non-committal, but it was seriously put to Irwin,

'that if we want the Princes in Federation, they themselves will demand a price and that one of the concessions the British Government will be supposed to make will be something touching the question of Paramountcy'. (2)

To underline the crucial importance of Princely participation, Benn recounted recent meetings with

'one or two of the back bench Conservative Members who represent rather the ex-Army officer view; and they asked sympathetically about the Conference and heard with pleasure the path the Princes were taking'.

Benn drove his point home:

'the fact is that the Princes are key-men so far as clearing the political difficulties in this country are concerned'. (3)

Given the ever widening Bikaner—Patiala split, pushing the Princes towards concerted action presented problems, but Benn felt increasingly drawn towards Bhopal, influential in the Chamber of Princes,

'a model, helpful and able young man ....... and not of the conservative school, certainly among his staff he had people who knew all about Congress and were not at all out of sympathy with them'. (4)

Benn calculated that the Chamber group was running the Princes and

'inasmuch as they have got Hashmir, Hydari and Mirza Ismail working with them, I think we may take it that it really represents a sufficiently powerful body to sway the Princes as a whole'. (5)

1. The old conservative, Rewa, confessed privately that he had just been roped in by the Chamber group and took no sides. In fact he thought the picture his fellow Princes had painted of the offensive and autocratic actions of the Political Department was grossly exaggerated and mentioned one or two cases where he thought the intervention of the Paramount Power had been too long delayed'. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Benn to Irwin, 24th November, 1930, Hx.6., 6, p. 258.

5. Benn to Irwin, 4th December, 1930, Hx.6., 6, p. 272.
Nor might Paramountcy inevitably prove to be the sticking point.

Having talked to Alwar again about the Princes' case, Benn concluded that

'they can hardly resist going into the Federation in any case; but in as much as they realise the Government would like them to federate, they think it a good opportunity to press the claims as to paramountcy'. (1)

Now well into December, the Federal Committee had come round to 'a general conclusion' which envisaged

'a unitary body consisting of two Chambers in the right Central authority without a British Indian Chamber at all, the British Indians being represented in the Lower Chamber'. (2)

It is not clear how seriously Benn took this exceedingly safe formula; he conceded that 'popular' interests had been excluded from the Committee. (3) But he retained absolute confidence in his ability to steer the Princes along: a propos of a forthcoming meeting,

'I do not expect that we shall have to sustain a very formidable bombardment as there seems to be several lines of cleavage among the Princes'.

It was tacitly acknowledged that the policy of His Majesty's Government could best be put over beyond the baleful glare of the Political Department, so Fitz and his colleagues were excluded on this occasion in case the Princes felt 'we were being unduly shepherded'. (4)

In order to 'keep the Princes straight', Benn was prepared to put up with any number of minor irritants like the ludicrous grading of dignitaries at the Alwar Banquet, a crude riposte to the placings at the Lord Mayor's Dinner Table. Interested in carrying the Princes with him as a body, the Secretary of State

1. Benn to Irwin, 5th December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 279.
2. Benn to Irwin, 11th December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 281.
3. Ibid.
4. Benn to Irwin, 12th December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 284.
5. Benn to Irwin, 18th December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 290.
6. See p. 313.
(1) took care to draw in the smaller Princes like Bholpur, 'modest, intelligent, and essentially a gentleman', to informal discussions.

Facing up to the difficulties of safeguarding a minor State, the Jat ruler favoured

'a Federation of all the States first and then federate with British India ...... otherwise there is nothing for it but the very rapid assimilation of the States to, and even absorption into, British India'. (3)

Dining with other minor Princes, Benn encountered varying degrees of anxiety for the future:

(4) 'although Forbesder said Congress did not effect him very much, Gandhi (5) and Limdi (6) felt its reactions very keenly'. (7)

In the aftermath of these conversations, Benn appears to have developed a quite unwarranted regard for the influence and prestige of even minor Rulers.

By Boxing Day, a very safe style of constitutional formula had emerged:

'the Lower House shall be the powerful one, elected indirectly from British India, with the nominees of the States and possibly a nominated element as well. The Upper House would then be elected by the Lower House, plus nominations ...... a Centre of the most ultra conservative kind and this would inspire great confidence among the cautious'. (9)

1. Sir Uhai Bhan Singh, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., invested with full powers in 1913; 12,000 square miles; population (Jat) 230,188.
2. Benn to Irwin, 26th December, 1930, Ex. P., 6, p. 243.
3. Ibid.
4. H.H. Maharaja Rana Sahib, K.C.I.E., created Maharaja 1918; captain of the All-India cricket team which later toured England in 1932; the State in which Gandhi had been expected to assume his father's role as Dewan.
Benn found that leading British Indian delegates saw through the scheme. Sastri claimed that what professed to be a popular Legislative Assembly was in effect a nominated body; although the official bloc had disappeared:

'the British influence would be felt through a nominated bloc of Diwans'. (1)

No doubt fearful of his future reception in India, Sastri added

'we shall be charged with betraying utterly the interests of thousands of our fellow-Indians who are subjects of the States'.

Criticism of Princely participation in the future constitution was not much to Benn's taste and when Jinnah proposed that the Princes were so uncertain in their minds that they would not much care if the whole Federal thing broke down, Benn countered sharply:

'I told him that, if it did, then goodbye to any hope of getting any measure of Conservative support'. (2)

It appears that rumours about the Princes backtracking on Federation were beginning to gather ground in the New Year; this much may be gathered from the frequency of their declarations to the contrary. At a bizarre dinner given to the old nationalist Muhammed Ali, Alwar privately told Benn to ignore 'ill-founded talk along these lines'. Further reassurance came from Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed who said:

2. Ibid.
3. The curious company also included Lansbury and the ex Prime Minister of Turkey, Rastif Bey. Alwar, of all people, was the proposer, in a very long speech, of the health of Ali. The occasion was somewhat spoiled for Alwar by the persistence of the Communist M.P. for North Battersea, Saklatvala, in addressing him as 'Alwar Sahib'. Benn to Irwin, 31st December, 1930, Hx.P., 6, p. 305. Perhaps the most embarrassing moment of the Conference's social rounds also concerned Alwar. As witnessed by Benn, it took place at the Prime Minister's Hogmanay party: an exuberant middle aged lady said that if the first foot was a man with dark hair she would embrace him; 'as I happened to know that Alwar had made up his mind to perform this function uninvited, I was all agog. When Alwar himself appeared, the shrieks from the unfortunate individual who had made the Jephstah's oath had to be hushed up in case the whole story should come to light'. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 308.
5. Member of the Council of Regency in Gwalior.
the likelihood at all of their running out ... while the
Princes see certain definite advantages in substituting
Federal control for unrestricted paramountcy in matters
of common concern, their real fear is the growth of
democratic India with which, later, they would not be able
to make so favourably the inevitable terms'. (1)

In this projection, the States would have a very real interest in
early Federation:

'the Princes' idea is that well-managed States and a Federation
in which autocracy is weightily represented may turn the
whole scale against democracy and save the Princely position'. (2)

Optimistic forecasts of this sort quite interested Benn; he was
impressed by the Princes' show of resolution as regards nationalist
pressures at home. Indeed, staunchness of this sort was recommended,
in an oblique way, to the Viceroy:

'the Jum Sahib told me that he was dealing sternly with
picketing which has spread to his State and of course
Dobandar, Baroda and many others are having the trouble.
The significant thing, so far as I can judge, is that their
methods do not provoke the sort of feeling that is worked up
so easily when the control is in our hands'. (3)

Meantime, it was made clear to Delhi that the Federal ideal
was here to stay:

'Hydari, who was the first to put forward practical proposals,
is as firm as ever in his belief in Federation and there is
not the least chance of his bolting .... Bhikner made it clear
that Federation stood and he said that 75 % of the States would
join in it'. (4)

The only professed doubt in Benn's mind concerned the character
of the future Indian executive:

'the more I see of the Princes - and indeed some of the British
Indians - the more convinced I feel that a Cabinet formed of
such elements will be very solid and probably too conservative'. (5)

2. Ibid.
4. Benn to Irwin, 8th January, 1931, Hx.P., 6, p. 312.
5. Ibid.
This minor misgiving apart, in general the outlook for Federation seemed to Benn to be very favourable, and it had found backing in the highest quarters:

'the King is very interested in it all and very sympathetic and gives no support whatever to the die-hard school'. (1)

As to those very sensitive issues concerning the composition and powers of the future Federal Legislature which had been under discussion in the Federal Structure Sub-Committee, progress had been rapid and indeed the Chairman had scored a considerable personal triumph:

'Sankey has become a deity with the Indians, partly for his courtesy but chiefly for his profound legal knowledge ... it really is marvellous how, in the course of a few weeks, he has sketched out, if only in pencil, the possibilities of Federation'. (2)

On closer examination, the reports of the relevant Committee do not endorse the Secretary of State's euphoria. Its proceedings amounted to three times the length of its sister committee equivalents and on crucial issues somewhat acrimonious discussion did not elicit an agreed solution. Apart from Princely hesitations, there were ominous indications that the British Conservative delegates had fallen back upon an ultra-cautious stance. Nor could the vexed communal issue be sidetracked. (3)

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1. Benn to Irwin, 12th January, 1931, Jk. 1., 6, p. 314.
2. Ibid.
3. Sub-Committee No. 1 (Federal Structure).
4. See Cmd. 3772, pp. 4, 5.
5. See in particular the exchanges on 'Competence of the Federal Legislature', Cmd. 3772, pp. 294-300.
6. The Conservative caveat ran: 'Lord Peel and Sir Samuel Hoare, with the information at their disposal, and with so many questions still undecided, are unconvinced that the kind of Executive envisaged in this Report can be successfully adapted to the special conditions of an All-India Federation'. Cmd. 3772, p. 210.
7. Both Muhammad Shafi and Jinnah insisted on settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question as a preliminary to framing a Federal scheme: 'no constitution would work unless it embodied provisions which gave a sense of security of the Muslims and other minorities'. Ibid.
the Federal Structure Report was published in a form containing very substantial loopholes:

'every member of the Sub-Committee reserves to himself the right of modifying his opinion before the final picture is completed'. (1)

The British right wing press pounced on this manifest caution as evidence of a breakdown.

Benn's faith in the Princes' good intentions took less account of the circuitous language of Bikaner when the Conference touched on States' internal autonomy than on the unstinted enthusiasm of Princes for the vague ideal: as quaintly expressed by Bikaner to the Sankey Committee,

'not merely as a Prince, but as a son of the soil, I have no hesitation in saying that we have achieved a remarkable degree of common achievement ..... these substantial gains must not be lost'. (3)

Following a final private meeting between the Princes, MacDonald and himself, Benn spoke with confidence of the federal future:

'generally speaking, those here are, I think, prepared to federate. Bhopal, Bikaner, Mirza Ismail and also Wadari (in so far as the Mirza's instructions have allowed him) have given a good lead to the others in the Federal Structure Committee'. (4)

1. Sub-Committee No. 1 (Federal Structure), Second Report presented to a meeting of Committee of the Whole Conference, 15th January, 1931. Ibid.

2. The Daily Telegraph gave full publicity to the doubts of leading Muslim delegates and Conservative members. The Morning Post, under the headline 'Indian Constitution Stillborn', proposed a bizarre parallel situation: 'If a Conference sitting in India, over which an Indian presided, were to draw up a constitution for all Europe, it would not be surprising if one section or another, the Roman Catholics or the Protestants for example, were to refuse to accept it. And so in this case Lord Sankey has no personal knowledge of India, which is just as difficult and complicated as Europe.' See Daily Telegraph, 14th January, 1931; Morning Post, 14th January, 1931.

3. Sm. 177; p. 266

The leading question remained, to what extent had the Princes thought through the implications of federation. Benn's essential optimism might have been tempered by the shrewd observations passed by Rewa on a private call to the India Office. Rewa now understood as a consequence of his London visit that his preference for the status quo was impossible, 'we could not for ever go on ruling by the lathi'. Rewa was prepared to accept, what he construed as the only logical solution, one Chamber with a membership elected by States and Provinces together.

"He complained that the other Princes blinked at this fact and would not recognise the implications of what they were doing. So far as he was concerned, he would not be surprised if his State was one of the first to join the Federation; but he did know what it was leading to, whereas the others did not." (1)

However ephemeral the achievement of the Conference, the India Office took great pains to publicise a positive outcome through staging a Final Plenary Session which would be an occasion of warmth and solidarity between all parties. The beneficial global publicity would be secured by the installation of Movietone apparatus on the proviso that should a delegate walk out, the film would be - by accident - destroyed. Should an Indian delegate publicly voice any disloyal sentiments, then the band of the Coldstream Guards, concealed in an adjoining room of St. James Palace, was detailed to strike up.

In the event, it all went off very well before a full attendance of delegates, advisers and secretaries. At the high point of MacDonald's theatrical closing speech 'the white light of the film machine was thrown upon the room, particularly where the Prime Minister stood'.

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2. Ibid.
With the camera still in motion,

'Patiala, in his blue turban and diamond earrings, was brought up near the Prime Minister, stood in front of the microphone, and read out a very grateful acknowledgement'. (1)

The only discordant note on this glittering occasion was struck by Sastri who 'rather against the rules of the game introduced something about States' subjects'. (2) So the Coldstream bandsmen were only required in their orthodox role and when they struck up the National Anthem, spirited singing and cheering engulfed the assembly.

Benn enthused about the very favourable effect produced by the final scenes,

'even papers like the Morning Post had to record our excellent finale, the singing of the National Anthem ...... I am setting great store by the circulation of the film in India'. (4)

Dawson's relevant leader could have been penned in the India Office:

'Federation for All India forthwith - a new feature this, fore-shadowed as nothing more than a hopeful indeed till the Round Table Conference was assembled in London, but thrust into the very foreground, recognised at once as a new factor of incalculable significance, and more and more strongly supported as the Conference went on'. (5)

In this appreciation one delegate was singled out, the young Nawab of Bhopal, whose words,

1. Benn to Irwin, 19th January, 1931, Hx-F., 6, p. 325. Patiala's speech was a brief two paragraph affair, but he may have thought it worthwhile doing as a bid to re-establish his position following his effective eclipse by Bikaner and Bhopal. With matchless effrontery, Patiala requested a confidential advance copy of MacDonald's concluding speech; the request was politely denied. See R.V.P. 30/69/1/578.

2. Benn to Irwin, 19th January, 1931, Hx-F., 6, p. 325. See too Cmd. 3778, p. 511.


"sum up both the national aspirations of his native land and the alternatives ahead of it and they may well be pondered not only in India but in this country, where it was the fashion till lately to suppose that there was some profound difference of outlook between the Princes of the States and the politicians of British India. 'We have made it clear', he said, 'that we can only federate with a self-governing British India, and that if British India is not self-governing any federation will be to our disadvantage'. So much for the solidarity of articulate Indian opinion on Federation and Responsibility". (1)

There remained solid grounds for viewing this constitutional comet, the Federal ideal, as a less than absolute political solution. On the British side there had been so little time to analyse Federal possibilities. As Keyes' correspondent in the India Council confessed, 'I had no inkling the Chiefs meant business over federation until they first got to London'. (2)

The Labour Cabinet had little precognition of what was afoot. Perhaps their most authoritative adviser understandably felt that Government of India forecasts as to the Princes' intentions at the Conference were grossly misleading. Irwin's response carried the ring of bewilderment:

'it certainly is a very complete transformation in their own position, in as much as all of them, with one voice before they left India and for many months before that, had been telling me that they intended to go very slow indeed and see how British Indian affairs worked out'. (3)

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1. Ibid. In framing this glowing tribute, Dawson may have been influenced by the Aga Khan who held Bhopal in the highest regard: 'an outstanding figure among the ruling princes of his time – a devout Muslim, a man of driving energy and will-power, of great physical strength, a sportsman and athlete and a first-class polo player. He was also a convinced Indian nationalist, eager to throw off India's semi-colonial yoke, and to do away with her dependent status'. The Memoirs of the Aga Khan, (1954), p. 216.


On the strength of the Viceroy's testimony, Federation had no fathers inside the Government of India:

'if the schemes do come to fruition, it will be a curious illustration of Indians themselves producing something on different lines to those on which British minds unassisted might have worked'. (1)

It had to be conceded that the Federal goal still lay a long way off. Even MacDonald, in his picturesque style, acknowledged the limitations of the Federal Sub-Committee Report:

'that report, rough wood if I may say so, wood of very varying lengths, full of knots, full of difficulties in handling and using, much to be planed and fitted into a logical and consistent structure'. (2)

And the most gnarled timbers had yet to be uncovered. Benn let slip to the Viceroy that two quite fundamental issues which would determine the Princes' policy on Federation would have to be settled in Delhi:

'two questions of federal import which the Princes want to discuss with you, and the solution of which seems most likely to influence their individual attitude towards federation, are their respective representation in the Federal Legislature and Executive(3) and the financial implications to the States of federation. Neither question has been discussed here in Conference'. (4)

One major participant who liked to think of himself as a bridging figure between East and West, the Aga Khan, recalled 'an especial atmosphere of hopefulness and optimism' enveloping Federation, 'the Conferenceb one major tangible achievement'. But even he, 'in my heart of hearts was always suspicious that our work might not procure any real or lasting results. Saperu suspected the Princes of

1. Ibid.
3. A veritable Gordian knot appeared to block progress here. Rikeyn told Benn that this was a question for discussion between Princes and the Viceroy and that 'he regarded the Chamber as the proper machinery for the purpose. This view however seems not to be shared either by Hyder, Mysore and the Madras States or by the small States represented by Sangu. The delegates of these States have expressed privately a strong preference for an impartial committee to make recommendations to the Viceroy'. Benn to Irwin, 15th January, 1931, 6x1, 6, p. 317.
4. Ibid.
'beating a retreat' even before they left London. The Jam Sahib confessed to a correspondent that 'suspicion and distrust are reigning supreme'; for him the Conference had turned out 'an even more dismal failure than he had feared'. Nevertheless, in taking the decision to enter the All-India political arena, the Princes had altered for the next decade the direction of British strategy in mapping out political concessions to India. Once apprised in London of the Princes' attachment to the principles of Federation, Government of India officials there began to explore the use of the Princely States in a Federal Assembly as a conservative force. Simon is generally credited with the formulation of a 'Princes' veto' on Indian constitutional progress, the Conservative demand for All India Federation as a prerequisite to responsible government. Of course Conservatives could calculate that, given the disinclination within the Political Department to take Federation seriously, it would take a period of years to establish an effective Federation and this would suit the gradualist position.

The instant receptivity of the Conservatives in London to the political emergence of the Princes requires explanation. Granted that Simon had done a good deal to prepare the ground, the Viceroy himself, in defiance of his many pious protestations to successive Secretaries of State about the dangers in hiding behind Princes, took the lead in alerting Baldwin in 1929 in the strictest confidence to certain possibilities:

1. Ahmad, W., op. cit., p. 123.
'the emergence of the States' problem is, I am sure, the card that we shall be able to play with effect when the right moment comes as justifying us in envisaging what, to India, will seem a more liberal method of approaching by way of Conference or something of the kind, with the States in. I am sure this is the way to tackle it ..... Don't forget that I have not written all this to the India Office'. (1)

On the Labour side, Benn saw in Federation an instrument which conceivably could effect a safe transfer of power. That a Labour Ministry should preside over the launching of the major Indian constitutional advance of the century would be irrefutable proof of its capacity for statesmanship. Yet the dominating consideration for the MacDonald ministry was its singular predicament in having embarked on the Conference with no plan of its own ready. The marked absence of alternatives does much to explain Benn's fervour for the Federal ideal.

But it should be clear that, whatever surreptitious Viceregal encouragement lay in the background, the initial impetus towards Federation was generated from within the Princely camp. (2) Though Wyllie could decry the status of Bikaner and the Princes who had first publicly committed themselves to Federation, 'petty people' as he put it, this was a declaration authorised by the great States in those crucial discussions immediately prior to the opening of the

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1. Halifax to Baldwin, 23rd April, 1929, S.P.R., vol. 103, p. 30. However, it should be noted that one of the most influential Conservatives, Austen Chamberlain, entertained doubts about the Viceroy's grasp of Indian affairs: 'Irwin's strength lay in his lofty character, but brains were also needed in his position'. See Memorandum by Austen Chamberlain, 1st July, 1930, Austen Chamberlain Papers (hereafter A.C.P.) 22/3/29.

2. Unquestionably, Bikaner was the pathfinder; he made the initial approaches to Sepru.

Conference. It has been alleged that the Princes' initiative was prompted by the fact of a Labour Government in power, but the congenial attitudes of the Labour hierarchy do not support the notion that they were bent in pressuring the Princes in any direction. The potential eclipse of the Political Department with the institution of a Federal Supreme Court did attract Their Highnesses; Bikaner and the shrewder Princes sensed that their bargaining position would not improve as British India moved inexorably towards self-government; and it was open to commentators within the Political Department to claim that the Princes had been 'stampeded' into Federation through the progressive infiltration of their frontiers by 'jathas'.

The most convincing explanation for the Princes' decision to embark on the waters of All India politics remains that offered by one of their own brotherhood, the Maharaja-kumar of Sitamau, who observed that

'by one stroke of bold policy the Princely order could become the hero of the day, and could not only oblige the other two parties at the Round Table Conference, but also increase their own importance and strengthen their own position'. (3)

This accords well with the natural workings of personal ambition in the breasts of men hypersensitive to the status of high office as demonstrated in their perpetual competition to serve as India's Representatives at Imperial Conferences and the League of Nations.

1. Venon, V. P., op. cit., p. 28.
2. Barton, Sir W., op. cit., p. 292. 'Jathas' were pickets of unarmed men from British India bent on organising obstruction to the State's authorities. Ibid. p. 292. For J. Nehru's involvement with the Nabha Jatha, see chapter 2, pp. 149, 150.
By assuming the role of architects of Federation, Bikaner, Bhopal and their fellows could anticipate that they would fill prestigious positions in an All India Legislature; they sensed how crucial their participation was to Conservative interests in Britain. It was not immediately apparent to Princes, imbued with quasi-monarchical ambition, that in the protracted constitutional negotiations to come, in some respects akin to a sophisticated form of political chess between Indian nationalism and British imperialism, their Highnesses would increasingly come to be regarded more as pawns than kings.
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In the immediate aftermath of the First Round Table Conference, it was widely supposed that the Princes had emerged with a greatly strengthened hand. 'Never before have they had so much importance thrust upon them', observed Jawaharlal Nehru, 'one of the notable consequences of the Round Table Conference and the proposal to have a Federation, is to push the Indian Princes very much to the forefront'.

There were surface indications of a sense of fellowship and confidence for the future among returning Indian delegates. The momentum towards Federation found expression in regular informal discussions that took place on board the S.S. Viceroy of India where 'obviously cordial relations pertained between all the delegates', though not all enjoyed quite the same degree of comfort. This series of 'informal yet none the less important conferences' continued through the duration of the voyage. A positive indication of the new spirit of cooperation obtaining between the representatives of the Indian States and British India was the telegram sent from the sea-borne delegates to Benn in

2. The observation of one departing delegate in a party of 30 at Victoria Station was thought by The Times to be particularly apposite: 'now we must fill in a fine outline with a Persian artist's care for detail'. See The Times, 23rd January, 1931.
3. Comment was passed on the extraordinary standard of comfort at sea set by some of the Princes: 'one Ruler has had four large cabins knocked into one and a parquet floor laid down in order to provide a 'sitting room' commensurate with his dignity'. See The Times, 28th January, 1931.
4. Ibid., 2nd February, 1931.
London congratulating him on Gandhi’s release from detention.

In response to 'a hearty welcome' at Bombay, the returned delegates issued a statement calling for the unity of India; the Conference had marked

"the beginning of a process of unification which is fraught with possibilities of incalculable benefit to our country". (2)

It was particularly gratifying to Benn to know that the Federal momentum had been maintained:

"the part which the Princes are playing in the negotiations, as reported from day to day in The Times, is an encouragement to us". (3)

Irwin's view was expressed with characteristic caution: criticism and detraction of the outcome of the Conference "was not any worse than I should have anticipated. Indeed papers like The Tribune and The Hindu have expressed their view pretty plainly, if with rather greater reserve than papers like The Leader, that the P.M.'s declaration ought to be taken seriously and offers a chance of constructive work by all parties". (4)

The evident enthusiasm of the Princes on their return for Federation elicited a guarded response from the Viceroy:

"they profess to get to work vigorously and comprehensively and I hope their good resolutions do not fade". (5)

It augured well that Gandhi himself, in the more relaxed atmosphere following the suspension of civil disobedience in March, acknowledged that Federation was 'an essential part' of the evolving constitutional plan. It seemed hopeful to partisans of Federation that the Mahatma chose

1. The heading signatories were the Maharajas of Bikaner, Jammagar, Alwar, Dholpur and Sangli. The text of the telegram read: 'Delegates, British Indian and Indian States, deeply appreciate decision release Gandhi and other Congress leaders. We earnestly hope this will restore normal peaceful conditions in country and that nationalist leaders may now consider scheme evolved by R.T.C. in spirit in which it has been conceived'. See Telegram, Indian Delegates to Benn, E2/E, 6, p. 343.

2. The Times, 7th February, 1931.
4. Irwin to Benn, 2nd February, 1931, ibid., p. 378.
5. Irwin to Benn, 9th February, 1931, ibid., p. 343.
to deal with leading Muslims through Bhopal. Inevitably, powerful sections of Indian opinion did baulk at the prospect of the inclusion of the Indian States in a Federated India on the grounds that this would introduce an unwelcome element of conservatism at the Centre. Sapru, perhaps the most energetic Federalist to emerge from the Conference, felt that something might be done to make the Princes more presentable to political India. Sapru defined the problem to the Prime Minister:

'there is a very keen desire that the Indian Princes should declare the fundamental rights of their subjects and also give some degree of representation to their subjects in the Federal House'.

The Prime Minister's legendary capacity for passing the buck was manifest in his reply which returned the onus for inspiring Princely reform to Sapru's shoulders. Having remarked on Sapru's high standing with the Maharajas, MacDonald added 'I know you have a great deal of influence with them'. On the Labour left, too, there was a belief that Sapru could muzzle those lobbies hostile to the Princes' involvement in the Reforms. The more astute dewans were alive to the political desirability of a public pronouncement along the lines sought by Sapru.

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1. Ibid.; see too The Times, 14th February, 1931.
3. MacDonald to Sapru, 5th April, 1931, Ibid., 2/191, IV.11.
5. Mirza Ismail convened a conference of South Indian States in March, 1931, which called for 'a declaration of fundamental rights of citizenship, such as security of person and property, liberty of conscience and equality of opportunity, binding on all States entering the Federation'. See The Times, 31st March, 1931. Such States should conform to a certain standard of administration of which the essentials should be 'a fixed privy purse, security of tenure in the public service, an independent judiciary, the existence of some consultative body representing public opinion with the function of advising the Ruler in the administration of the State'. Ibid.

No immediate implementation of this resolution followed.
In the course of a meeting at Bhopal in April, 1931, with a number of Princes, Sapru outlined a scheme to promote Federation through the formation of a new party with newspapers to back it. The project found favour with Bikaner:

'I do hope you have been able to make rapid progress about the Federal Party, funds and papers. I attach the greatest importance and urgency to this matter'.

Bhopal, too, made known his enthusiasm for the Federal Party and confirmed that support was gathering.

But while there can be little doubt that Sapru pursued the goal of Federation with tenacity and drive, it became increasingly apparent that he was swimming against a strengthening tide. From the first, the success of the Round Table Conference in giving birth to a general commitment to Federation had awakened little enthusiasm within the Secretariats of New Delhi. The reservations of the European commercial communities in Calcutta vis a vis the Federal scheme were quite unequivocal:

'...the Indian material for legislation and administration is strikingly inadequate'.

The situation required the guiding hand of a Viceroy of stature and independent style, capable of over-riding the qualms of Anglo-Indian officialdom. With the arrival of Lord Willingdon at Delhi in April, 1931, the British public is dancing to the music of Krishna's flute'; he went on to say that 'it is almost within the bounds of possibility that the doors of the Viceroy's house will be picketed by English ladies bearing union jacks'. See The Times, 9th January, 1931.

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1. Sapru to PoIak, 10th April, 1931, Sapru, 2191, p. 86.
2. Bikaner to Sapru, 4th June, 1931, ibid., 2193, p. 179.
4. According to one observer, Delhi officialdom held that 'the British public is dancing to the music of Krishna's flute'; he went on to say that 'it is almost within the bounds of possibility that the doors of the Viceroy's house will be picketed by English ladies bearing union jacks'. See The Times, 9th January, 1931.
5. Ibid., 10th January, 1931.
it has been observed with some justice that the helm had passed to a Viceroy more than most in the hands of his officials. While Willingdon exhibited flawless good manners, indeed he struck one especially articulate witness 'as tremendously like an old beau in a Restoration Comedy', he remained an odd choice to guide India along the path of accelerated constitutional change. Montagu had found Willingdon, when Governor of Madras,

'a difficult man to handle; eccentric in his administrative duties, and not of a markedly enlightened disposition'.

Irwin favoured Linlithgow to succeed him. Yet Willingdon was excavated, apparently unwillingly, from Canada at the age of 65 on completion of a five-year term as Governor-General. Even had his temperament been in tune with Indian political advance, it may be doubted whether Willingdon had either the physical or mental capacity to provide dynamic leadership at a critical time. By the end of 1934 Willingdon complained to Baldwin:

'I am grossly overworked and when you see me again I shall be a shadow of my former self; ... I shall be delighted when I hear no more of reforms'.

4. Montagu to Reading, 10th November, 1921, R.E.P., vol 3, p. 252. Montagu despaired of conducting an effective correspondence with Willingdon who evidently did not keep copies of his letters and was quite liable to deny having written them. Ibid. Montagu's doubts about Willingdon stemmed from his appointment as Governor of Bombay: 'I am very disappointed that you could not do better than Freeman'. Montagu to Crewe, 16th January, 1913, E.P., Box 1/5 (10).
6. The Canadian Prime Minister dropped a strong hint that Willingdon was not keen on the Delhi appointment, 'he is in need of a prolonged holiday'. See Sir Robert Borden to Prime Minister, 12th January, 1931, R.M.P., 30/69/1/976.
A respected civilian, reviewing Willingdon's period of Viceregal office, recalled a period of 'masterly inactivity'.

A consciousness of opposition to Federation within the Government of India moved Sapru to warn Bhopal that:

'I have received an important letter from a high-placed friend at Delhi from which I gather than an insidious attempt is being made to persuade the Princes not to join the Federation on the grounds that no deficit State will agree to pay and no surplus State will agree to surrender'. (2)

Bhopal's reply alluded to independent confirmation of the existence of officially initiated anti-Federal pressures. From the vantage point of the Hyderabad Residency, it seemed as though the opponents of Federation were gaining ground,

'the enemies of Indian unity within her borders are now more dangerous than those without'. (4)

Keyes sought to convince the India Office of the prominence of the anti-Federal lobby:

'when I was in Simla the other day, I was so disgusted with the spirit of defeatism that was rampant in the various Departments of Government and at the ill-concealed hostility of the white babus to the Federal idea that I cannot help writing'. (5)

In Keyes' analysis, the last ditch opposition was located within his own Department:

'though the Government of India officially blesses Federation, the people most capable of throwing the machine out of gear, the Foreign and Political Department, will damn it by their defeatism and make it unworkable by insisting in staying in their cocoons unless they are put in order'. (6)

3. Bhopal to Sapru, 12th April, 1931, ibid., H. 164.
6. Ibid. Keyes roundly denounced the reactionary nature of his Department which had 'always been obsessed by the Curzonic motto, 'Curzon holds what Curzon held', and still thinks that our prestige suffers whenever we have to reduce a single appointment or give up a function we have assumed'. Ibid.
It was clear to the Hyderabad Resident that in Willingdon, India had a Viceroy lacking in the necessary purpose and will to effect a radical change in the outlook of the Political Department. On a visit to Delhi in the following year, Keyes discovered that 'the Viceroy had never seen the order attributed to him that I was not to press for the Reforms'. (1)

The independent imposition of 'such a fatuous policy' by the Political Secretary struck Keyes as 'a fair example of the rottenness of the Political Department'. (2)

He felt bound to applaud Willingdon's 'buoyancy' but in the background the Political Department Secretaries were 'doing all the work and taking vital decisions in accordance with their own ideas'. (3)

Increasingly, Keyes came to regard himself as a solitary progenitor of Federation:

'the Nizam was my second convert to Federation, Sirza Ismail was the first'. (4)

Granted that the Princes would be subject to a degree of official pressure hostile to Federation, they were still likely to favour that course rather than attract the wrath of a united British India by pursuing a policy of prevarication which could be construed as constitutional sabotage perpetuated by stooges of the British. In one of his final communications as Viceroy, Irwin showed himself to be alive to this interpretation when he delineated, with considerable clarity, the dangers in putting up the Princes as stalking horses:

2. Ibid.
3. Keyes to Lord Hastings, (Member of the Indian States Inquiry Committee, 1932), n.d., Ibid.
'the people who make Federation a prerequisite for responsible government may think the emergence of a united British Indian demand a consideration of minor importance. But it is possible to argue that our definite commitments are to British India, that we cannot at this or any stage hide behind the States, and that the States, who must in future live with a democratic British India, may as well face it now .... a united demand from British India would be the most important political factor in sight. Neither on grounds of expediency nor of obligation could we or the States 'fob it off with anything but immediate proceedings in full conference'.

This was a sound prognosis, but the vital determinant, a British Indian common front, visibly withered prior to the convening of the Second Round Table Conference in the autumn of 1931. In the interval between the First and Second Conferences, it was anticipated that the Indian parties would redefine their views on Federal structure and resolve some of the constitutional difficulties which had originally appeared in London. However, the outcome of the All-India M uslim Conference in Delhi in April, 1931, demonstrated the dominance of the communal issue in the framing of Federal legislatures. As more evidence of communal division on the British Indian side emerged, congenitally irresolute Princes felt less pressure on them to conform to precise Federal schemes. A flood of qualifications and provisos emanating from Their Highnesses moved a former editor of The Times of India to wonder whether anything could save the Indian States from themselves.

1. Irwin to Benn, 30th March, 1931, Hx.P., 6, p. 32.
2. Since the States were chiefly Hindu, their participation in a Federal Central government could further load the scales against the Moslem interest. In consequence the Muslims demanded a very considerable bloc in the central legislature, one third of the seats, a contentious move; they would cede to the centre only those powers which the Princes would relinquish. See Moore, R. J., op. cit., p. 65. Some doubt was expressed as to the Musl im's belief in the permanence of a Federal India, ibid.
3. Asked by Bikaner to examine a statement of reservations relating to the Federation propounded by his State, Reed found scores of them: 'Your Highness, he asked, 'how many of these are really important? 'Perhaps five', replied Bikaner, 'but we put in everything we could think of'. See Reed, Sir Stanley, The India I Knew, 1897-1947, (1952), p. 197. Bikaner, as the initial public proposer of Federation, was assumed to be in the vanguard of the Federation lobby.
Predictably, the chronic incapacity of the Princes to act in concert was manifest in a proliferation of federal proposals. At the formal meeting of the Chamber of Princes at Delhi in March, 1931, it was conceded that a certain amount of difference of opinion still exists among the Princes on the Federal scheme. The Rulers of smaller States were particularly active in casting around for a formula which would provide for their individual representation in a Federal legislature; a tall order when it is appreciated that no less than 74 States nuzzled each other at the foot of the Salute List meriting 11 guns or less.

It was quite in character that Patiala, the proverbial weather-cock, should emerge as the tribune for small States. Early in June, 1931, His Highness published a pamphlet which unambiguously opposed the entry of the Princes into an All-India Federation. There are good grounds for supposing that Patiala's solicitude for small States was nothing less than an electioneering ploy following his narrow defeat at the hands of Bhopal in the March election for Chancellor of the Chamber.

Sapru, however, recognised further influences behind Patiala's opposition:

'while he was in England I knew that he had been very strongly advised by Sir Leslie Scott against the Federation'. (4)

1. The Times, 17th March, 1931. In its usual nebulous style, 'the Chamber resolved to support in principle the scheme outlined at the (Round Table) Conference and authorised its representatives to carry on further discussion and negotiation with due regard to the interests of the States and subject to the final confirmation and ratification by the Chamber and each individual State. See Sinh, op. cit., p. 126.

2. Maharaja of Patiala, Federation and the Indian States, (Simla, 1931). The document argued that 'Federalism is radical innovation; it subverts the very basis of well-tried and time-honoured political institutions; it attempts to destroy their individuality and culture; it is a revolution as far-reaching as the absorption of the States in British India'. Cited in Phadnis, U., op. cit., pp. 59, 60.


But the major inspiration behind Patiala’s anti-Federal stance was believed by Sapru to emanate from Delhi, 'it had been prompted by the Political Department'. Most of Patiala's proposals were quite unreal; perhaps the most dramatic called for a reconstituted Chamber with an enlarged Standing Committee with powers to confer with a permanent Standing Committee of both legislatures of British India. Imagine, scoffed Sapru,

'the idea of 14 Princes meeting a joint committee of the two British Indian houses to 'decide' matters of common concern'.

In the wake of Patiala's pyrotechnics, Sapru felt it necessary to bolster the resolve of Bikaner and the pro-Federation Princes. The Morning Post was hard at work producing inflated estimates of the princely support accumulating for Patiala, but Sapru confidently intimated to Bikaner that,

'I feel sure that Your Highness and His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal will be able to manage the situation'.

One of the most interesting features of this morale-boosting exercise was the confidence with which Sapru forecast influential British Indian support for a Princes' Federal commitment, a conviction not upheld by subsequent events. Bikaner should note that

'there is a growing disposition among the leading taluqdars such as Raja Rammal Singh and others to cooperate with Your Highness'.

Cooperation was promised, too, at ministerial level in the United Provinces Government and a move was afoot to acquire The Pioneer; the Daily Mail was about to pass into the hands of Akbar Hydari. Sapru conveyed reassurances to London:

1. Sapru to Haksar, ibid. Indeed, Patiala let it slip that his change of attitude had been 'voted' by the Political Department. ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
the overwhelming majority of Princes have reiterated their adherence to the Federal scheme, and were not going to back out at the next Round Table Conference'. (1)

Sapru was joined by Sastri in playing down Patiala's volte face:

'Patiala has ratted and may make trouble. Still, somehow I am more hopeful this year than last'. (2)

This optimistic viewpoint was pressed on an all parties gathering of M.P.'s in the House of Commons in July by the Jam Sahib in a speech which, when taken with his subsequent inveterate resistance to Federation, underlines yet again the capacity of leading Princes to dissemble:

'with authority and confidence', Ranji declared, 'the Princes are in favour of Federation'.

Such sanguine predictions were undermined by displays of dissension within the Princely camp. Following a meeting at Bombay in August, a formula emerged to be known as the Dholpur-Patiala Scheme which interposed the formation of a 'confederation of States', which would be representative of the smaller States as well as the larger, as a preliminary to entry into a Federation. (5) Behind bland assurances of a common policy, there emerged two distinct Princely groups; Confederationists headed by Patiala and Dholpur, Federationists lined up behind Bikaner and Bhopal; this threw doubt on the good intentions of the Princely order vis a vis Federation generally. The Confederationists represented at the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee of 7th September, prior to the Second Round Table Conference, received a plainly

1. Sapru to Polak, 12th July, 1931, ibid., p. 96.
2. Sastri to Edward Thompson, 17th June, 1931, E.T.P.
3. Lansbury acted as Chairman and a distinguished gathering was composed of 75 other Members including Simon and a number of Round Table Delegates. See Wild, R., op. cit., pp. 289, 290.
4. Ranji confessed to 'present difficulties' among the Princes but these would be 'smoothed out prior to their arrival in London for the resumed Conference, and they would have an ordered scheme for bringing the Conference to a successful conclusion'. Ibid.
expressed warning from Sapru: their scheme was 'not one which would facilitate the creation of the Federation which we have in view'.

While the Federal cause had been encountering obstruction and prevarication in India, in Britain too, in the interval between the First and Second Round Table Conferences, prospects had noticeably dimmed. On the floor of the Commons diehard opposition to the Conference proposals moved up a gear and Benn commented with distaste on the thin attendance which would be noted by Indian observers and the manner in which the House filled up for Churchill's speeches:

'they came in to hear a row, not because of any particular interest in the Continent for which they have been so keen on retaining responsibility'. (2)

To Churchill's rhodamontade could be added Simon's denunciation of the achievement of the First Round Table Conference,

'working on the assumption that no one but himself had heard of India .... nothing (had been) settled at the Round Table Conference'. (3)

Benn remarked bitterly to the Viceroy:

'he would have been better advised if he had said bluntly that the rapid move by the Princes had made his report on India out of date'. (4)

The Parliamentary diehard campaign was spearheaded, at this stage, by Churchill and Lloyd and the points made by these spokesmen were amplified for a more general audience by the Morning Post, a combination

1. Cited in ibid., p. 64.
3. Ibid., p. 339.
4. Ibid.
5. Churchill had made his Indian views very clear to Baldwin prior to the start of the First Round Table Conference: 'the most serious of all our problems is India'; he had been receiving 'streams of letters from our people in India'; this was 'the greatest question Englishmen have had to settle since the War'; Churchill admitted to caring 'more about this business than anything else in public life'. See Churchill to Baldwin, 24th September, 1930, S.B.P., vol. 104, p. 51.
6. Lloyd of Dolobran, 1st Baron; Governor of Bombay, 1918-23; M.P. (Conservative), Eastbourne.
of talents which agitated Benn. The Secretary of State pinned his hopes on the Princes' bona fides: the Conservatives could not overlook 'the express desire of the Princes to join a Federation'.

Privately, the diehards were already suggesting that this would not happen. Lloyd did concede to Baldwin that the entry of the Princes had made Federation 'an eventual possibility which, prior to their adherence to the ideal, was impossible': but this had 'removed no rocks'; rather 'rolled away the mists', and Lloyd implied that the Princes generally would not endorse the action of their peers in London.

As momentum gathered behind the diehard movement, Benn approached Baldwin with the suggestion that moderate Conservatives might join with other party representatives on an Indian visit. Baldwin responded bleakly that 'Hoare and Peel were quite firmly against any further participation'. An additional complication for Benn lay in the fact that the diehard campaign could not be contested on a purely Indian platform; increasingly it assumed an anti-Baldwin character:

'Baldwin's enemies have been busy....what was a reasonable, and to some extent I understand a confidential committee, the India Committee, (6) has been swamped by Churchill and Lloyd and others and become, in their hands, a weapon to use against Baldwin'. (7)

Churchill was an energetic on the public platform as on the floor of the House. In reporting his Albert Hall performance, Benn described 'a really poisonous address' which cast doubt on the reconvening of a

1. See Benn to Irwin, 13th February, 1931, Hx.F., 6, p. 358.
2. Ibid.
4. Benn to Irwin, 5th March, 1931, Hx.F., 6, p. 379.
5. Ibid.
6. In normal times this was not a ginger group but a relatively informal gathering of those Conservative back-benchers with a special interest in Indian affairs. See Butler, R. A., The Art of the Possible, (1971), p. 40.
Second Round Table Conference; should this materialise, Churchill gave a personal guarantee that the Conference would 'come to no good'.

In the course of the summer of 1931, two meetings of the Conservative India Committee conveyed an impression of hardening attitudes towards Federation. When Irwin addressed this body along reasonably realistic lines, and with all the authority of a newly returned Viceroy, he encountered a frosty reception. By contrast, the same gathering listened with sympathy to markedly gradualist proposals adumbrated by Simon in the following week: with reference to the States entry into an All-India Federation,

'Simon rather pooh-poohed this .... Federalism was going to make the problem of Central government more and not less difficult'.

Given that Conservative opinion generally exhibited growing uneasiness as to the character of Indian Reforms, the fall of the Labour Government and its replacement, on 24th August, by a National Government overwhelmingly Conservative in spirit, were events which could only inhibit prospects of speedy advance at the Second Round Table Conference. Whatever Benn's limitations, he had clung steadfastly, faut de mieux, to the Federal ideal. It was far from clear that his successor at the India Office, Sir Samuel Hoare, would follow the same path.

2. Butler, present on the occasion, was struck by 'this display of courageous naivety .... his speech, apparently unprepared and certainly unpolished, seemed disappointing even disillusioning'. See Butler, R. A., *op. cit.*, p. 41.
4. Beaverbrook, a shrewd observer of Conservative styles, noted that Hoare represented 'the real heart and strength of the Conservative Party: the policy of suppression in India'. See Taylor, A. J. P., *Beaverbrook*, (1972), p. 327. While Taylor, himself, does not accept this judgement on Hoare, (see *ibid.*), the drift of Hoare's writings in the first half of 1931 was scarcely reassuring to the nationalist viewpoint. See his contribution to the *Morning Post*, 6th February, 1931, which Benn described as 'a deplorable article', watering down the original stance taken by the Conservatives at the very moment when Indian 'missionaries' from the Round Table Conference were arriving to a good reception at Bombay. See Benn to Irwin, 9th February, 1931, *H. & P.*, 6, p. 352.
visiting Maharajas and British Indian leaders respond to 'a not very warm personality certainly sometimes rather distant'. On his own admission, Hoare's first task as Secretary of State had been to reassure Indian leaders about his commitment to All-India Federation.

Hoare did not carry a surplus of enthusiasm into his new office: as he lost no time informing the Viceroy, 'I knew that I should have a nasty job when I took on the India Office, but I had no idea that it would be as bad as it is.' After a mere two months, Hoare described his post to Willingdon as 'penal servitude'.

Few well-placed observers can have hoped for a great deal from the Second Round Table Conference. Due to the timing of the change of Government, an incoming Secretary of State for India, even had he been sympathetically disposed towards Indian political progress, still had less than 14 days to prepare for the Conference. The Princes set out for London, still at sixes and sevens over Federation or Confederation, but with a show of sensitivity for sterling's current difficulties.


4. Hoare intimated that he 'would gladly have left the India Office', if the Prime Minister and Baldwin had not insisted on his staying. Hoare to Willingdon, 6th November, 1931, Tem.P., (1), p. 65.

5. A conference held at Bombay from 30th June to 3rd July, expressly to draw together the two groups of Princes, had singularly failed in its objective. See Phadnis, U., op. cit., p. 63.

6. The relevant gesture was made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes when he offered to forgo the contribution of His Majesty's Government towards Indian States' Delegates' expenses while in London. See Cab.P., (Cab 56/31), p. 165.
At least one leading States' delegate, faced with the joyless intractabilities of planning a Federation, took the opportunity of a European visit to let off some preliminary steam in Paris. Prospects for the Conference were gloomily reviewed by Attlee who told a prominent Indian journalist that the Conservatives 'would exploit the second round of talks to set up obstacles to India's advance towards self-rule ..... they were planning to drag the Princes into the cockpit to delay, if not to sabotage, the transfer of responsibility at the Centre. (2)

1. On a visit to the Lido, the Editor of the Associated Press of India encountered the Prime Minister of Hyderabad 'engaged in a lively tete-a-tete with a young women in a ravishing costume'. See Das, D., India From Curzon to Nehru and After, (1970), p. 151.

2. Ibid., p. 152.
The Second Round Table Conference and the Davidson Report
The Second Session of the Indian Round Table Conference did not open with a meeting of the full Conference. An enlarged Federal Structure Committee, which contained potentially disruptive elements, was reassembled on 7th September and the Minorities Committee on 28th September: this was followed by a Plenary Session beginning on 28th November. The emergence of a Confederation party within the Princes' ranks was reflected in the presence of 5 newcomers to the Indian States Delegation representing small States not progressive in character; Cutch, Indore, Kapurthala and the Rajas of Korea and Sarila.

The participation of Gandhi as sole representative of Congress seemed to mark a major advance in the representative nature of the Indian delegations vis-à-vis the First Conference. However, Gandhi's reiterated declaration that 'Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes', as well as 'the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions .... over 85 per cent of the population', held little appeal for Their Highnesses. Hopes, or more properly fears in some quarters, that Gandhi might act as a mediator between competing parties and interests swiftly evaporated. With a hint of satisfaction, Hoare recorded Gandhi's lack of impact on British politicians: the Mahatma was

'playing a furtive and uncertain game ..... he has met a good many M.P.'s of all parties and, from what I am told, has made a very bad impression on them'.

1. In the sense that he had pressed for Dholpur's inclusion, 'a very good little fellow', in the Federal Structure Committee, a notorious opponent of Bhakar, Willington had connived at a probable deadlock there. See Willington to Hoare, 28th August, 1931, T.R.1(1), 5, p. 3.
2. See Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session), Proceedings, Cmd. 3997, p. 5.
3. For a complete list of Indian States Delegates see appendix 3.
5. The Viceroy seized upon some outspoken references in Gandhi's British speeches to the 'insolent Pailees of the Ruling Princes'. See Willington to Hoare, 24th October, 1931, T.R.1(1), 5, p. 18.
This would come as no surprise to Willingdon who had already put down Gandhi as
've the most Machiavellian bargaining little political humbug I have ever come across'. (1)

In general, Willingdon alluded to the Indian Delegates to the Round Table Conference in disparaging terms; an illuminating aside to Hoare ran: 'you will I think be glad to get rid of all my pals!'.

Earlier in the year Hoare had communicated to his constituents his future plans for the Princes and his intention
'to work with the forces of Indian goodwill and try our hand at bringing about an All India Federation in which the stabilising force of the Indian States will be brought into the constitutional balance'. (3)

But having encountered the Princes collectively at the start of the Second Round Table Conference, Hoare fell to wondering how these potentates could be effectively decked out as the key influence in Indian constitutional advance:
'the trouble was that many years of paternal supervision by the Political Department in India had left them with little initiative'. (4)

1. Willingdon to Hoare, 10th January, 1932, T.P.(i), 5, p. 61.
2. Willingdon to Hoare, 15th November, 1931, T.P.(i), 5, p. 33. The only Prince of any particular merit in the Delegation Willingdon took to be Bhopal, 'a nice lad, but terribly full of small grievances, and over-impressed with his position as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 12th October, 1931, ibid., p. 16.
3. Hoare to the Chelsea Conservative and Unionist Association, May 1931, see T.P.(C.), vi: 1. The new prominence of the Princes gave Hoare an opportunity to stress, in a previous speech to this body, the special competence of Conservatives to understand India's problems: 'in the case of Indian questions we have this definite advantage over the other parties, for whilst we are determined to maintain law and order, we are especially conscious of the value of history and tradition. The varied history of India appeals to us, its movements and antiquities impress our imagination and its Princes impress us by their long lineage and their respect for tradition'. Ibid., October, 1930.
4. Templewood, Viscount, op. cit., pp. 85, 6. One of the Princes had confided to Hoare that 'in the past, my ancestors sat on hard saddles. Now we sit on silk divans, we have become soft'. Ibid. Hoare went on to observe of the Princes generally that many were 'men of real mark' but significantly he did not name these Rulers and concentrated instead on the merits of the shrewder Diwans. Ibid.
The Princes did not strike Hoare as ideal partners in a great
constitutional experiment: as he explained rather petulantly to
Willingdon

'the Princes are in a great state of nerves. They descend
upon me at every hour of the day and night about every
conceivable subject'. (1)

Willingdon concurred about the current panic abroad among the Princes
and put it down to the fact of the Irwin-Gandhi conversations. The
Princes

'couldn't understand the reason for Gandhi being treated as
a plenipotentiary, negotiating terms of peace on apparently equal
terms, and really felt, I think, that if they didn't want to
be wiped out they must make friends with Gandhi and his
crowd in order to save their skins'. (2)

It was a particular embarrassment to the Princes and their
advisers that during the proceedings of a Conference so dominated by
the communal issue, there should break out in Kashmir serious
disturbances reflecting Moslem discontent with the Pandit administration.
Hoare noted that 'the Princes are almost demented over Kashmir'.

The Kashmir affair provided Gandhi with ammunition to support his
contention that the Princes were politically impotent. The riots
were used as a platform to introduce the vexed question of the
fundamental rights of Indian States' subjects. This was poor
publicity for a Princely order being built up as the sheet-anchor of
political stability. On the general progress of the Conference, Hoare
remained uniformly gloomy:

3. See chapter 2, pp.190-192.
6. See speech by Dr. B. S. Moonje at the Second Plenary Meeting,
30th November, 1931, Cmd. 2978, pp. 271, 2.
By mid-November, Hoare felt that proceedings had ground to a halt:

"we are brought to a standstill by the Princes' refusal to be precise over the manner in which they will take part in a Federation". (2)

Of special concern to Hoare was, not only the deflation of Princes' morale, but their growing indifference to the India Office:

'I have been terribly depressed by the individual talks that I have had with almost all the members of the Conference and particularly with the Princes, for I have found that we have scarcely a friend among them. This makes me think that however the Conference ends, we must somehow keep the Princes happy. Even the Princes talk to me as if it were certain that we were leaving India in the next five years. I have really been horrified by the impression that these talks have left upon me'. (3)

All in all, the general mood of delegates as the Conference limped to an untidy end appears to have been one of depression tempered by 

(4) accumulating frustration. There were several public expressions of extreme dissatisfaction. It was depressing for Princes to hear (5) Mrs. Naidu, the 'Nightingale of India', tell the assembled delegates what she told her own Ruler, the Nizam:

'Sir, when the people begin to walk, Princes must begin to run to keep up with them .... we shall not be content with an alliance merely between dynasties and democracies'. (7)

1. Hoare to Willingdon, 17th September, 1931, T.P.*(1), 1, p. 12. At times Hoare's depression plumbed the depths: 'how we shall ever get out of the Conference I cannot imagine'. After talking privately with prominent Indians, Hoare surmised 'that they will try to put the failure, if failure there is, upon our shoulders .... it seems to me quite certain that nothing in the nature of detailed proposals can possibly emerge from this welter of conflicting opinion'. See Hoare to Willingdon, 25th September, 1931, ibid., pp 19, 20.
4. See the comments of a retired I.C.S. observer in London, Patrick Cadell, shortly to become President of the Council, Junagadh State, 29th September, 1931, E.T.P.
5. See in particular Birla, G. D., speech to the Second Plenary Meeting, 30th November, 1931, Cmnd. 3997, p. 361.
The President of the Hindu Mahasabha described the Princes' uncertainty on the Federal issue as an 'unsurmountable obstacle'. (1) While Sapru could maintain, in optimistic vein, that the three vital conditions for All India Federation imposed by the Princes had been met, reality was represented by the fearfully complex fiscal problems attached to the entry of a maritime state, like Cutch, to the Federation. The Conference did not settle the eventual structure of a Federal Legislature.

A gathering suspicion that delays in the establishment of a Federation would be used as a pretext to slow down constitutional reform was evident in the thinly veiled warning delivered by one prominent Indian delegate:

'no doubt Federal and Central responsibility are linked together, but make up your mind to bring about Federation in as short a time as possible, for, let me assure you, India is in no mood for any delay in this matter'. (5)

It was left to Ramsay MacDonald, in his concluding Statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to attempt to paper over the cracks by underlining the official commitment to Federation:

'we intend, and have always intended, to press on with all possible despatch with the Federal plan'. (6)

1. Moonje, Dr. B. S., ibid., p. 275.
2. These were: a guarantee of Treaty Rights; unimpaired internal sovereignty; an assurance that Federal India would be a Member of the Commonwealth. See Sapru, T. B., ibid., p. 301.
3. See speech by the Maharao of Cutch, ibid., p. 267.
4. The Federal Structure Committee Report contemplated an Upper House of 200 and a Lower House of 300, in which the State's representatives would number 80 and 100 respectively. The Princes held out for a fifty-fifty representation in the Upper House. Ibid., p. 346. The Confederation group insisted upon parading the merit of their scheme at length to weary delegates. See in particular Bholpur's speech, ibid., pp. 346-9. A Muslim delegate from the Punjab expressed the widely-held view that the States were not entitled to representation in either House except on the basis of population. See Shah, Sir M. F., ibid., p. 352.
5. Setalvad, Sir C., ibid., p. 372.
But even MacDonald felt bound to refer to the Princes' mood of indecision:

-'it has not yet been possible for the States to settle among themselves their place in the Federation and their mutual relationships within it'. (1)

The solution proposed by His Majesty's Government envisaged the appointment of three small specialist committees to work in India; a first to advise on franchise and constituencies, a second to test the recommendations of the Federal Finance Sub-Committee, a third to explore financial problems arising in connection with certain States. In marked contrast to the Prime Minister's publicised optimism, Hoare privately conveyed a defeatist account of the Conference's outcome to the Viceroy:

-'nobody has really agreed about anything ..... having become terribly irritated with each other and knowing that it is entirely their own fault that they have not made any substantial progress with the details of a Federal scheme, they have all been turning upon us and trying to make it appear our fault that no results have been achieved'. (3)

For those, like Hoare, strongly attracted to a gradualist approach there was comfort in the supposition that framing a Federal Bill would be a very long job. Provincial autonomy might even be introduced as a staging post: 'we cannot thrust self-government down the throats of people who do not want it', Hoare snorted to Willingdon. Nor was the prospect of a long constitutional haul unwelcome news to conservative Princes. The deep-seated internal dissensions within the British-Indian delegation demonstrated during the Conference

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1. Ibid., p. 416. MacDonald also reluctantly conceded that no agreement had been reached on the composition and powers of the Federal Legislature. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 419.


4. The Parliamentary draftsmen had told Hoare that until they had the reports of the franchise committees and the data from the Indian States, it was quite impossible for them to begin to draft a Bill seriously. Ibid.

5. Hoare to Willingdon, ibid., p. 79.
were not lost on the Princely participants. The Political Officer attached to the Hyderabad delegation concluded that the Princes had begun to hope for a sustained constitutional stale-mate

'and that they will be able to continue their sheltered existence while Hindus and Muhammadans wage communal war in British India'. (1)

Certainly, the Princes returned to India committed to very little. Characteristically disparaging, Hoare cast doubt on the ability of Conference delegates generally to mobilise support for the constitutional proposals in India: he retained little faith in

'our Round Table friends to do anything effective. They are full of forensic zeal when over here, but it seems somehow to evaporate between London and Bombay'. (3)

Mindful that a lead would have to come from London, Hoare's immediate problem was to staff effectively the three committees of the Conference due to leave shortly for India: his curious criteria for selection reflected less a concern for speedy progress than a desire to placate anxiety on the Conservative benches regarding Indian constitutional reform. As Hoare explained to the Viceroy, he was looking for

'new and young M.P.s... who are likely to play an active part in British politics in this generation';

so Willingdon should not be surprised to find no 'Indian experts' in the team. In anticipation of adverse comment, Hoare continued:

'in particular you may be surprised that I have selected Delaval Hastings(5)... he has a growing influence with back-bench members of the House of Lords and I think it is very important that we should associate with our policy some of the country-squires in addition to the highbrows and the urban politicians.' (6)

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3. Hoare to Willingdon, 10th December, 1931, T.P.(i), 1, p. 108.
4. Ibid.
5. Hastings, 21st Baron (or. 1264), Albert, Edward, Delaval, Astley; Hon. Lieut.-Col. Kings Own Royal Regiment Norfolk Yeomanry; J.P.; D.L.
6. Hoare to Willingdon, 10th December, 1931, T.P.(i), 1, p. 108. Hastings was well known to Hoare, on the social level, as a frequent shooting host. Ibid.
By mid December, Hoare had completed his selection:

'I have chosen on the whole young men with fresh minds. I purposely got J. C. C. Davidson for the Princes' Committee, as it seemed to me that a genial Conservative, known to be Baldwin's closest personal friend, would be the best type for Chairman, provided that he had expert officials to assist him'.

To Davidson and Hastings, Hoare added General Hutchinson, 'a very genial and agreeable soldier for the more personal side of the enquiry'.

Hoare chose two officials, Sir Reginald Glancy and Sir Maurice Gwyer, 'to provide the technical knowledge'. The two remaining members of the States' Committee, not specifically mentioned by Hoare, were Sir Charles Stuart-Williams, included for his knowledge of maritime customs, and a former Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, J. R. Martin.

1. Davidson, Rt. Hon. John Colin Campbell, P.C. 1928; C.H. 1929; C.B. 1919; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster since 1931; M.P. (Unionist) Hemel Hempstead since 1924. As if to reassure Willingdon, Hoare felt obliged to reiterate his faith in Davidson a little later: 'Davidson has a very pleasing manner and has dealt with all sorts and conditions of men, as Chairman of the Conservative party, and is entirely in Baldwin's confidence'. See Hoare to Willingdon, 31st December, ibid., p. 121. Not all Conservatives shared in Hoare's enthusiastic assessment; in the opinion of one vastly experienced former party official, Davidson had acquired a reputation as 'a slippery character whose temporary absence might not be unwelcome to the party hierarchy. The view of Lord Palermo, former Chairman of the Conservative Party in Scotland, interviewed 21st October, 1970.


5. Glancy, Sir Reginald Isodore Robert, K.C.B. 1928; C.S.I. 1921; C.I.E. 1917; C.B. 1919; C.I.E. 1896 with service in Central India, Jaipur, Baroda and Hyderabad; Member of Council of India since 1931.


8. Stuart-Williams, Sir Charles, Kt. (or. 1929); Chairman of Calcutta Port Commissioners 1922-30.

9. Martin, James Rea, C.I.E.; I.C.S. 1901, service in Sindh Frontier, Karachi and Bombay; Member of Council of State, India, 1924.
who would be au fait with fiscal wranglings concerning Kathiar States. It is an indication of Hoare's general approach to Indian affairs that his major worry in connection with the touring Committees was that a senior British politician with a declared interest in Indian Reform should want to serve as a head of a Committee, namely Lord Sankey, whom Benn had previously described as 'a deity with Indians', on the strength of his contributions to the First Round Table Conference. Sankey having expressed himself as not keen, Hoare wrote at once to India with an enormous sense of relief; he had found Sankey, 'extraordinarily vague and sentimental and I was terrified that he might compromise all of us'.

Davidson received his brief from the Prime Minister on 16th December. It required the Committee to investigate the attainment of an ideal system of Federal finance with uniformity of contribution by the Federating units. To undertake this daunting task, Davidson subdivided his team into three Sub-Committees; one dealing with customs, salt and miscellany under Hastings; a second looking at tributes and ceded territories under Hutchinson; a third he ran himself, working on the general Federal position with Clancy and Gwyer.

The enterprise required the support of a harmonious and hard-working

2. Hoare to Millington, T.P. (4), 1, p. 120.
3. MacDonald's full brief ran: 'an ideal system of Federal finance would be one under which all Federal units would contribute on a uniform basis to the Federal resources. The task of the Committee is to determine how far and in what respects the attainment of this ideal is affected by two particular elements in the existing situation:
   a) the ascertained existing rights of certain States and
   b) certain contributions of a certain character which many States are now making or have made in the past to the resources of the Indian Government.' See Report of Indian States Enquiry Committee (Financial), Cmd. 4109, p. 1.
5. Ibid.
To Davidson's discomfort, he swiftly discovered weaknesses and disturbing potential for friction:

'Hutchinson is a disappointment - he doesn't approach his subject from the right angle ....... pompous, very lazy. Lady Hutchinson is the real difficulty, she runs him completely and is an unenthusiastic, grumpy and exceedingly bitter woman who talks about "blacks".' (1)

Worse was to follow as it dawned on Davidson that diehard influence might have penetrated the Committee:

'Hastings and I have come independently to the conclusion that Hutchinson is out to use the Committee for his own personal purposes and if he can manage to get home before us, will make mischief'. (2)

In the event, Hutchinson developed a mischievous touch while still in India: from Bhavnagar, Davidson complained to Hoare that Hutchinson was encouraging Princes to stand out from Federation.

If the Committee were to achieve anything positive this would be the work of Davidson himself. Initially, the Chairman worked in harmony with Hastings, but by mid April, Davidson had come to despair of his team generally with the exception of Clancy:

'both the Hastings have been very difficult owing to their selfishness and snobbery, and give everybody the impression that the Committee is really run for their benefit .... The Hutchinsons are openly annoyed at having to stay in Simla for a fortnight with nothing to do except work which, of course, he is incapable of doing .... Martin, of course, is completely useless and has had a damned good tour under luxurious conditions.' (5)

Thus the great bulk of the work, both political and social, fell upon Davidson; ill health, too, took a hand in striking down Hutchinson, Clancy, Gwyer, and Mrs. Davidson in particular with severe dysentery. (6)

2. Davidson to Hoare, ibid.
4. See Davidson to Hoare, 20th February, 1932, ibid.
5. Davidson to Hoare, 15th April, 1932, ibid.
The core of the problem lay in balancing the various States' 'rights' in the sense of various privileges and immunities in respect of sea customs and salt tax, against certain 'contributions', i.e. the cash tributes required by historic treaties in return for assurances of protection. An indication of the complexity of the Committee's brief, to arrive at a basis for assessing States' Federal contributions, is the impressive scale of its itinerary, 8,476 miles by rail, 1,704 miles by road and 411 miles by sea. Discussions took place with the Rulers and Ministers of no less than 88 States. Davidson found, as did Harcourt Butler before him, that in Indian States a host's social duties took precedence over his disposition to discuss constitutional affairs. Reviewing Committee morale in mid April, Davidson confessed to Hoare, 'it is amazing, in view of the immense strain both physical and mental which the Committee has gone through during the last two months, that anyone has a scrap of nerve left'.

As Davidson progressed on his rounds of the Princes, he found little enthusiasm for Federation. Hoare had been particularly anxious to have news of Hydari's views as representing the premier State: 'he is back where he started at the First Round Table Conference', reported Davidson, 'he pleaded with me not to believe that the Princes ought to be rushed into Federation'. Hoare, supremely conscious of the importance of Princely participation to Conservative rank and file,

1. The conflict of economic interest between the Indian States and British India is discussed in chapter 2, pp. 114 - 137.
2. Cmd. 4103, p. 3.
3. These were, in sequence of visiting, Hyderabad, Mysore, Cochin, Travancore, Kolhapur, Sangli, Baroda; the Principal Kathiawar States; Ratlam, Indore, Bhopal, Rewa and Gwalior; Udaipur, Kotah, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Dholpur, Kasurthala and Tehru-Garhwal.
4. The Political Officer, deputed to act as advance agent to the Committee, recalled that 'much time was taken up by sightseeing, shooting expeditions, banquets, garden parties, military reviews and an infinity of entertainments by which the Princes give vent to their traditional genius for hospitality.' See Fitze, Sir K., op. cit., p. 81.
briefed Davidson to counteract an attitude growing in India

'that the project may be impractical and that we can simply slide from an All India Federation to the idea of a British Indian Federation'. (1)

For Hoare and Davidson, jointly engaged in the promotion of Federation, a first consideration was the alleged anti-Federal stance of the Political Department, so explicit in the correspondence of Keyes and Sepru.

Hoare counselled Davidson to 'keep an eye' on this body:

'very much between ourselves, I have the feeling that sometimes the personnel of our residents and agents in the Indian States is not as good as it was'. (2)

Davidson's response was little short of devastating:

'in all seriousness I have never been so disappointed in anything as in the quality, the calibre and the prestige of the Political Officers whom I have so far met. Something is radically wrong, so wrong that it is almost incomprehensible to me that such a state of affairs as exists could have been allowed to continue'. (3)

Hoare expressed little surprise and confided to Davidson that

'time after time it has seemed to me in the talks that I have had with the representatives of the States that the trouble was to a great extent personal ... we must try to get this side of the machine more efficient in future'. (4)

Writing from Bombay, Davidson continued to stress the gravity of the difficulties being encountered:

'the impression that we have formed here is that Delhi has got completely out of hand and has lost its grip on the situation'. (5)

Davidson had despatched Gwyer to Delhi

'because there doesn't appear to be a soul there who knows anything about the mind of the British Delegation at the last Round Table Conference'. (6)

The Princes had been pleasantly surprised by Davidson's 'friendly and informal methods' but he entertained few illusions about their sympathy for Federation, commenting 'on the obstinancy of the Rajputana lot'. (7)

1. Hoare to Davidson, 16th February, 1932, ibid.
2. Hoare to Davidson, 16th February, 1932, ibid.
4. Hoare to Davidson, 10th March, 1932, ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. The Rajputana Princes held out for a Senate of at least 300, on a 50/50 basis with British India, 'as they claim that the whole of the Chamber of Princes and a great many more must have direct representation'. Ibid.
Confirmation of the Government of India's hostility to Federation reached Hoare from other impressive sources. He passed on to Baldwin the view of 'much the ablest administrator that we have in India':

'I confess to you frankly that when I came back to India, I was astonished to find that Simla and Delhi took a very different view both of the attractions and possibilities of Federation from those which I had seen among the leaders of parties in England. Whether the cause is to be found in some lack of official enthusiasm for Federation out here or not, yet certainly it does seem to me that the prospect of attaining it within any reasonable time is receding'. (2)

Hailey had no positive solution to offer; there was no point in threatening the Princes with responsibility at the Centre in British India in the hope that they would be frightened into Federation on any terms; the British Indian politicians would then press for full responsibility at the Centre without taking count of the Indian States.

Clearly, it was imperative to Hoare that the Viceroy himself should be seen as a protagonist of Federation, but there seemed little hope of this. Prior to Davidson's arrival, Willingdon cast gloom on Federal prospects generally; the Princes had beset him with

'the eternal question of ceremonial and paramountcy .... I can get nothing out of them at all with regard to Federation'. (4)

Willingdon continued to forecast that the Princes would run out and he developed an uncompromising attack on the ploy which sought to introduce Princes as constitutional safeguards; Hoare was asked to consider if

'as seems likely, the Princes turn round to us in the near future and either say that they won't come into the Federal scheme or make some completely impossible demands with regard to their entry into it .... do you really contemplate saying to the British Indians we decline to go ahead with you towards a British Indian Federation because we look upon the Princes as the only safe body who can steady the ship of Federation at the beginning of our new administrative system?'. (5)

2. Hailey to Hoare, ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Willingdon to Hoare, 1st February, 1932, T.L.(1), 5, p. 71. Willingdon saw no possibility of the Princes coming in at this juncture, 'I think their demands from what I can gather as to representation and safeguards will probably be impossible to concede'. Ibid.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 8th February, 1932, ibid., p. 72.
Willingdon concluded dramatically:

'I own frankly that if we take this line I see the prospect before me of every British Indian becoming a Congressman'. (1)

The issue of the Princes' constitutional role blew up into a first-class row as Hoare stuck to his guns: viewed from the British end everything hinged on Princely participation, a British Indian Federation, Hoare declared, 'is not politically possible in the near future'.

Hoare pressed the Viceroy to make

'a very vigorous effort to bring the Princes in. If we don't get them in now, I believe they will either drift away or gradually crumble to pieces ... if the door of All-India Federation is closed we are then back on the pre-R.T.C. status quo and 80 per cent of the House of Commons will go back to the undiluted Simon Report'. (3)

Willingdon was explicitly warned about the Princes' probable attitude to Federation at the forthcoming Chamber of Princes meeting; 'we should certainly refuse to take a 'No' from them'. In reply, Willingdon reiterated his belief in the forthcoming demand for a British Indian Federation and played the Muslim card in support of his position:

'the Muhammadans, for instance, at the moment have no particular desire to see the Princes in a Federation at all, for they realise that their (the Princes') representatives, whoever they may be, will be largely Hindu and that will increase the Hindu majorities. But all communities would feel that it is rather insulting to British India, which has been trained up by us for the last 150 years, to be held back because the Princes won't come in, whom they consider are most of them at all events at least 50 years behind them in their administrative ideas'. (5)

Willingdon's obstruction inspired Hoare to brief the Chairman of the Franchise Committee, Lord Lothian, as a 'second barrel' alongside Davidson to stir the Princes:

3. Ibid., p. 206.
4. Ibid.
Willingdon does not in the least realise the almost insuperable difficulties of the kind of piecemeal proposals that he and his Council have been making. I go constantly on worrying him with the urgent necessity of getting something out of the Princes ... if they say 'No', all the fat in the world will be in the fire here ... do use all the influence you have to get these facts into peoples' heads. (1)

For his part, Davidson continued to propagate the Federal gospel to the best of his considerable abilities and pressed shrewd courses of action on the Princes though he confessed to the limitations of Their Highnesses. (2) In one particularly pertinent piece of advice, Davidson advised them

'to found, with the big land interest in British India, an agricultural party - not of course with themselves openly associated with it - if, instead of spending vast sums bribing British Indian politicians, they would organise Province by Province, the conservative agricultural class to the policy which they as a whole propose to pursue in their States, it would be to their advantage undoubtedly'. (3)

But as Davidson came to realise, his best intentions might be frustrated by the Government of India. Initially, Willingdon's position was far from clear; as Davidson put it 'what I cannot find out is where Willingdon stands in this matter'. Earlier condemnation of the Political Department was confirmed:

'all the senior men I have met are completely worked out .... I have come definitely to the conclusion, which is shared by such an old hand as Clancy, that the deterioration in the Political Department at Delhi must have been very serious in the last few years'. (5)

By mid March, with the meeting of the Chamber of Princes imminent, Hoare felt sufficiently alarmed to challenge the Viceroy directly on Federation and the Government of India's bona fides:

2. As Davidson sadly confirmed to Hoare, 'the more I have discussed it on the spot the more convinced I am that the Princes are doomed unless they are able to make their views heard and their weight felt on the same platform and in the same body as British India. They are suffering very strongly from an inferiority complex; they are terrified of British India, and are always defending, which means death in the end.' See Davidson to Hoare, 6th March, 1932, EP(1), L4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
'for some reason or another there is a general impression here that the Government of India is unsympathetic to the idea of All India Federation. People have not forgotten the fact that in the Government of India Despatch, All India Federation was regarded as a very distant ideal almost at the very moment when the Princes were coming over to enter an All India Federation. Since then, there does not seem to have been any great enthusiasm for it in official circles so far as we can judge from here. This may be quite a wrong impression but it is an impression that is very current here and this is not my single view, it is very much the view of the Prime Minister, and so far as I know, of every member of the Cabinet'. (1)

There followed a stiff warning against letting All India Federation drift out of the programme. The rockets from the India Office made little impression on the Viceroy and his mandarins. Davidson reported a long, intimate and depressing conversation on Federation between himself, Willingdon, Lothian and Hydari: of special note was the extreme nervousness of Hydari lest his representatives be corrupted by contact with British Indian representatives in the Lower Chamber, and a curious ploy of Lothian's which would have allowed to the States certain 'mental reservations enabling them to slip out of the Federation'. Davidson was particularly struck by

'"the fact that the Political Department, as I gathered from Sir Charles Watson himself and the Viceroy, have been heartily opposed to Federation". (4)

Both Davidson and Lothian had, by now, a strong appreciation of the potential of States' representation at the Centre. Davidson surmised of the Princes,

'"if they had the sense to stiffen their own representation, which will contain men equal to any British Indian politician, e.g. men like Miza Ismail, Pattani, Krishnamo Char and Sir C.P.', (5)

by buying the best British brains and adding them to their number, there is no doubt that the Princes would dominate at any rate the Upper House and possibly the Executive too'. (6)

2. Ibid.
3. Note of a meeting held on 22nd March, 1932, T.P.(1), 12.
4. Ibid.
5. Ramaswami Aiyer, the Dewan of Travancore.
6. Davidson to Hoare, 24th March, 1932, T.P.(1), 14. Davidson noted with approval a developing tendency among the Princes to ask for the loan of British officers to serve as ministers in the States. Ibid.
Lothian was attracted by the possibility of an official 'Bloc' which might be operated by proxy. Should the Princes ultimately stay out, 'the right of the Crown to nominate persons to occupy the proportion of seats to be held by the Princes, will enable it to ensure that at least a proportion of the Federal Assembly in the new structure is composed of conservative elements': (2)

More or less the same attractive possibility was put to Baldwin by the leading representative of the European Association in India. But if the Federal ideal were to make headway then Davidson came to be convinced that a new agency must be found to conduct negotiations between the Princes and British India,

'I don't believe Willingdon is capable of undertaking such a task'. (3)

The answer might lie in a deus ex machina; Davidson insisted that,

'the reorganisation of the Political Department must take place forthwith, and someone must be sent out to India as first lieutenant to do the work for the Viceroy'. (4)

Davidson's uphill fight scored something of a success when he stagemanaged a formal declaration in favour of All India Federation to be made at the forthcoming Chamber of Princes' session: but this coincided with a final dramatic denouement regarding Willingdon's intentions:

'the fact is that Willingdon has all along been opposed to Federation and only a few days ago advised Travancore to stay out'. (5)

2. See Confidential Memorandum on the Indian Situation by Sir Hubert Carr, March 1932, S.P.F., vol. 105, p. 125; the general drift ran: 'it is suggested that the proportion of seats allocated to the Princes, but not filled by them, should be filled by the Crown by virtue of its paramountcy'.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
This intelligence shook Davidson but there was no gainsaying its authoritative nature:

"it is difficult to believe that he did so but as I was told myself by the Taharani and Patrick was told by C.P. it is difficult to disbelieve it, altogether a very unpleasant situation'.

Confronted by inveterate saboteurs of His Majesty's Government's proposals in Delhi's highest places, Davidson propounded, for the benefit of the Secretary of State, a realistic appraisal of the pitfalls opening up ahead and the most practicable solution attainable:

"the fact is that there is not a politically-minded individual in India amongst the British officials, and of course Willingdon is hopeless. If it is our intention to preserve the States as a counter-balance to democratic British India obviously it would be disastrous to choke and stifle the public expression of British Indian views in the Federal Legislature. A small uni-cameral Chamber would not save the Princes from secret societies and underground propaganda amongst their subjects to undermine their authority. Whereas if there is a comparatively large lower Chamber in which the Princes form a comparatively minority they would be able to show up in public debate the nefarious activities of British Indian agitators .... what I should like to see is a very small Upper Chamber in which the cream of the States' Ministers would sit, and which would be a check on the Lower Chamber'.

On balance, Davidson felt that the situation was far from hopeless and concluded,

"I am quite sure that there are astute men among the Princes, astute enough to realise that their sole salvation rests in joining Federation'. (1)

For his part, Willingdon, the possessor of a long suit in effrontery, issued a vehement denial to Hoare of his Government's hostility to Federation;

"that is really not the case for, after all, while some of us including myself, may have thought it very odd and very undesirable for the Princes to tumble into a Federation three years ago, having committed themselves to it we have always felt that it was impossible for them to keep out of it'. (2)

1. Davidson to Hoare, 1st April, 1932, T.P.(1), 14.

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 27th March, 1932, T.P.(1), 5, p. 101. It may be that Willingdon prevailed upon Hastings to write independently to Hoare denying that the Viceroy had attempted to influence the Princes against Federation. See Hastings to Hoare, T.P.(1), 14, 16th April, 1932.
Willingdon's new posture as a Federationist took in as well-informed a commentator as K. N. Haksar who duly stated in enthusiastic style that everybody,

'Lothian, Gwyer, Davidson and the Viceroy himself are extremely keen on the consummation of the Federal constitution'. (1)

The intention of the Princes to reaffirm their willingness to join an All India Federation moved Sapru to conclude that a major success had been registered against

'the combined wreckers of the Federal scheme including our friend Rushbrook Williams. I am on the whole satisfied with the resolution of the Princes. The guarantees they want are nothing new'. (3)

The resolution came as a considerable relief to Hoare; he subsequently addressed a diplomatic note of congratulation to Willingdon while at the same time pressing for an investigation of 'the next stage'.

Hoare's tactics in dealing with the Viceroy were to blend a surface solicitude for the Viceroy's efforts with plain-spoken demands for action on the Federal front. With Davidson breathing down his neck,

Willingdon affected a show of action:

'I have written to Ranji, my new Chancellor, to tell them they MUST get busy on all this, so that they may be ready when they come to negotiate between themselves and British India. I hope I shall get a move one but you know what they are'. (9)

2. On the assumption that the Crown would accept responsibility for the usual guarantees i.e. safeguards embodied in the constitution, treaties and sanads to remain inviolate; sovereignty to remain intact as would obligations of the Crown. See Sinh, R., op. cit., pp. 133, 4.
5. Hoare to Willingdon, 6th April, 1932, Ibid., p. 245.
6. Ibid.
7. This is well illustrated in Hoare to Willingdon, 15th April, 1932: 'I am afraid all that work connected with the Chamber of Princes must have imposed a heavy strain on you... I am waiting anxiously for further information as to what exactly the resolution of the Princes means'. Ibid., p. 263.
8. Informed gossip said that the Jam Sahib stood for the Chancellorship of the Chamber with Willingdon's support; he was unopposed by either Bikaner or Patiala. See Davidson to Hoare, 6th March, 1932, T.P.(1), 4. There are further references to Ranji as 'a very old friend' and 'my Chancellor' in Willingdon to Hoare, 27th March, 1932, T.P.(1), 5, p. 103; Willingdon to Lothian, 7th June, 1932, Lo.P. GRLO/1/53.
The Viceroy took care to reassure Baldwin in identical terms about the
(1)
Princes' commitment to Federation.

Davidson saw through the Viceregal smokescreen and exhorted the
Secretary of State in the strongest terms to introduce a British
Federal initiative which would shortcircuit Willingdon; even the
latter's popularity with the Princes was in question:

'because they do not respect a man who agrees with everything they
say and then does the opposite, even though he pleads higher
authority as his excuse. Now what you will have to consider
very soon is whether or not the British Government is prepared
to produce a reasonable scheme of representation for the States
..... unless we bring the Princes up with a sharp turn, realising
as I do, again with notable exceptions, that many of the most
powerful would be only too glad to see the last of the British
in India, the more difficult it will be to make acceptable any
scheme which we may have to impose on them'. (2)

Davidson underlined the hopelessness of building a common Princes' front
by reference to the quixotic behaviour of perhaps the two key States:

'Hyderabad and Mysore are both off the rails again. Hydari and
Mirza are daggers drawn, and when Hydari is wearing the nightshirt
of the single chamber, Mirza at once dons the pyjamas of bi-
cameralism, and vice versa'. (3)

Again and again, Davidson returned to the theme of British intervention:

Bikaner,

'master of the situation at present ..... is I think equally
convinced with the other Princes that as no settlement is
possible on representation among themselves, the British
Government will have to produce a scheme'. (4)

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2. Davidson to Hoare, 15th April, 1932, ibid., 14. As a striking
example of the futility of Chamber of Princes' Federal schemes,
Davidson instanced the amazing Bikaner formula which allotted to
Central India 30 seats in the Upper House and 8 on a population basis
in the Lower House. Hyderabad would have one seat in the Upper
House and 30 in the Lower House. Ibid. Davidson found the whole
position in the States astonishingly unreal. Bhopal, who in public
supported the Bikaner scheme, told Glancy privately that it was quite
unworkable and most unjust and many Princes told Davidson privately
that they would never be able to agree. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Davidson to Hoare, 22nd April, 1932, ibid.
As to implementation, an immediate internal reform of the Political Department should be accompanied by the arrival in India of an 'Envoy Extraordinary', who would be

'an individual of great administrative and diplomatic experience sent out from England as head of the Political Department',

and charged with the task of carrying through negotiations with the Princes. The eve of his departure found Davidson in an ambivalent frame of mind regarding Federal prospects. On the negative side there loomed the obstructive bulk of the Government of India:

'quite privately, I don't think that Willingdon is capable, certainly the Political Department is not, of getting the scheme across, especially when it is not their own, and they are unenthusiastic in principle to the whole idea of Federation. Secondly, I am not absolutely certain, although you must treat this as very private, that I would trust Willingdon to take a sufficiently strong line or to grasp the details'. (2)

Yet Davidson struck a wholly positive note in envisaging, to Lothian, a swift Princes' entry to Federation,

'speed is the essence of the situation if we are to bring the Princes in by February (1933)'. (3)

To Hoare, he spoke of Federation as 'an accomplished fact by August or October next year', dependent of course on the 'immensely urgent' reorganisation of the Political Department.

The difficulty about acting on Davidson's advice was that the Secretary of State would have to override hallowed Viceregal autonomy in running the Delhi administration. But Hoare could hardly hang back since word of Willingdon's resistance had now reached Sapru and Hoare's own bona fides were coming into question. It became apparent,

2. Davidson to Hoare, 22nd April, 1932, ibid.
5. See Sapru to Haksar, 30th April, 1932, Sapru, 2190, H60, p. 192.
too, that Willingdon's Chancellor, the Jam Sahib, was working successfully
to arouse apprehension in the minds of the Princes concerning entry
to Federation: that hitherto keen proponent of Federation, Haksar,
confessed himself to be 'dog sick' of attempting to keep Princes 'on
the right lines'. Hoare therefore attempted to instigate an
overhaul of the Political Department:

'almost everyone who visits me from India and talks to me about
our relations with the States says that the Political Department
want stronger personnel at the top .... if there is anything in
this criticism, it seems to me to react unfortunately upon the
future course of events in connection with Federation .... it
looks to me as if it wants a strong push from the Political
Department if there are not to be long delays'. (2)

Hoare followed up this advice by proposing that

'some person or persons should go round the principal States with
our scheme and try to get them to accept it after individual
discussion'. (3)

The alternative, arranging for States' representatives to visit London,
filled Hoare with foreboding:

'not only will they never agree .... I go so far as to say that
another meeting of the Federal Structure Committee or of the
Round Table Conference on the scale and manner of the last
two autumns would destroy any chance that I may have of getting
a constitutional bill through the Commons'. (4)

It may be that Davidson's unpromising news about official hostility
in India to Federation induced Hoare to suggest a two-phase approach,
provincial autonomy to be followed at a later stage by Federation.
Faced with the unglamorous prospect of having to defend this plan in
India, Willingdon discovered a new enthusiasm for Federation among the
Princes: Lothian and a few colleagues had assured him that,

Sahib's machinations, alleged both Sapru and Haksar, was Rushbrook
Williams who drafted the Jam Sahib's public pronouncements, and,
by implication, the diehard caucus in London. See ibid., and
2. Hoare to Willingdon, 22nd April, 1932, T.P.(i), 2, p. 293.
3. Hoare to Willingdon, 5th May, 1932, ibid., p. 312.
4. Ibid.
5. See Moore, R. J., op. cit., p. 71.
'there is no reason to hold up the passing of the Bill because of the Princes. The Princes themselves are definitely committed to a Federal scheme. They have put before the Federal Structure Committee their views on general principles. Why not prepare a Bill laying down the general principle of the whole Federal scheme, pass it and let us deal with the many details in regard to the Princes' side of it after the Bill is passed'. (1)

The merits of a single comprehensive Bill as a 'tranquillizer' for Indian opinion were independently urged on Hoare by a prominent Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and with Cabinet approval of the one-Bill programme Willingdon felt obliged to give a general impression of action on the Federal front while shifting responsibility for detail onto the Secretary of State:

'I will take immediate steps to get a Conference of Princes up here as early as I can and put the whole position before them; but it would be a great thing if you would let me know, as early as possible, what are the principal points that you wish to get their opinions and views on'. (3)

Hoare did what he could to maintain pressure on the Viceroy; how did he intend to consult the non-Chamber States, especially Hyderabad and Mysore:

'personally, I am all for small Chambers .... it seems to me that the bigger the Chamber the more unmanageable and corrupt it is likely to be and the more difficult it will be for States to find suitable representatives'. (4)

2. A primary attraction for Haig in this scheme lay in the fact that it would be a protracted affair. A Provincial Autonomy Bill would not divert Congress hostility and 'would certainly give rise to great suspicion'. Haig professed to speak for all his colleagues in seeing a complex single Bill as something of a sedative for Indian aspirations ... 'it is, of course, realised that the Federal part of the Bill cannot come into being for some time, for it will be necessary to secure the adhesion of the Princes, and that is going to be no easy task'. See Haig to Hoare, 2nd May, 1932, T.P.(o), vii: 1.
3. Willingdon to Hoare, 5th June, 1932, T.P.(i), 5, p. 148. In his familiar breezy style, Willingdon made a similar request to Lothian while forecasting with confidence that the Princes would come in, 'otherwise every British Indian will probably set himself to upset the Princes in their particular localities'. See Willingdon to Lothian, 7th June, 1932, T.P.(o), vol. 17/153, pp. 396-402. Willingdon had earlier accepted with alacrity a proposal that a draft detailed scheme on States' representation should be prepared by His Majesty's Government rather than the Government of India. See Willingdon to Hoare, 3rd May, 1932, T.P.(i), 5, pp. 335, 5.78., vol. 105, p. 179.
The path was far from clear in London and in reporting Davidson's reception by the Commons' India Committee, Hoare warned of a degree of cynicism towards Federation:

'the position is that many Conservatives are attracted by the idea of getting the Princes into the Indian Government but that they will want a lot of convincing that the Princes are really coming in'. (1)

By mid June, Willingdon had yet to arrange a date for his 'good gathering of Princes' representatives'; he was keener to transmit news of growing Indian Liberal suspicions of Hoare: 'they don't seem to have very much confidence in you'. Sapru's suspicions were rather directed towards the Muslims whom he thought had come to regard Federation merely as a face-saving formula, and the Government of India where he believed that Hailey and fellow Governors supported Provincial autonomy on the assumption that Federation would then 'recede into the background'. But ultimately Hoare too came to be regarded as a broken reed who would bypass the question of central responsibility by imposing impossible conditions for the inauguration of Federation.

Disillusion among Indian Liberals would inevitably undermine what resolve remained in the Princes' camp. Gloomy prognostications reached Sapru from his Gwalior correspondent:

'I am expecting another pitched battle between Patiali and Bakana as a result of incitement offered to the latter by the Political Department. If this does occur within the next week or two, I shall feel confirmed in my suspicion that the move is to bury Federation once and for all'. (6)

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 12th June, 1932, T.P. (1), 5, p. 152. Willingdon finally settled on 29th August for his Princes' conference and once more requested guidance on policy and agenda. See Willingdon to Hoare, 10th July, 1932, ibid., p. 165.
3. Willingdon to Hoare, 19th June, 1932, ibid., p. 156.
5. Sapru to Maksar, 3rd July, 1932, ibid., H75.
Sapru bitterly concurred:

'as regards Federation I hear the feeling is that it is entirely out of the question as Hyderabad and smaller Chiefs are opposed to it and so are the Muslims and those Princes who agree with the Indian Liberals cannot turn the scale'. (1)

Willingdon played down Liberal disaffection: he represented that the resignation of Sapru and Jayakar in July from his Consultative Committee would have little affect in British India where Sapru’s influence was slight, but he did concede that it would affect the Princes in view of Sapru’s considerable standing with them.

More ominously the Viceroy continued to stall on the Federal issue; his meagre response to the graphic criticisms levelled at the Political Department in the Spring was a nebulous undertaking, made some four months later, that he would 'be able to do something on this matter before too long', along the lines suggested, 'namely putting young fellows who are good over the heads of the older ones who are too easy-going'. The manifestly anti-Federal activities of Willingdon’s Chancellor, the Jam Sahab, in London during the summer, described by Hakkar as 'a dirty game played at the bidding of Leslie Scott and Bushbrook Williams', brought a confession of 'distress' from the Viceroy but he dismissed these as a reaction to grievances relating to the Nawabgarh Ports case.

The Davidson Committee Report published at the end of July, understandably in view of the extraordinarily heterogeneous nature of States’ liabilities and immunities, proposed a policy of 'give and take' concerning Federal finance. As put by the Report,

3. Willingdon to Hoare, 25th July, 1932, ibid., p. 171. 'easy-going in this context emerges as a recurring phrase in Willingdon's correspondence'.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 10th July, 1932, T.P.(1), 5, p. 166. For a discussion of the Nawabgarh Port Case, see chapter 2, pp. 232-236.
wherever it is proposed to remit an existing cash contribution or to give credit for the cession of territory, the value of any privilege or immunity enjoyed by the State in question should be set against the proposed remission or credit. (1)

The text of this immensely detailed Report meandered from States' 'Cash Contributions', through 'Ceded Territories', 'Miscellaneous Contributions', to 'Salt', 'Sea Customs and Ports', and finally dried up on 'Miscellaneous Immunities'. The culmination of this painstaking exercise was an essentially negative conclusion:

'We have found it impossible to make recommendations providing for a uniform distribution of benefits and burdens either between the States and British India or between the States themselves'. (3)

But there was a good deal in the recommendations to gratify Princes who benefitted from specific proposals notably on the assessment of 'tributes', 'ceded territories', 'salt'. These went some way towards meeting old grievances; in the area of 'sea customs and ports' the suggested compromise was not unreasonable. In the sense that the Report recommended individually tailored arrangements with each State,

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2. Ibid., cols. iii-vii.
3. Ibid., p. 179.
4. Here the Report recommended an immediate relief calculated to approximately Rs 12 lakhs a year. See Ibid., p. 172.
5. Here the Report recommended the following annual credits:- Baroda 22.98, Gwalior 11.78, Indore 1.11, Sangli 1.10, (all Rs in lakhs). See Ibid., p. 173.
6. In the case of Kathiawar and Cutch, it was recommended that all existing restrictions on the manufacture and marketing of salt should be removed. See Ibid., p. 174.
7. In this specially sensitive area, the Report recommended an arrangement under which Maritime States would retain the duties on goods imported through their own ports for consumption by their own subjects. See Ibid., p. 176.
8. As the Report put it: 'we find that the financial adjustment with the States must take the form of a separate settlement with each State on its entry into Federation'. See Ibid., p. 179.
it allowed enormous scope for vacillation, so much the forte of
congenitally hesitant Princes. The Report also endorsed the
preservation of
‘certain immunities and privileges which a number of States will
continue to enjoy without making an equivalent contribution in
return’.

These last were not ungenerous provisions and the Report estimated that
they would impose on Federal revenues

‘an ultimate gross burden of approximately Rs 1 crore per annum
additional to that borne by the central revenues of the Government
of India today’. (1)

Predictably, Davidson's findings attracted waspish comment from the
Delhi administration:

‘The Foreign and Political Department holds no brief for the
Davidson Committee's proposals in regard to tributes, ceded
territories etc. .... in the absence of an alternative scheme,
there has been an increasing tendency to regard the Committee's
Report as an inspired document to canonise J. C. C. Davidson’. (2)

Willingdon's immediate response to the Report ran that 'it ought to
give a good deal of satisfaction to the Princes'. He sought to keep
the onus for marrying the States and British India with Hoare:

'it does seem to me that you over in London will have to suffer the
discomfort of trying to bring British Indians and Princes together
on the question of their Federal share of responsibility'. (4)

By mid August, the Viceroy was casting around for a face-saving exit to
the Federal scheme:

1. Ibid.
2. See 'Views of the Government of India on the Recommendations of the
Davidson Committee as regards the Ceded Territories'. C.R.R.
8/1/30/14 (c) 1934, p 7.
4. Ibid.
'Since the production of the Davidson Report the position politically has changed a good deal. The Princes are naturally very cock-a-hoop about the document; on the other hand British Indians are beginning to scratch their heads and consider whether Federation is going to be for them too expensive a luxury after all. What seems to me inevitable is, as we have suggested, that there must be a Conference over in London where Princes and British Indians must be represented besides our own representatives from Parliament, and that these two parties must be brought face to face to deal with the practical matters connected with the Federation. I quite appreciate that the result of this might be to bring Federation to an end; but I feel that the onus of responsibility should come upon one of these two parties and that the Indians, at all events, would not be able to say that the responsibility for the crash came upon H.M.G. or the Government of India.' (1)

All in all, Davidson's Indian tour and his findings served to reinforce suspicions about the will and capacity of the Government of India, from Willingdon down, to contribute positively to the framing of a workable Federal constitution. Indeed, Davidson had exposed a fine network of official obstruction and veiled hostility to Federation, the consequences of which, in the longer term, would be critical.

1. Willingdon to Hoare, 14th August, 1932, ibid., p. 177.
The Third Round Table Conference and the Emergence of the White Paper
The prospect of reassembling a Round Table Conference did not appeal to Hoare: he had previously warned MacDonald that

'the meeting of a big semi-public body like the Federal Structure Committee might gravely disquiet Parliament'. (1)

Hoare favoured private consultations with a few selected Indians

'and more formal meetings with them at the stage of the Standing Committee of both Houses'. (2)

By this stage Hoare had little interest in placating Indian opinion:

'no doubt the Indians who will not be invited to come over will complain of our having sidetracked the F.T.C. But they will complain whatever we do and it seems to us much more important to show decision and the power of action'. (3)

Initially, Willingdon 'entirely agreed' on the Joint Select Committee stage in the Reforms as the appropriate moment to involve Indian opinion; but he almost immediately reverted to the demand for a prior convocation in London and Hoare very reluctantly agreed to receive 'a limited number' of States' representatives there.

This last example of Viceregal volte face, taken with Davidson's revelations, moved Hoare to communicate to the Prime Minister his doubts about Delhi:

'I am getting some curiously inconsistent advice from India upon almost every important issue'. (6)

1. Hoare to MacDonald, 12th May, 1932, T.P. vii: i.

2. Hoare was obsessed by the need to conciliate Parliament; as he stressed to the Prime Minister, 'the great advantage of the Joint Select Committee will be that the British Parliament and Indians will be sitting together and we shall therefore not have the constant suspicions of Parliament against what appears to be a constituent assembly sitting outside its purview'. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. Hoare to Willingdon, 9th June, 1932, T.P. (i), 2, p. 337.

6. Hoare to MacDonald, 3rd September, 1932, T.P. (o), vii:i. It is questionable how much interest MacDonald now took in Indian affairs. He relayed a long letter from the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, unopened, to the India Office, perhaps through protocol, but more likely through indifference. See MacDonald to Hoare, 6th September, 1932, Ibid.
Willingdon's current contradictory attitude to Paramountcy led Hoare to reflect on

'the sudden vicissitudes through which he and his Government pass ..... it all shows how very uncertain is the hand that drives the Government machine'. (2)

Both Baldwin and MacDonald endorsed Hoares' strictures: as Baldwin told Hoare,

'I had a long talk with the P.M. His first reaction is the same as mine was. He thinks nothing of Willingdon's judgement'. (3)

It now fell to Hoare to prod his shaky partner in Delhi into action:

'it is essential for us to know that the Princes are prepared to come into the Federation upon some such lines as we are sketching to you'. (4)

Hoare was sharply critical of the Viceroy's pessimism which assumed that an unfavourable financial climate would negate Davidson's findings favourable to the Princes:

'it would surely be a calamity if the Princes are, at the outset of the discussions, frightened off Federation altogether'. (5)

Hoare particularly deplored the conduct of Willingdon's protege, the Jam Sahib, in London; his 'iniquitous' attempts to incite Chamber Princes to 'blackmail' the British Government on Federation; his lobbying of most of the Cabinet with Leslie Scott-inspired memoranda. (6)

1. As Hoare explained this, Willingdon 'had come near to selling the pass' on the Paramountcy issue in casual conversation with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. In stark contrast, Hoare had received a Viceregal telegram 'saying that when he meets the Princes in a week or two's time he intends to take up a position that can only be described as a good deal more rigid than anything that we have contemplated here'. Ibid.

2. Hoare to MacDonald, 3rd September, 1932, T.P.(o), viii. Hoare listed a number of other examples of Willingdon's 'gross inconsistency' concerning service salary cuts and the appointment of Governor of Burma. Ibid.


5. Ibid.

In urging the Viceroy to isolate the Jam Sahib from major Princes, Hoare indirectly revealed the mechanism for monitoring inter-State exchanges:

'it will be splendid if you can mobilise the big States against him. From the correspondence that we have intercepted it looks as if Bikaner, Patiala, to say nothing of the big States, are not prepared to go the whole way with him'. (1)

Willingdon sought to explain away his 'old friend's' conduct:

'got into the hands of that horrid little fellow Rushbrook Williams'

and Sir Leslie Scott: the Jam Sahib was already allegedly in hot water with the other Princes. With the Viceroy's long-awaited gathering of Princes at Simla on 20th September, came his opportunity to wax sanguine on Federal prospects:

'I am much inclined to think that they are getting more and more amenable to a reasonable solution of the whole Federal problem'. (3)

But the unsuitability of this gathering as a barometer of opinion was underlined by Lothian who remarked on the unrepresentative nature of the Conference, Kutchwar and the Gujerat States with important maritime interests being without delegates. (4) Privately, the Dewan of the most progressive State was profoundly pessimistic:

'as regards the All-India Federation, I fear it is receding further and further into the distance. I am beginning to wonder if the British Government really want it to materialise'. (5)

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1. Hoare to Willingdon, 9th September, 1932, [ibid.], p. 413.
2. In attempting to reassure Hoare, Willingdon emphasised what he represented as the isolation of the Jam Sahib. His fellow-Rulers were 'all in a state of fury .... and say that under the rules of the Chamber of Princes, he has got no business at all to deal with all these questions over in London, because he delegated his powers to the Pro-Chancellor'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 19th September, 1932, T.P. (1), 6, p. 188.
5. Ismail to Sapru, 3rd August, 1932, Sap.P., 2190, 1.86.
Since nothing of real substance was resolved in discussions with the Princes, Willingdon felt at a temporary loss to maintain his spurious optimism; the results of the conference had been 'rather unsatisfactory'.

Something of Hoare's chagrin may be gathered from the fact that one week later, despite the absence of any fresh and weighty evidence, Willingdon resumed a splendidly optimistic tack: as to the Princes' intentions, 'I feel quite sincerely that they are really anxious to join the Federation'.

The only positive outcome of the Princes' conference was the Ruler's proposal to send Ministers over to represent them at the Third Round Table Conference, 'business people with a really practical knowledge of affairs', stated Willingdon with enthusiasm: the Viceregal tone became more muted when it was realised that the list submitted represented by and large the Chamber of Princes, an organisation which by now had become offensive to the Viceroy, 'a most useless and ineffective institution'. Willingdon recovered his breezy style in transmitting the final list of Princes' representatives for the Conference, 'men who will, I believe, be helpful and quite likely to come into the Federation'. No doubt Hoare took this with a pinch of salt and having met the Dewans in London, the Secretary of State took up a much less hopeful tone:

1. Willingdon stated that a formula of sorts had been reached on Paramountcy but next to no progress had been made on Federal finance and representation. See Willingdon to Hoare, 26th September, 1932, T.P.(1), 6, pp. 190, 1.

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 3rd October, 1932, ibid., pp. 193, 4. In a somewhat fanciful explanation, Willingdon ascribed the Princes' apparent stickiness on Federation to a dislike of 'being bossed by Bikaner and Bhopal'.

3. Willingdon went on to describe it as 'merely an exaggerated debating society, which gives opportunities for Bikaner, Bhopal and others to blow off steam in long speeches and to pass resolutions which no State need ratify'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 3rd October, 1932, ibid., pp. 193, 4.

4. See Appendix 4. The Indian States' Representatives together with their Staff considerably outnumbered their fellows on the British Indian side.

'it looks to me as if there will be great difficulty in getting any of the Ministers here up to scratch. The Ministers whom I have seen tell me that they have explicit instructions not to commit their Rulers too far'. (1)

Hoare predicted trouble over the size of the Chambers: Hydari, representing the key State of Hyderabad, pursuing 'some very rigid instructions against the increase in the numbers'. This climate of uncertainty contributed to the 'extremely jumpy attitude of the Conservative rank and file'.

The suspicion grew that the Princes would run interminable and futile arguments over Chamber size and allocation of seats as a plausible means for delaying decision. Hoare gloomily reviewed the open clash between States' representatives with the Conference under way:

'the medium sized States for big Chambers, the big States for small Chambers .... Hydari and Mirza appear to be rigid against big Chambers with equal representation for individual States, and I do not believe that they will move from their position'. (5)

The occasion demanded that Hoare endeavoured, in private, to talk the Ministers round towards an agreement; he himself favoured smaller Chambers, but he sensed that the Dewans were too far apart.

Evidence of some solid progress was required to sustain Indian Liberal morale: both Sapru and Jayakar told Hoare of their fear 'that the Princes would hold up Federation indefinitely and that if Provincial Autonomy was established in the meantime, they would never get either Federation or a change at the Centre'. (7)

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 536.
However much the merits of Federation were being publicly paraded at the Conference, indications persisted that the old concept of the Two Indias remained very much alive. On a relatively isolated occasion when some Princes did interest themselves in British Indian politics, Hoare received aggrieved representations from the Aga Khan:

'the Moslems are extremely indignant with Alwar, Bikaner and Bhopal for the part they have played in regard to the Allahabad Unity Conference...... he and his colleagues want to make it clear that they think it most objectionable that these Princes should be interfering in British Indian affairs in this way and I am bound to say that I sympathise with them'. (1)

Willingdon's tart rejoinder was extremely hostile to the Princes' initiative:

'if these gentlemen are always squealing to us that we must keep our Congress folk from contaminating their subjects, they had better not take part in Congress discussions because their argument - if they do - falls entirely to the ground'. (2)

In all, the Third Round Table Conference sat from 17th November to 24th December, 1932, five long weeks for Hoare who confessed himself to be in a raging hurry to wind it all up in case the spate of protesting telegrams from India resulted in the withdrawal of the Indian delegates. With a distinct sense of relief, Hoare informed the Viceroy of very good feeling at the end. Everybody, even Indian Liberals, when once they were told that they could put in memoranda about their individual views seemed happy.

'The States' Representatives were particularly pleased as also were the Moslems'. (4)

4. Ibid., p. 566.
It may be that the States' Ministers rejoiced in being tied to few precise undertakings. Hoare, himself, winding up the discussions on Christmas Eve, could sum up the Conference results only in the most nebulous fashion, which owed something to the style of Ramsey MacDonald:

"we have delimited the spheres of activity of the various parts of the Constitution. Secondly, and I regard this as much more important than even that important first result, we have I believe created an esprit de corps amongst all of us that is determined to see the building that is going to be reared upon the field that we marked out both complete in itself and completed at the earliest possible date". (1)

There was scant evidence of any agreement on details. Under Head A which dealt with the size of Federal Legislatures, the Report confirmed that 'no final decision proved possible in the Conference on this question'. (2) Under Head B which dealt with Legislative Relations between the Federal Centre and the Units, the Report confessed that

"the Secretary of State for India was unable to make a final pronouncement at that stage, but stated that the Government was fully alive to the great cleavage of opinion on the subject". (3)

Nor did the group which met to consider the form of States' Instruments of Accession achieve any immediate breakthrough.

In only one area did the Conference record any real success and Hoare dwelt on this for the Viceroy's benefit:

"we did a good piece of work in getting the States for the first time to state definitely that they would undertake obligation for Federal taxation". (5)

1. Indian Round Table Conference (Third Session), Cmd. 4238, 1933, pp. 138, 9.
2. Ibid., p. 15. The Raja of Sarila gave vent to an unequivocal exposure of the stalemate reached regarding the allocation of Indian States' seats in the concluding discussions: 'the Princes have failed to come to an agreed solution .... indeed there is no hope of an agreement being reached among them in this respect'. Ibid., p. 96.
3. Ibid., p. 21.
4. This body concluded that 'it was considered desirable that in due course the skeletal draft of an Instrument of Accession should be discussed between the Viceroy and the representatives of the States'. Ibid., p. 69.
5. Hoare to Willingdon, 28th December, 1932, T.P.(1), 2, p. 566. The Relevant report of the Committee on Federal Finance ran: 'provided a satisfactory yield from taxes on income is permanently assigned to the Federation, the States' representatives agree to assume liability for Corporation tax on the expiration of the period of x years'. See Cmd. 4238, p. 51.
This advance was publicised energetically by Hydari who was interested in dispelling the notion that the States would run out on Federation. (1) But it is scarcely surprising that a general uneasiness prevailed regarding the Princes' bona fides and Sankey, the Lord Chancellor, took the trouble to preface his address, the final speech to be heard at the Conference, with a melodramatic appeal to the Princes' representatives:

'I know your difficulties, I know that you are acting on instructions, but I should like to say to you that there is only one thing which can dim the lustre of the wise and patriotic statesmanship of the Princes, and that one thing is delay .... Gentlemen of the States, India is calling, you have put the cup to her lips, do not delay her drinking it!' (2)

At one time Sapru, so prominent an architect of Federation, would have been much moved by such an appeal. The Conference proceedings, however, had exploded his hopes:

'I cannot say that the Princes have played the game as I expected them to. The result will be further estrangement between British India and the States', (4) he complained to Haksar. With a keen sense of disillusion, Sapru mulled on the practical difficulties of working with Princes who 'seem to me to be justifying the official view, that they are speaking with double voices, with one to us and with another to the Government. The whole thing is a sickening business'. (5)

The nebulous results of the final Round Table Conference served, above all, to underline the infinite capacity of the States' representatives to dissemble and prevaricate.

1. Hydari assumed the mantle of statesmanship and self-sacrifice in reminding the Conference that "when we came down to what have been called 'brass tacks' ... have we not shown courage in accepting a tax which was very odious to the Indian States and agreeing that that tax should be made a Federal source of revenue." See Cmd. 4235, pp. 97, 8.
2. Ibid., p. 147.
3. Earlier in the year Sapru had waxed enthusiastic about the Princes' support for Federation. See Sapru to Thompson, 28th May, 1932, F.T.P.
4. Sapru to Haksar, 9th December, 1932, Sap.r, 2190, H105. See too Sapru's note on Federation, 17th October, 1932, ibid., H100.
5. Ibid.
The next immediate task for Hoare lay in mapping out a White Paper for the consideration of the Parliamentary Joint Committee. To secure the States' allegiance to Federation, Hoare now felt that Hydari, 'who had behaved so excellently' throughout the late Conference, was the key figure and that, as a Federal incentive, the Berara question should be finally settled. The well-tried device of dangling fresh honours before the Mizam, 'if he is inclined to play up over Federation', was mooted. The Mizam, equal to any effrontery, intimated through Hydari that he wanted to be a king, a proposition that Hoare was prepared to countenance though he recognised that 'the King would be very sticky about it'. It was left to a scandalised Viceroy to point out, with some justice, that the Mizams were never hereditary monarchs but rather officials ruling in the name of an Emperor. Hoare's planning took careful account of the primacy of Parliament's wishes. On the size of Chamber issue, a major sticking point, Hoare calculated that not only would the major States reject enlarged Chambers,

'I am also certain that, whatever we put into the White Paper, Parliament will revert to something like the numbers of 200 and 300. This being so we must somehow get Bikaner and his friends to drop the idea of big Chambers'.

1. Issued as Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, March, 1933, Cmd. 4268.


3. Hoare to Willingdon, 9th December, 1932, ibid., p. 556.

4. Hoare to Willingdon, 28th December, 1932, ibid., p. 569.

5. Willingdon found a second sensible objection in the practical difficulties of fitting a 'kingdom' into an already anomalous Federation of democratic provinces and semi-sovereign and protected States. See Willingdon to Hoare, 29th January, 1933, ibid., 6, p. 238.

6. Hoare to Willingdon, 28th December, 1932, ibid.
Little cooperation, however, was on offer from Delhi where the Viceroy persisted in projecting an undiminished and unjustified optimism. December 1932 found him 'tearing round the States .... they all seem in very good heart; they all seem ready for Federation, provided of course that their individual entities are absolutely secured'. (1)

The contradiction implicit in these last phrases had not escaped the Viceroy. Rather than become enmeshed in specific Federal negotiations, he speedily returned the buck to the India Office:

'I don't think there is going to be much value in my seeing these Princes on the various points you want me to'. (2)

Was there not some expertise in London after three years of discussions there on the Reforms; in Willingdon's view, the next steps should be based on the forthcoming White Paper. Yet again Hoare was confronted with baffling inconsistencies in the Viceregal position:

'we shall never get agreement among the Princes with regard to their allocation of seats - of that I am perfectly clear':

this consideration did not prevent the Viceroy from urging that 'I am quite sure that they feel bound to come in'. (3)

With little evidence of Federal progress to hand, Willingdon explained that he had been distracted by a severe outbreak of disorder inside Alwar, a serious affair which he had had to monitor and which led eventually to the deposition of the Maharaja. In one of his few and least helpful initiatives, Willingdon suggested opening up Pandora's Box.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 241. Willingdon penned a similar contradictory letter on the following week when due to meet a number of Princes' delegates: there was 'little chance' of their coming together on the size of Chambers, percentage of membership, representation of Princes, 'so I shall ask them if they are satisfied to leave it to H.M.G. and the Secretary of State, and I am definitely assured that in the greater number of cases the reply will be in the affirmative'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 12th February, 1933, ibid., p. 245.
5. See chapter 2, pp. 158-163.
by bartering the promise of a revision of the Salute List in exchange
for the Princes' acceptance of a Federal scheme. The Viceroy
sought to deflect criticism by stressing the Princes' frustrating tactics,
their penchant for bargaining in their own interests as a preliminary
(2) to Federating. In addition one had to contend with Their Highnesses'
centrifugal tendencies; 'they are very difficult to get hold of ......
they are spread out in every direction to such an extent that it is
extraordinarily difficult to get them here together.' (3) Holding
forth in the same sanguine vein, Willingdon brushed aside the anti-
Federal activities of the Jam Sahib; 'I don't think he can stand out
if the others - as I think they will - agree to come in'.

These vapourings did not find favour with Hoare who had his own
difficulties in handling volumes of correspondence from various Maharajas:

'Princes especially ought to look to the Viceroy for personal
dealings'. (5)

A recurring worry for the Secretary of State, given the mercurial style
of Hyderabad politics, was the possible displacement of Hydari, whom
he took to be a pro-Federal influence. Hoare deplored the
degeneration of the Berars negotiations, between Hydari and the Resident

1. Willingdon to Hoare, 22nd January, 1933, ibid., p. 233. Hoare reacted
to this notion with justified scepticism. See Hoare to Willingdon,
2. See Willingdon to Hoare, 5th February, 1933, ibid., p. 240; Willingdon
to Hoare, 12th February, 1933, ibid., p. 245.
4. Willingdon continued to represent the Jam Sahib as the creature of
Rushbrooke-Williams and Sir Leslie Scott. Ibid.
5. Hoare to Willingdon, 3rd February, 1933, ibid., 5, p. 397.
6. Hoare to Willingdon, 12th January, 1933, ibid., p. 587. A major
contribution to current uncertainties in the Hyderabad Government was
the application by a retired I.C.S. official, Sir Frederick Gauntlett,
to the Nizam for employment. Gauntlett had previously held office
as Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, and since retirement in
1929 had found employment as Finance Minister, Patiala State. Hoare
thought him to be 'most unsuitable' for Hyderabad. Ibid.
Keyes, into 'a personal wrangle between these two notorious enemies'.

In reality, the more significant threat to Federation lay in the growing interest shown by the diehard Conservatives in the Princes' intentions:

'the opposition are going to make a great deal of what they claim to be the reluctance of the Princes to join the Federation',

Hoare fretted to the Viceroy:

'if this is so, it makes it all the more important that we should get the Princes along with the least possible delay'. (2)

The following week found Hoare a good deal more alarmed:

'a very formidable attack is being made upon the Government scheme by Salisbury and Winston, and one of the points of which they make the greatest possible use is the allegation that the Federation is a sham Federation and that the Princes are not really coming in. We do, therefore, badly want some outward and visible sign that the Princes are not receding from the position that they have hitherto taken up. The further you can get them, the easier it will be for us here'. (3)

While Hoare, in the course of piloting his mammoth India Bill through Parliamentary shoals, came to show an increasing tendency to jump at shadows, there was no gainsaying the existence of a broad political base at constituency level for the diehard campaign. (4) What previous investigations of this campaign had not revealed is the extent to which the diehard spokesmen capitalised on and indeed connived at the Princes' ambiguous attitude to Federation.

4. Such bodies as the Primrose League, the Women's Unionist Association and the Junior Imperial League were sympathetic to the diehard cause; the more active dissidents established the Indian Empire Society (1930) and the Indian Defence League (1933) to preserve unimpeded British rule in India. The formation and membership of these bodies is discussed in Ghosh, S. C., 'Decision-Making and Power in the British Conservative Party: A Case Study of the Indian Problem, 1929-34', *Political Studies*, vol. xiii, no. 2, 1965, pp. 198-212.
The driving force behind the diehard movement, Sir Henry Page-Croft, in his opening public salvo, identified the Princes as the central figures in the proposed Reforms:

'the sole excuse given for the great revolution was the Princes' desire; yet the Government are now pursuing their policy, even if only half the Princes support the change, and the Princes have been urged by the Lord Chancellor to assent to what was once imagined to be 'their burning desire'.' (2)

In February Page-Croft, successful in the Commons ballot, proposed a motion in favour of the Simon Commission Report; his most telling points focused on the Princes' intentions:

'no one can now doubt that the Princes had given scant consideration to the proposals and did not understand their full implications ... pledges were also made to the House that nothing should be done unless the Princes came in as a body'. (3)

Page-Croft's seconder, suggested that the Princes' enthusiasm for Federation had dipped sharply and spoke of

'a lot of vagueness as to what measure of unanimity there may be among them'. (6)


6. Ibid.
While the motion was defeated, it had attracted 'an exceptionally friendly reception' and, if Page-Croft may be believed, his rhetoric had been lauded by the press generally. The sensitivity of the issue was revealed to the India Office by the large number of Unionist backbenchers who had ignored the Whips and abstained.

A persistent diehard line of attack sought to hold up the Reforms by allowing the Princes further time for consideration. With the emergence of a diehard caucus, the Morning Post, acting as its mouthpiece, argued that the Princes should take several months to mull over the White Paper proposals due in March. This tribune alleged that the basic plank of the Reforms, the presence of a Princely bloc as a stabilising force at the Centre, was in itself a fiction since States' representation would be ministerial:

'neither the British Government nor the Indian Princes themselves can trust too much to the loyalty of the Indian States' Ministers once power is given them in the Federation';

a thinly veiled suggestion that the States' representatives would be beduced by Congressmen in the Assembly. The Princes' formal commitment to Federation was explained away, by the diehard organ, as the product of pressure from the India Office, of

'threatening language towards these good friends of the British connection'.

1. Lord Croft, op. cit., p. 217. Such phrases as 'prolonged ovation', 'frequently deep throated roars of applause' were said to have recurred in the reporting of the speech. Ibid.
2. Lord Croft, op. cit., p. 217. In all there were 245 Unionist abstentions, so the diehard attack had hardly been beaten off in 'comfortable' style as reported in Cross, J. H., op. cit., p. 161.
4. The Morning Post urged that 'a large section of the Indian Princes and their Prime Ministers feel that there is a danger of rushing matters too precipitately ... the opposition of Mr. Churchill and his supporters cannot and should not be ignored. See Morning Post, 20th February, 1933.
5. Ibid.
On the eve of the White Paper's publication, the Morning Post 'Special Correspondent', having been

'in close and intimate touch with the Indian Princes for some 15 months, calculated that only Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Bikaner and Kashmir were at all enthusiastic about Federation'. (1) (2)

In each case some unscrupulous leverage had been brought to bear. An emotional broadside was fired by an anonymous Indian civilian against Hoare and his associates:

'are we going to allow them to force these wonderful Princes and noblemen to commit suicide in return for their unflinching loyalty to the Empire?' (3)

Churchill played the Princes card at an especially tense gathering of the Conservative and Unionist Associations on 28th February; in the face of his claim that unfair pressure had been put upon the Indian Princes to join Federation, Hoare had to give a flat contradiction.

In view of the comparative success of Page-Croft and his associates in reaching backbench Conservative opinion, it was imperative for Hoare to establish a medium of counter-propaganda, and hence the founding of the Union of Britain and India. The driving force behind this organisation, described by Page-Croft as 'perhaps the most ardent of the

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1. Ibid., 20th February, 1933.
2. These alleged pressures were connected with remission of tribute, restoration of territories, seats in the Federal executive, and not least exhumation of skeletons in cupboards. See ibid.
4. Morning Post, 1st March, 1933.
5. See The Times, 23rd June, 1933. Both the U.B.I. and the I.D.L. sought to recruit retired Indian Officials; as Thompson recorded the outcome of the competition, the U.B.I. did best with those more recently retired: 'of Governors and Members of Council who have served under the Montagu/Chelmsford Reforms, we have 26, they have only Lloyd and Jacob'. See Sir J. F. Thompson to Col. R. I. D. Gordon, 12th February, 1932, J.P.T., Private Corr. Bundle E. Initially, however, the Under Secretary of State for India found it 'very difficult to find anyone' willing to join the U.B.I.; two ex-Governors, Goschen and Harcourt Butler refused outright. See Butler, R. A., op. cit., p. 51.
abdicationists', was Sir J. P. Thompson, a retired Indian civilian of high standing with experience in Indian States' affairs. (1) Addressing the India Committee of the House of Commons in the previous December, Thompson set out to counteract diehard accusations: it was only natural that the Princes should carefully weigh the Federal proposals, they were after all in the position of sovereigns, not that of a British titled aristocracy. Thompson could scarcely have been more reassuring to the doubtful: the implementation of Federation would be a long haul and he roundly declared

'no Federation, no responsibility - at any rate for the present .... there can be no question of compelling Princes to come in. The choice is theirs to make and for them alone'. (3)

The diehard lobby hailed the U.B.I. as a vehicle of 'propaganda for 'Yes Men''; it was hinted that Thompson's allegiance had been secured by the offer of the premiership of Rampur State, a canard strenuously denied by Thompson.

While a pro-Federation movement was taking shape on the British scene in India, prospects became steadily more gloomy. Sapru did his best to rouse Bikaner into settling the outstanding questions between the Indian States and British India,

'a united voice can produce a tremendous impression on Congress opinion'. (6)

However Sapru's most intimate correspondent inside the States confirmed the scale of official obstruction to Federation inside India:

2. Address to the House of Commons, 12th December, 1932, J.P.T., File 5. See too Thompson's speech at the Lincoln Diocesan Conference, 27th October, 1932, 'The Peoples of India', J.P.T., Box 13, pp. 11, 12.
3. Ibid.
4. Morning Post, 22nd May, 1933.
5. Ibid., 3rd June, 1933.
'however anxious H.M.G. may be to bring about Federation, the Government of India are not. Indeed I would go further and say that the Government of India are still — and perhaps more than ever — acting to prevent it'.

Haksar further alleged that junior officers of the Political Department, who had honoured instructions issued in 1930 to keep the States out of Federation, were now being awarded with prize appointments. On the eve of the issue of the White Paper, Sapru reflected morosely on the extent to which the cards were stacked against Federation with

'...the diehards, an important section of the Princes, practically the whole of the bureaucracy,'

and even the Indian liberals being ranged against it. Even Sapru's most trusted associate inside the Princely order, Bikaner, had hedged his Federal intentions with doubt.

The White Paper was issued on 15th March, 1933. In British India generally it was widely regarded as a 'damp squib'. Hoare himself could work up little enthusiasm for the document and, having passed the last proofs, he glumly questioned the Viceroy, 'has it been an attempt to square the circle?'. Princes and diehards alike scrutinised with particular care the White Paper's conditions for the inauguration of Federation:

'H.M.G. propose as the condition to be satisfied before the Federal Constitution is brought into operation that the Rulers of States representing not less than half the seats to be allotted to the States in the Federal Upper Chamber shall have executed Instruments of Accession.'

2. Haksar cited the meteoric promotion of MacKenzie, a very junior officer, to Hyderabad, and the elevation of NoNab, another comparative tyro, to A.C.C., Central India. Ibid.
4. Sapru to Haksar, 24rd March, 1933, Ibid., H111.
5. Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, March, 1933, Cmd. 4268.
The White Paper proposed a maximum of 260 Members for the Upper Chamber, of whom 100 would be appointed by the Princes; the Lower Chamber should consist of a maximum of 375 Members of whom 125 should be appointed by the Princes; by no means an ungenerous weightage for the States. Hoare unenthusiastically reviewed a very mixed press reception for the White Paper:

'while The Times and the regional press had taken a sober and reasonable line, the Morning Post, Vail, and Express were positively rabid'. (2)

By contrast, Willingdon's response to the White Paper smacked of his customary unjustified euphoria:

''it seems to me to be a very fine effort on the part of you all at home .... I - always an optimist - am inclined to think it will go a great deal better than we anticipate''. (3)

Since the White Paper had proposed that the Act should first be passed prior to States succeeding, so that the final character of the Federation should be clear to federating Princes, Their Highnesses could now enjoy further scope for procrastination. An opportunity for a public show of irresolution presented itself with the forthcoming meeting of the Chamber of Princes, due to meet on 20th March to consider the White Paper. Willingdon forecast the outcome of these proceedings in a particularly whimsical and contradictory fashion:

'I think you will find that I shall get you my 50 per cent of population and before long my 50 per cent of Indian Princes themselves', (5)

he assured Hoare. The Viceroy went on to say:

'but then remember that I am an optimist and I may be wrong!' (6)

1. Ibid., p. 10.
6. Ibid.
Any degree of confidence on the part of the Viceroy seems misplaced when the composition of the reshuffled Princes' Standing Committee is taken into account. Haksar now despaired of Federation since, Bikaner apart, he appreciated how little influence such lightweight Princes carried either in British or Princely India, he pronounced them to be 'political reactionaries likely to parrot the line propagated by the Political Department'.

The 1933 Session of the Chamber of Princes developed into a fiasco for the India Office and the pro-Federal party generally. A preliminary meeting between Willington and 40 Princes in New Delhi on 14th March proved inconclusive. A further informal meeting on the eve of the conference only revealed, to the satisfaction of the Morning Post, 'a definite cleavage in the Princes' ranks on Federation'. Ominously, the opening session was thinly attended by Princes; 'a sombre dulness pervaded the Chamber': the Viceroy's assurances about the recommendations of the White Paper, which he represented as by no means final with the Joint Select Committee stage to come, were received with 'a cold silence'. A Morning Post editorial went on to allege that bribery was rampant: 'any minister of an Indian State who desires a decoration has only to work for the Federal scheme'.

1. Patiala was to be elected to Chancellor of the Chamber; the Standing Committee numbered Bikaner, Bahawalpur, Dungarpur, Jahalawar, Famine, Rampur, Sangli and Wankaner. See Ramusack, B. N. op. cit., p. 286.
2. Haksar to Sapru, 26th March, 1933, Sep., 2190, H112.
5. Kashmir was too much concerned with internal troubles to attend; Bhopal withdrew permanently from office and the Chamber, soured by mounting negative criticism from within his order. See Sinha, R., op. cit., p. 132.
Key States were to be enticed into the Federation by means of secret concessions; to Hyderabad on the Berars question and to Mysore through cancellation of its tribute. The critical stage of the Conference was heralded by an assault on the adequacy of the safeguards and seat allocation by the Jam Sahib. Willingdon immediately cancelled the next public session of the Chamber to prevent a resolution along these lines being moved. The Viceroy called an emergency private meeting with the Princes and, to the delight of the exceptionally well-informed an unscrupulous Morning Post correspondent, Madhava Rao,

'drew a complete blank. The indeterminate discussion of the Princes will be depressing news to the British Cabinet'. (5)

Willingdon was quite unable to damp down the stormy scenes which took place during the final session of the Chamber on 25th March centering on the Jam Sahib; an unseemly spectacle stage-managed in all probability by the diehard lobby. Ranji launched a ferocious onslaught on Federation which culminated in an expression of 'profound disquiet' over

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1. Morning Post, 24th March, 1933.
2. Ibid., 25th March, 1933.
3. Set for 24th May, 1933, ibid.
4. Madhava Rao had joined the Morning Post staff in 1933 and was most warmly recommended to Patiala by its editor H. A. Gwynne. See Gwynne to Patiala, 15th February, 1934, G.A., MS11. This was unfortunate for Gwynne's standing since Patiala later complained that Rao had extracted considerable sums in connection with his work from the Maharaja. See Gwynne to Patiala, 11th June, 1936, ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. The Morning Post carried the following banner headlines: 'Viceroy Stops Jam Sahib; Scenes at Chamber of Princes: Strong Stand Against Federation'. See Morning Post, 27th March, 1933.
the difficulty of the Crown retaining in future any effective sovereignty (1) in India if the policy of the White Paper were put into action.

The diehards extracted every advantage from these fireworks:

'only the Princes' innate courtesy, diplomacy and their fear of official pressure have prevented the Chamber from passing a formal resolution rejecting the White Paper scheme'. (2)

The Morning Post shrewdly aimed, in the final argument of its hard-hitting leader, at the Government's back benches:

'are Conservatives in this country going to allow themselves to be jockeyed into a measure openly disowned by the very Princes whose alleged demand for it was the only excuse for its inception?' (3)

The Chamber closed its final session

'in an atmosphere of disillusionment, dissatisfaction and distrust...... the scheme of Federation had killed the Chamber'. (4)

Whatever strength the Chamber had possessed as a unifying agent had now drastically waned at the point where the most critical work confronted it. The 1933 session of the Chamber has been regarded, with some justice, as marking the final bankruptcy of the Princes; as Hakaar saw it, the happenings had not been merely 'inconclusive', but rather 'disgraceful'. (5)

1. Leader, 'Is it Cricket', Morning Post, 27th March, 1933. While the Jam Sahib's speech was in great part a wandering rhodomenta, it did contain an impressive reference to the opinion of the noted scholar, Professor Berridale Keith, who had pronounced on the incompatibility of responsible government and safeguards. See letter from Professor A. Berridale Keith, 'Worthless Safeguards', Morning Post, 30th March, 1933.

2. Morning Post, 27th March, 1933, under the headline, 'Strong Stand Against Federation'.

3. Ibid., under the heading 'Is It Cricket'.


5. The Political Department had sought to compensate for the defection of leading States Hyderabad and Beroda and then later Kashmir and Kapurthala through a scheme to enlarge the Chamber by admitting more small Princes. This only sufficed to bring threats of resignation from Bikaner and medium sized States in March 1933. See Ramasaok, R., op. cit., p. 286. Even Patiala as Chancellor came to question the value of an institution so depleted in its ranks and divided in its counsels. See Patiala to Clancy, 2nd February, 1932, cited in ibid.

6. Hakaar to Sapru, 26th March, 1933, ibid., 2190, H112.
Willingdon, faced with the private refusal of the Princes to commit themselves to any aspect of the White Paper, concluded that the proceedings had been 'a waste of time'. The Viceroy passed on a version of these to Hoare which was shot with wild ambiguities, spiced with alternating doubt and optimism. In the course of fruitless discussions, it finally dawned on Willingdon that '75 per cent of the Princes knew nothing whatever about the Reforms Scheme, they really are a very hopeless lot to try and get down to business'.

Nevertheless, Hoare should not read too much into Ranji's speech which had been conceived by 'that wily little scoundrel Rushbrook Williams', who had been promised 'a safe seat by the diehards in Britain if he could succeed in smashing Federation'. The Viceroy went on to say that the Jam Sahib was very much the odd man out among the Princes and that his apparent malevolence was due to mishandling in London on the subject of his Fort case; Willingdon predicted with confidence that 'the Princes would wait for the Act but would come in in sufficient numbers once the Bill was through'.

The manoeuvres of the Jam Sahib, an 'immensely popular' figure in England, were more than an embarrassment for Hoare who confessed to finding Ranji 'shifty and unscrupulous to deal with'.

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2. On the optimistic front, Willingdon's first ploy was to give special representation to the bigger States and count on the rest following on. See Willingdon to Hoare, 20th March, 1933, T.P.(1), 6, p. 262.
5. Ibid., p. 268
source of worry was the extent to which the diehards were exploiting Ranji's opposition:

'indeed Hore made it the principal text of a great part of his speech'. (1)

The sudden death of Ranji fortuitously removed a major piece from the diehard battery. For Willingdon, as the Jam Sahib's political sponsor, this was very definitely an occasion for sadness especially since he connected Ranji's demise with their recent flare-up in the Chamber.

The fact that Ranji had gone 'all wrong with regard to the Princes and Federation' should be put down to the malign influence of the London diehards. Hoare felt less sentimental and hoped that the indebtedness of Nawanagar would now rule out the services of mischievous legal advisers in London. For Hoare, the death of Ranji could offer but temporary respite. The inconclusive outcome of the Third Round Table Conference, several very public demonstrations of irresolution on the part of Their Highnesses, and most ominous, accumulating diehard interest in the Princes' intentions, all combined to prejudice the future of Federation and the India Bill. It would only be a matter of time before the diehard lobby located and brief another Princely spokesman.

1. Ibid. Hore's speech in the Commons was given very full coverage in the Morning Post. He quoted the Jam Sahib at length to 'prove that we have been far too complacent in thinking that the Princes were all the time in the Government's pocket'. See Morning Post, 29th March, 1933. See too Page-Croft's reference to Ranji's 'remarkable speech ... a courageous and definite warning both to his brother Princes and to the British people against the fatal policy which it was sought to impose on India.' Lord Croft, op. cit., p. 245.


3. Ibid.

4. The Morning Post made the most of Ranji's untimely death through an extravagant obituary: 'A Glorious Innings' which lauded Nawanagar as 'a model principality' and praised Ranji's resistance to the notion that British Parliamentary institutions were a suitable addition to the far more ancient tradition of personal sovereignty. See Morning Post, 2nd April, 1933.
The Joint Select Committee and the Diehard Attack
Increasingly, Hoare showed signs of extreme nervousness in connection with a diehard campaign which focussed more and more on the Princes' proposed constitutional role. The mood of the extra-Parliamentary Party gave grave cause for concern:

'the constituencies are far behind the two Houses in their views about India',

and Hoare came to attribute the most extravagant and sinister motives to Churchill:

'at the back of his mind he thinks that not only will he smash the Government but that England is going Fascist and that he, or someone like him, will eventually be able to rule India as Mussolini governs North Africa'.

With the problematic establishment of a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee in April, Hoare entered the most critical stage in the making of the India Act. However much Hoare impressed observers inside the Committee with his apparent coolness and mastery of Indian complexities, at heart he feared for his Bill:

1. See the Manifesto issued to the press by Page-Croft in 11th March, 1933: 'the sole excuse given for this great Revolution was the Princes' desire; yet the Government are now pursuing their policy even if only half the Princes support the change'. Lord Croft, op. cit., p. 231.


3. Finalising the composition of the Committee had been a nightmare task for the Secretary of State. Initially hoping for 6, Hoare had been driven to accept 32; three of the principal diehards, Page-Croft, Churchill and Lord Lloyd electing to stay out and remain unmuzzled, but Lord Salisbury, the single most influential Member of the Lords, headed a team of certainly 5 intransigents. The Chairman elect, Peel, had gone down with phlebitis 90 minutes before the Committee was due to meet. His replacement, Linlithgow, was recruited with difficulty there and then. See Lord Templewood, op. cit., pp. 88, 9; Cross, J. A., op. cit., p. 166.

'I was really nervous about the first meeting. What with avowed opponents such as Salisbury and the ex Pro-Consuls and the procedure experts, I feared that we should get nothing do at all'.

Bearing in mind the very critical mood of Parliament, and the question of the accession of the States, Hoare conceived of a margin of some three years before Federation came into operation.

At this stage, anti-White Paper propaganda accelerated and came to obsess Hoare:

'Churchill has got a lot of money from various sources and the attack is being cleverly organised'.

An especially hard-hitting article appeared in Blackwoods Magazine which denounced the India Bill, making great play with the Federal provisions. States' Members in the Federal Legislatures would be 'in a hopeless minority'; they would have to face a Congress Party

'at deadly enmity with the Rulers of the States .... but now, at a wave of MacDonald's wand, the lion and the lamb will doubtless lie down together'.

In a controversial pamphlet, Page-Croft claimed that

'it is common knowledge that to this day, in spite of desperate attempts on behalf of the India Office, the majority of Princes have not accepted the proposals'.

1. Hoare to Willingdon, 20th April, 1933, T.P. (1), 3, p. 680. The Under Secretary, Lord Butler, remembered the Joint Select Committee proceedings as less tense occasions when the Archbishop of Canterbury and one or two other Members would absent themselves as early as 11.00 a.m. for 'a dock glass of port'. See Butler, R.A., op. cit., p. 50.


5. Ibid., p. 144. In fact the article underestimated the number of seats which the White Paper proposed as the Princes' allocation. See J.P.T., F. 137/6.

6. H. Page-Croft, The Salvation of India, pp. 4, 5, J.P.T., F. 137/6. See too Lord Croft, op. cit., pp. 232, 3. In the manner of its distribution, which was said to be unconstitutional, Page-Croft's pamphlet caused a storm. It was sent to every chairman and delegate of Unionist Associations prior to the Conservative Conference at Birmingham in October, 1933.
Even if sufficient Princes were to federate, the diehards questioned the permanency of their stabilising influence:

'there is no reason to assume that the States representatives will always employ the 'weightage' that may be contrived for them, in the manner desired; or be able to prevent that landslide which the extremists will certainly try to bring about'. (1)

The U.E.I. did attempt to counteract the diehard attack.

J. P. Thompson reassured the Chairman of the Conservative Associations about

'the vital new factor introduced by the Indian Princes ..... Responsible Government at the Centre is an expressed condition of the Princes' acceptance of the preamble of the Federation'. (2)

Given the central importance of the Princes, Hoare feared a diehard initiative which would produce a 'representative' Prince as a mouthpiece, a second Ranji. This ploy emerged with the move to produce Patiala, Ranji's successor as Chancellor, as a witness before the Select Committee. (3)

Hoare and Willingdon agreed to block this under mounting diehard pressure:

'Salisbury is still very suspicious and is convinced that Patiala has many things to tell us that we ought to know'. (4)

The move to press Patiala on the Committee had been initiated by H. A. Gwynne of the Morning Post. Salisbury was interested but shrewdly questioned the Maharaja's constancy:

'I don't doubt that Patiala is very reluctant to accept the White Paper, but the question is whether he would have the nerve to say so'. (6)

4. Ibid. It was symptomatic of Salisbury's ignorance of the hierarchy and general character of Indian Princes that he assumed Patiala to be, despite the Fitzpatrick Enquiry and a mountain of evidence to the contrary, 'the greatest of all Indian Princes' and the spokesman for 'a unanimous body of Indian States'. Ibid.
5. Gwynne to Salisbury, 31st October, 1933, G.P., MS 11.
6. Salisbury to Gwynne, 13th October, 1933, Ibid.
In his breezy fashion, Willingdon approved of the composition of the Joint Select Committee, 'a pretty good lot', and urged the Secretary of State to discount the current effusions of Patiala about safeguards and the testimony of the three witnesses from the Chamber, due to give evidence before the Select Committee in London; they were quite unrepresentative of the Princes as a whole and Patiala's exhortations should be taken 'cum grano salis'. Nevertheless, Hoare was repeatedly pressed by Salisbury and his fellows in Committee to produce Princes before them; Hoare resolved to resist this until it became 'absolutely necessary'. Willingdon, having dismissed Patiala a few weeks before, now admitted that he was 'very much worried' by the Maharaja's activities. The Viceroy came up with a rather unlikely expedient; to head off diehard pressure, he suggested that Salisbury send out an emissary who would be afforded every opportunity to meet Princes'. Hoare ignored this suggestion, beset as he was by a wave of unfavourable publicity attaching itself to leading Princes, at a delicate stage in the passage of the India Bill, legislation which depended to a great extent on the credibility of the Princes as an august and responsibly body.

2. These were P.K. Sen, Sir Nagbool and K.W. Panikkar.
3. Hoare to Willingdon, 30th April, 1933, ibid., p. 289.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 18th June, 1933, T.P.(1), 6, p. 314. The Maharaja had not implemented the fiscal reforms proposed by the British financial minister seconded to his administration and the State was drifting towards bankruptcy. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
At last, the crimes and vices of Alwar had become public knowledge and were much discussed in Britain. A great deal of attention had been focussed through the press on the expensive entourage of young Jaipur, currently in England for the season with his polo team. Hoare, commenting on the vogue to denounce extravagance especially where Indian Princes were concerned, observed wryly:

'people do not readily believe in these times that there are men who can really afford these things'.

As the Joint Select Committee lumbered along, the proponents of Federation found little over which to enthuse. Sapru, a leading witness, was struck by the 'tremendous amount' of diehardsism and signally unimpressed by the Labour Members. Opposition also emanated from the Muslim quarter; their senior spokesmen put forward proposal after proposal which was intended to frighten the representatives of the Indian States. Sapru felt badly let down when the States' Ministers rejected the formula, already agreed to, which would have formalised the previously stated Princes' undertaking to take no part in purely British Indian matters. Increasingly, Sapru feared that the diehards were daily gaining strength and that Baldwin would purchase the solidarity

3. Hoare to Willingdon 9th June, 1933, ibid., p. 725.
6. Sapru to Braj Narain, 2nd June, 1933, ibid., B24. This agreement could have been of critical importance; as Hakasar observed: 'in the absence of your formula, the Viceroy would be able to secure that the States' representatives vote for or against as it suits the British book'. This automatically followed given the increasing number of British officers serving in the States and the extent to which the States were overawed and dominated by the Political Department. See Hakasar to Sapru, 19th June, 1933, Sapra, 2190, B113.
of his party at India's expense. There was something of a silver
lining for Sapru in a very effective cross-examination of Hydari by
Sir Manubhai Mehta which elicited a firm denial of the much quoted
diehard allegation that the Princes had been rushed into Federation in
1930 without realising its implications. But, in general, the
proceedings of the Committee left Sapru feeling 'very tired and discouraged'.

A mark of Sapru's shrewdness was his identification of the key man
in the Committee upon whom to prevail as an ex-Secretary for India, Austen
Chamberlain, 'an honest man', but should he join forces with Churchill,
'there would be a considerable landslide against the Government'.
Hoare too came to regard Chamberlain, in many respects the elder statesman
within Conservative ranks, as the man to pull round waverers and
doubters. By the autumn of 1933, Chamberlain had compiled a
memorandum for circulation within the Committee which laid great stress
on the participation of the States in the Federation; indeed it argued
that 'the proportion of States whose entry is a sine qua non should
be increased'. This found a solid measure of support but
predictably, the White Paper proposals were attacked at length by Lord
Salisbury, almost exclusively on the basis of the Federal proposals;
his cast doubts on the States' firm adhesion to the Federation, drew

1. Strictly Confidential Note by Sapru to the J.S.C., 30th June, 1933,
Sapru, 2189, B118. See too Sapru to Braj Narain, 8th June, 1933,
Ibid., B114.
2. Confidential, Sapru to Braj Narain, 15th June, 1933, Ibid., B115.
3. Sapru to Braj Narain, 8th June, 1933, Ibid., B114.
4. Sapru to Braj Narain, 25th May, 1933, Ibid. Sapru thought
Salisbury to be 'fair-minded, but very ignorant and very Conservative'.
Ibid.
6. Memorandum by Austen Chamberlain, 16th October, 1933, Ibid., 40/2/52.
7. See 'Joint Memorandum and Comments' of Austen Chamberlain, Hon. E.
Cadogan, Lord Eustace Percy and Lord Meldrum, October 1933, Ibid.,
40/2/3.
attention to the anomalous position on income tax of the States and British India, and dwelt on the difficulties surrounding a final distribution of States' seats. Salisbury expressed himself as sensitive to the Princes' grievances appertaining to the arbitrary style of the Government of India; he recommended a return to Simon's Greater Indian Council. Chamberlain did not endorse this retrogressive stance and came to be convinced by Hoare's argument that the proposed constitution, faute de mieux, would work and minimise political friction between Centre and the Provinces; as Hoare put it,

'I would clinch the argument by pointing out how the Centre would be strengthened by the adherence of the Princes'. (3)

Throughout the prolix proceedings of the Joint Select Committee, Chamberlain retained two aims; the establishment of smaller Chambers; 'I am sure there is danger in collecting many idle hands at Simla and Delhi', and the introduction of indirect election for the Centre.

On this latter issue Chamberlain succeeded, leading as he did a majority of the Committee. It became clear to Hoare, following his detailed examination at the hands of Salisbury and Chamberlain, that Chamberlain could be accommodated in his twofold demand; it was the matter of the Princes' intentions regarding Federation, Hoare confided to the Viceroy, which represented 'our most exposed ground'. In the strongest terms, Hoare pressed Willingdon,

2. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Hoare to Chamberlain, 12th June, 1934, ibid., 40/1/49.
5. The Committee generally had expressed strong feelings against direct elections and none more so than the next Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland. See Zetland to Chamberlain, 14th April, 1934, ibid., 40/1/3a. Hoare was surprised to find among this vociferous majority the principal labour representative, Major Attlee. See Hoare to Willingdon, 3rd November, 1933, T.P.(d), 3, p. 857.
6. Hoare to Willingdon, 3rd August, 1933, ibid., p. 768.
'to give your very personal and immediate attention to the best way of dealing with Princes ... it is the question above all others that will influence people like Austen'. (1)

Hoare relayed to Delhi the majority Committee's strong preference for small Federal Chambers, adding his own support, but on this issue found Willington less than receptive:

'it is only the three or four big States that want reduced numbers, and we must consider the States as a whole'. (2)

With little support from Delhi, Hoare battled on, beset as he was by 'the intrigue with Salisbury and the Morning Post' whose agent 'seems to have promised Patiala to get him over to London somehow or another'. (3) Hoare urgently required something concrete on the Princes' intentions and he pressed the Viceroy to pursue them in their respective States:

'I much hope that the Political Agents are succeeding with the Princes in getting more definite opinion out of them as to the number and allocation of seats in the Federal Assembly'. (4)

As the proceedings of the Joint Select Committee unfolded, the eventual character of Federation did not become noticeably clearer: an unexpected bombshell, in the form of a demand for the right of secession, was sprung upon Hoare by the witness for Bikaner. Hoare intervened at once to rule out this contention

'but it all left a nasty taste and it gave Salisbury and his friends an opportunity for blaspheming and for claiming that the Federation meant nothing at all'. (6)

Hoare felt that the way forward was to concentrate on the major States, in the case of Hyderabad and Mysore the Berars and Bangalore disputes.

1. Hoare to Willington, 3rd August, 1933, T.P.(i), 3, p. 768.
3. Hoare to Willington, 3rd August, 1933, ibid.
5. This very large claim was tacked onto 'a long rigmarole to show that the Chamber of Princes had included it in one of their demands'. See Hoare to Willington, 20th October, 1933, ibid., p. 817.
6. Ibid.
could be used as bait to federate; he concluded with feeling,

'it is most important to bring in these States .... the diehards here are exploiting to the full the indefinite position of the Princes'. (1)

In his bland style, Willingdon resisted the pressures from the India Office; regarding the Princes' position,

'we are pushing on with the enquiry as quickly as we possibly can'. (2)

The Viceroy opposed the move to placate the big Princes:

'that is a position which I'm sure you will agree is quite impossible for us to agree to, for we must try to come to some happy compromise and, after all, the smaller Princes are very large in numbers and must be given full consideration'.(3)

Yet Willingdon could recognise that the strength of Hoare's anxieties required some sort of positive move, and he promised an immediate personal tour of Hyderabad and Mysore to 'see if I can't square them with regard to the allocation of seats'. (4) It typified Willingdon's habitual ambivalence that he coupled this apparent initiative with a dire warning:

'if Hyderabad and Mysore are both anxious for the smaller Chamber - which I fear you approve - then they may stick their toes in, and, if the smaller Chamber is the result of the Committee's decisions, I am certain that all those whom we have already got in will go back on their present promise'. (5)

Willingdon's subsequent report on Hyderabad suggested that, unlike Harcourt Butler, he had seen little of the real Hyderabad: he found the Nizam,

'in very good form .... I was very much impressed with the wonderful developments that have taken place in Hyderabad';

3. Willingdon to Hoare, 9th October, 1933, ibid., p. 375. In this, the Viceroy was required to stand out against the 'unqualified confidence in Ryderi' demonstrated by Hoare and his colleagues in London. See Hoare to Willingdon, 3rd August, 1933, T.P.(1), 3, p. 771.
5. Ibid.
6. See chapter
and in the matter of federal bait, the Berars negotiations were likely to terminate satisfactorily. Any comfort for Hoare here was tempered by the anticipation, as it happened a correct one, that

'Winston and his friends will say that we have been bribing the Nizam to come into Federation'.

Progress in negotiating federal douceurs was less advanced at Nysore where the tribute and the Bangalore cantonment were the subject matter; but again Viceregal optimism prevailed, 'Nysore will come into the Federal scheme'. By the end of his tour of the Southern States, Hyderabad, Nysore, Travancore and Cochin, the Viceroy felt able to congratulate himself, in his quixotic way, on 'a considerable success though very trying'.

Faced with sustained and well-founded attacks from the diehard quarter, Hoare was in need of something more substantial than sanguine forecasts. On the Viceroy's own admission, the Chamber of Princes had declined in importance to the extent that its annual meeting due in March 1934, had to be postponed owing to the unlikelihood of securing a quorum. As Hoare put it this had

'the disadvantage of leaving the Committee without any indication, however vague, of the general attitude among the Princes to the Federation'.

Further bad news emanated from India with a depressing on-the-spot appraisal of Federal prospects which reached Baldwin from one of his

2. Hoare to Willingdon, 1st December, 1933, T.P.1, 3, p. 925.
3. Willingdon to Hoare, 8th December, 1933, T.P.1, 7, p. 427.
5. Willingdon to Hoare, 30th January, 1934, ibid., p. 453. Willingdon complained afterwards that he had been kept completely in the dark by Patiala about the paucity of Princely support for the Chamber. See Willingdon to Hoare, 5th March, 1934, ibid., p. 479.
most active backbenchers associated with the U.B.T.:  

'Federation is a very long way off. The Princes say one thing to those in high places and exactly the reverse to all of us. I do not believe there is a single Prince now who wants to come in'. (2)

Somewhat surprisingly, Cazalet failed to locate the opposition to Federation within the Political Department, 'the hardest-headed conservative Political Officer has no more use for Winston Churchill than he has for Gandhi'.

It may be that the diehard campaign had now outgrown Churchill's bombast; J. P. Thompson noted a disconcerting concentration on the Government's most vulnerable ground, Federation, and less reliance on Churchill. A British textile magnate was said to have solicited Patiala's support against the Federal scheme. In this connection, Hoare noted with alarm a novel twist to diehard tactics, the imminent departure for an extensive tour in India of Colonel Courtauld,

'an extreme diehard. As a director of the Morning Post he has gone mad dog over the White Paper. He makes no secret of the fact that his visit is with the intention of getting ammunition against the White Paper and of persuading the Princes not to join the Federation'. (7)

The moving force behind the diehard mission was H. A. Gwynne, editor of the Morning Post. For him, the Princes were the men who counted:

3. Ibid., p. 204.
7. Ibid.
'when I came to examine the Indian question',

he wrote to Courtauld,

'I realised quite quickly, as, indeed you did, that the key to the whole position was in the hands of the Princes, and that, if we could make them turn it the right way, the "White Paper would have to be considerably modified to suit their and our views'. (1)

The Morning Post's Indian agent, Madhava Rao, who had an established reputation for intrigue between the Morning Post and discontented Princes, had been detailed to organise Courtauld's tour:

'it is to be centred upon Patiala, where he is convinced that he can persuade the Maharaja to come out against Federation'. (2)

The Viceroy received this disturbing news with customary urbanity:

'we will, I promise you, take all necessary steps to try and prevent him creating any mischief. I think probably the best thing I can do is to invite him here and keep him under my wing'. (3)

As the full import of the Courtauld mission sank in, Willingdon stirred himself to call in Patiala and remind him of his pro-Federal stance taken at the First Round Table Conference. 'I rather think I frightened him'. (4) The Viceroy also came to realise that direct intervention in States' affairs by the diehards in this way might well reflect on his own stewardship, and he undertook to deliver a stiff dressing down to Courtauld and his companion Viscount Lymington:

'I shall tell them what I feel strongly, that to come over here and try to use this country for their political propaganda at home is the most scandalous thing I have ever heard politicians do since I have been in public life'. (5)

3. Willingdon to Hoare, 13th February, 1934, T.P.(4), 7, p. 459. In practice, this was not easy to arrange. Having undertaken to button-hole Courtauld, prior to his visit to Patiala, Willingdon was told that 'Courtauld is determined to keep right away from Government House or officials'. See Willingdon to Hoare, ibid., p. 479.
4. Willingdon to Hoare, 20th February, 1934, ibid., p. 466. Willingdon came to despair of Patiala, surrounded as he was by 'a lot of intriguing people; he is such a stupid man that I am afraid we shall never get anything practical out of him'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 27th February, 1934, ibid., p. 474.
5. Lymington, Viscount, Gerard Vernon Wallop; M.P. (Unionist; Basingstoke since 1929; eldest son of the 8th Earl of Portsmouth.
From a Viceroy in the Curzonio mould this might have been reassuring; but predictably, Willingdon did not succeed in overawing the diehard (1) deputation.

There was little here to sustain Hoare who was currently in difficulties with the Select Committee in combating the very plausible suggestion that, in view of the scale of States' exemptions and the intricacies of their treaty positions, there was not sufficient Federal content in the White Paper proposals, to make Federation a reality. In addition, it now fell to Hoare to defend his political life as Churchill brought a breach of privilege case against the Secretary of State for India. This was a distracting thrust which greatly embittered Hoare particularly against the Churchill family.

1. As Willingdon related the style of the confrontation: 'I had a very frank conversation with them and told them exactly what I felt and, further, exactly what I was sure would happen in this country if the diehards got their way. Whether I impressed them at all I am not quite sure'. Willingdon to Hoare, 13th March, 1934, ibid., p. 485.

Courtauld and Lymington appear to have varied in their individual reservations as to the Reforms but both shared an undiluted antipathy to Federation. Courtauld struck the Governor of Bombay as 'very vague'; but Lymington appeared 'much more reasonable', and his line seems to be definitely to agree to Provincial Autonomy, even including the transfer of law and order, but to stop Federation at any price'. See Ernbourne to Hoare, 26th March, 1934, T.P.4, viii:4, p. 77.


4. 'I do not know which is the more offensive or more mischievous, Winston or his son', Hoare reflected maliciously to an associate. 'Rumour, however, goes that they fight like cats with each other and chiefly agree in the prodigious amount of champagne that each of them drinks every night'. Hoare to Stanley, T.P.4(1), 4, 1st June, 1934, p. 1072.
The hearings of the Select Committee progressed with more than a hint of horsetrading. Hoare complied with the demands of Chamberlain, Derby, Hardinge and Conservatives generally who were 'almost solidly in favour' of introducing indirect election and smaller Chambers.

In return, Hoare secured the acceptance of the Committee, barring the Salisbury faction, of the principle of responsibility at the Centre and a single Bill dealing with the Centre as well as the Provinces.

These dealings took place in a general atmosphere of Conservative dislike for the Bill which greatly agitated Hoare:

'among the Conservative Members of the Commons there are not 30 who are genuinely keen to go on with the Bill, the great mass is very lukewarm and a very strong minority is actively hostile'. (3)

Hoare used these very real difficulties under which he laboured to move the Viceroy towards an acceptance of unpalatable changes in the White Paper proposals, but Willingdon would not countenance them and fumed against 'Austen C., Derby and their friends' who had evidently refused 'to consider the unanimous view of the Governor-General and his Government and all local Governors'. A bleak forecast followed of the drastic consequences of the Committee's amendments:

'If you reduce the Upper Chamber considerably, you reduce the Princes' allocation of seats, with the result that, I fear, the greater number who agreed to come in on our allocation of 104 will be sure to run out if the allocation is cut down, and this presumably means the finish of Federation'. (5)

1. Hoare to Willingdon, 13th April, 1934, ibid., p. 1030.
2. Ibid., p. 1034.
3. Hoare to Willingdon, 20th April, 1934, ibid., p. 1045. One week later Hoare struck a still more frenetic tone: 'I would say that 9 Members out of 10 are very depressed at the idea that a Bill which is very unpopular with some people and is not popular with anyone should take up practically the whole time of Parliament in a very critical year of the Government's lifetime'. Hoare to Willingdon, 27th April, 1934, ibid., p. 1048.
5. Ibid., p. 506.
As Willingdon projected the future demise of Federation from Simla, the diehard deputation active in the Punjab sought to bury Federation on the spot. Courtauld and Lymington gave generous assurances to the effect that when their associates came to power, as they would do,

'Patiala should receive all such honours and guns that he was disposed to ask for, provided that he would say that he was against the Reforms'. (1)

Willingdon anticipated that these machinations would be reported in detail by the *Morning Post*; the rumoured visit by another party of young diehards incensed the Viceroy:

'evidently they are going to work like beavers to try and defeat us in our purpose; indeed it seems that it is all coming to be a personal matter, for they seem to have an intense desire both to get you out of the India Office and to get me off the saddle at Simla'. (2)

A second diehard embassy did arrive in India in June with one fixed goal, according to the acting Viceroy, 'to wreck the Bill if they possibly can'. (3)

The grossness of the visitors' ignorance of Indian conditions both amused and infuriated Willingdon and he denounced them roundly in the best tradition of 'Tagett M.P.'

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2. Ibid., p. 508. The rumour of a second diehard visitation, emanating from 'a confidential source', reached a well-connected observer in Bengal, the former editor of the *Times of India*: 'there is confident talk here of a small Conservative delegation headed by the *quar* of Huntingdon coming to India after the publication of the Report of the Joint Select Committee with the object of stirring up resistance to it in the Indian States. One member of the deputation is expected to be Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*. Sir Stanley Reed to J. P. Thompson, 6th May, 1934, *J.P.T.*, Bundle 8, Private Correspondence.

3. Stanley to Hoare, 18th June, 1934, *T.P.*(1), 7, p. 522. The diehard emissaries were respectively Capt. E. G. Spencer-Churchill, Unionist candidate at Derby in 1906, and Tynemouth, 1910; Edward Frederick Langley Russell, 2nd Baron Russell of Liverpool 1919, nephew to Stanley and cousin to Hoare, Ibid. Spencer-Churchill was recommended to Patiala by Gwynne on the most curious grounds; 'one of the 70 or 80 men in the world who can understand the *Einstein Theory ... just as interested in the prospect of the Australian Test Matches*'. See Gwynne to Patiala, 25th May, 1934, *J.P.* E 11.
'these are the people who are going back home to try to influence people on the Indian question!' (1)

The outcome of the Courtauld mission was sent to Baldwin and the Viceroy in early May. It took the form of a letter to Courtauld from

'certain Ruling Princes, all members of the Standing Committee, although not ruling the largest States, and men of great influence and prestige'. (2)

Courtauld claimed to have used 'no pressure in obtaining it'. In essence, the Princes' mission declared that the conditions on which they might have been prepared to accept the Federal scheme had not been incorporated in the White Paper; thus, if the Joint Select Committee Report

'does not contain these essential conditions the Chamber of Princes is absolutely free to reconsider its position'. (4)

The India Office experts played down the document in taking the view that

'Major Courtauld and his party have really got remarkably little out of their mission however much they may have had their legs pulled by the adroit people with whom they have been dealing'. (5)

The unrepresentative character of the signatories was stressed.

1. Willingdon recalled an exchange with Spencer-Churchill in which the Viceroy touched on the differences between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins in Madras: Churchill said at once that the non-Brahmins were of course the depressed classes on whose behalf Gandhi had been making a recent crusade. Willingdon observed caustically, 'I would have liked enormously to have been the faces of certain Hindus to whom he might have made a similar remark - I only hope he has done so - Later on one of my A.-D.-Cs was showing him the country around from the terrace and remarked to him that on a fine day it was possible to see the Sutlej and Churchill asked him whether there was much snow on it'. Ibid.

2. Courtaulit to Baldwin, 4th May, 1934, G.B.P., 106, p. 229. The signatories were Patisa, Noorpur, Panna, Jhalar and Bahawalpur. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. W. D. Croft (India Office) to Sir G. S. Fry (Private Secretary to Baldwin since 1923), 11th May, 1934, Ibid., p. 233.

6. The combined population of their States, at a little over 3 millions, was a small fraction of the total States' population which ran to some 80 millions. See Croft Memorandum, G.B. 767/34, Ibid., p. 237.
It was recognised that Patiala and Dholpur in particular carried weight among some medium-sized and smaller States in Central India, Rajputana and the Punjab. But the fact remained that the Rulers of the greatest States had disassociated themselves from the work of the Chamber. It would have been tempting to confront Courtauld with his technique of dangling honours before Patiala and his associates, but this would have prejudiced the position in Patiala of the Viceroy's informant there. Rather, Baldwin was advised, prior to conducting a personal interview with Courtauld which the situation clearly demanded, to decry in a general way the allegedly 'innocent' character of his mission and express surprise that Courtauld should have put himself into the hands of such an unscrupulous publicist as the Morning Post agent, Madhava Rao.

A private dressing-down of Courtauld would do little to dampen down the intensity of diehard propaganda which was bearing fruit. Haksar testified to a climate of growing anxiety and a hardening of opinion against certain of the White Paper proposals. This took its toll of Haksar's morale, and this hitherto staunch advocate of Federation now sought to reserve his position if it became clear that the States might suffer through entry. Sapru, too, had

1. Ibid.
2. These were principally Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Gwalior, Kashmir and Travancore, having a combined population of some 35 millions. Ibid. The restricted nature of the Chamber membership is discussed in chapter 1 pp.
3. This was Patiala's Prime Minister, Liaquat, who had been secretly channelling information to Willingdon. See Willingdon to Hoare, 30th April, 1934, T.E. (1), 7, p. 507.
6. Ibid.
heard from a source in The Times that the original proposals were being watered down in favour of the big States. The diehard campaign moved up a gear with the arrival of Willingdon in London in mid-June. He was greeted by a very offensive leader in the Morning Post, which declared, in Hoare's choleric version, that

'the only reason for his coming to England was to persuade me into agreeing with a ramp for bribing the Princes into Federation by giving several of them more gun salutes'.

The fact that these were precisely the tactics employed by Courtauld, presumably occurred to Hoare when he fulminated against the activities of touring diehards:

'it is really intolerable that ignorant people of this kind should go about India stirring up trouble'.

The particular target of Hoare's bile was the intriguer Madhava Rao who had drawn close to the editor of the Morning Post:

'he seems to have got the dangerous old fool Gwynne completely in his hand'.

The unrelenting hail of abuse from the diehard press left its mark on Hoare as indicated in the increasingly strident style of his correspondence:

'the Morning Post, inspired by Madhava Rao, is sticking at nothing. Day after day it attacks me and sneers at the Viceroy'.

1. Sapru understood, correctly, that the Committee had resolved upon smaller Chambers, 'exactly what Sir Akbar Hydari and others want', and the institution of indirect election in both Houses. See Sapru to Raksar, 8th May, 1934, ibid., K 126. Hoare confirmed this arrangement to the acting Viceroy; it was, as he put it, 'quite out of the question to imagine that either the Committee or Parliament will accept direct election for either Chamber'. Hoare to Stanley, 1st June, 1934, T.P.s (4), 4, p. 1073.


3. Hoare to Stanley, 29th June, 1934, ibid., p. 1087.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.
For his part, Willingdon did attempt to deck himself out as an enthusiast for Federation while in Britain.

Although the diehard campaign was pursued with ever-increasing energy and determination, in one respect it was less successful; in drafting a Princely mouthpiece in succession to Ranji. The Duchess of Atholl inferred that this failure was due to Government of India pressure when she produced, as a 'prize exhibit', the Nawabsada of Toru, the only Moslem known to the Duchess.

'who has the courage to state openly .... the great opposition to Federation among his community'.

It was dryly observed in the India Office that Toru was the only genuine Indian whom the I.D.L. had been able to get into their organisation.

Conscious of this flaw in their case, the leaders of the I.D.L. strove through their connection with Patiala to impress upon the Princes their unique opportunity to dynamite the Federation and hence the Bill, and the increasing support building up for such a move within the Conservative Party. An I.D.L. letter of July 1934 to Patiala assured the Princes generally that if they were to 'make it clear that they are against the scheme', its promoters would be 'bound by their own pledges to withdraw it'.

1. Willingdon made a special effort, while in Scotland to receive the Freedom of Edinburgh; he spoke in inimitable optimistic vein about the glowing prospects for Federation: indeed Lady Willingdon revealed that 17 Princes had already given an undertaking to come in. See J. F. Simpson (retired Managing Director, Gordon Woodroffe and Co., Madras) to Tweedy (possibly George Alfred, former Member of the Board of Revenue, U.P. and Oudh; Member of the Legislative Council; retired I.C.S. 1915) 28th June, 1934, J.P.T., Bundle 8, Private Correspondence.

2. Muhammad Azim Khan of Toru, the son of a leading landowner in the U.P. Toru was the author of an alarmist letter, dutifully published in the Morning Post, which appealed to the 'Imperial Parliament, and the great English nation ... to refrain from pursuing a policy which will inevitably lead to bloodshed and misery and endanger the safety and peace of India ... don't empower the new constitution'. See Morning Post, 18th September, 1934.


4. Croft to Geoffrey Lloyd (P.P.S. to Baldwin) 6th October, 1934, Ibid. p. 2

5. Cited in Gilbert, M., op. cit., p. 594. The letter continued: 'we can well understand the sort of pressure which is brought to bear on you and your colleagues; but we venture to assure you that whereas if you yield your destruction is certain, if you stand firm you have nothing to fear. We have no hesitation in assuring you of the strong and increasing opposition to the White Paper in this country. Already, the best part of the Conservative Party which maintains the Government in power is either openly opposed or secretly critical of the scheme.'
At this point Churchill introduced a novel and not implausible charge; that nobody wanted the Committee's scheme and that new and more representative conversations had better be started again with important Indians. But the main direction of diehard attack took up the charge of illegitimate official pressure on Princes. Hoare became very concerned that

'mysterious rumours about compromising documents are still being spread abroad by the Morning Post. They seem to have got hold of a certain amount of correspondence between Government officials and individual Princes'; it was imperative that Willingdon, now returned, should investigate.

Not without reluctance, Willingdon undertook to 'have a serious interview with my friend H.H. the Maharaja of Patiala'. Once again the Viceroy's inadequacy was demonstrated by his assumption of impotence. Although the extent to which Patiala had stuffed visiting diehards with nonsense had become apparent, Willingdon questioned his ability to stop much embarrassing intercourse:

'the unfortunate fact is that when you get many Morning Posters coming out to get useful copy from Princes and Indians who are not very favourably disposed for one reason or another towards me and my Government, they will probably very likely get hold of some very glaring lies which I suppose will probably appear in the Morning Post'.

In the Viceroy's version, he administered a severe ticking-off to the errant Prince:

'I told him that I was fully aware of his constant intercourse with the Morning Post and its satellites and that I should in future be unable to talk on anything of a political nature to him'.

Patiala of course professed 'the greatest surprise' but subsequently assumed a more chastened demeanour. Forthcoming events would show

2. Hoare to Willingdon, 14th September, 1934, ibid., pp. 1124., 5.
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
that this was a very transient mood. With the future of Federation still wreathed in uncertainty, few Princes were likely to make a positive move. It may be, however, that shrewder Rulers were considering a contingency plan should Federation look like materialising. In his explanation for the appointment of a British Political Officer as Chief Minister of Jodhpur, Willingdon revealed

'an interesting fact that more and more Princes are asking for European Political Officers to assist them in the administration of their States. (1)

In Britain, the diehard campaign reached a crescendo with the staging of the Annual Conference of the Conservative Party at Bristol in October 1934. Quite unexpectedly for Hoare and the party managers, who had not put up a spokesman against Page-Croft, the amendment to suspend judgement of the White Paper was only carried by the thinnest of majorities. (2) Page-Croft's speech, the delivery of which had a delayed start due to his 'wonderful reception' and the 'thunderous roars of applause and foot-stamping', gave full play to the Princes' fears of the White Paper. (3) The diehard triumph was not lost on Willingdon: he had no positive help to offer Hoare and contented himself with commenting on the frenzy of the Conference ladies, the Duchess of

1. Willingdon to Hoare, 5th October, 1934, ibid., p. 570. Hoare, ever sensitive to the charge that the British were rigging the mechanisms for federating, objected to the expansion of this practice: he pressed a 'chief worry that such men be employed by States on the actual practice of negotiation of the Instrument and hence the insinuation that it rested with British Officers engaged, on the one hand, on behalf of the Government, and, on the other, on behalf of the State, to determine the conditions on which States should federate'. Hoare to Willingdon, 9th November, 1934, T.L. (i), 4, pp. 1170, 1.


3. Ibid.
Atholl and her 'considerable lies about the Viceroy and the officials, the effusive female entourage surrounding Page-Croft'. (1)

Page-Croft followed up his Conference success with a public declaration of the Princes' opposition to Federation. The Evening Post made allegations of official bribery in specific cases notably regarding 'ysore's price for Federation' and the 'Surrender of Bangalore'.

With the spotlight on ysore, Hoare insisted that Willingdon disabuse the Dewan of any notion that Federation was a distant goal, an opinion voiced by Isma'il in The Times. 'With the bit between their teeth, the diehards raised the Bangalore Case in the Commons, to the annoyance and embarrassment of Hoare:

'they think they have discovered a first-class ramp in the negotiations for handing back part of the Cantonment to ysore and they seem to be constantly supplied with material by some of the disgruntled inhabitants'. (6)

1. Willingdon to Hoare, 5th October, 1934, T.P.(1), 7, p. 571. The Conservative ladies were evidently a formidable audience and unique in confounding an able T.P. spokesman: 'only once did I fail to win agreement; that exception was startling. It was at an aristocratic meeting in the West End of London, and the heat, passion and prejudice displayed by ladies who knew nothing of India was a revelation'. See Reed, Sir S., op. cit., p. 199. It seemed to a Government spokesman that the Bristol delegates generally had behaved with less than dignity: 'the audience would have been a credit to the zoo or wild regions of the globe'. See Butler, R. A., op. cit., p. 53.

2. See Page-Croft’s letter to The Times, 6th October, 1934.

3. The relevant headlines ran: 'Secret Parleys', 'Civilian Residents' Vigorous Protest'; the supporting text emphasised the anxieties of Trade and European Associations in Bangalore concerning a possible hand-over and their desire, at all costs, to continue under British Civil Administration. See Morning Post, 3rd October, 1934.


5. A heated exchange took place in the House when Annesley Somerville (Conservative, Windsor since 1922), protested against 'hanging over 135,000 British citizens to native rule'. H.C.O., 10th December, 1934, vol. 296, col. 170. Churchill interjected, 'a vulgar bribe'. Ibid., col. 172. The rationale behind the 'bribe' was revealed by the Duchess of Atholl who reminded the Commons that, calculated on a population basis, the nine largest States could bring about Federation regardless of the wishes of the rest: 'when we realise that ysore, to which it is proposed to transfer Bangalore, comes second on the list of nine and that Travancore, to whom it is proposed to transfer Tangasserie (a tiny enclave of 99 acres), comes third, we cannot but believe that there is but one reason for these transfers, namely to bring about Federation whatever the majority may wish'. Ibid., col. 173. It was left to the Under-Secretary, R. A. Butler, to deflate this attack by pointing out that the population of the assigned tract of Bangalore stood at 125,000 of whom 100,000 were ysore State subjects. See ibid., cols. 174, 5.

As a counter to the diehard offensive, Hoare determined to discourage Princes from visiting Britain and thus avoid the consequences of their falling into the clutches of Page-Croft and his associates. Hoare felt that the Viceregal wigging administered to Patiala was not without result, since the Morning Post was

'the rebuke to...platitudeous remarks of Dholpur as evidence that all Princes are opposed to Federation'. (2)

But this is to underestimate the hard-hitting quality of the leader in which Dholpur expressed 'the grave disquiet' with which Princes had viewed the White Paper. Allegations followed to the effect that the Government, in realisation of the deep-rooted aversion felt by the Princes for the Federal scheme, intended to short-circuit Their Highnesses, and hence the Viceroy's refusal to summon the Chamber and his preference for sounding States individually. On the eve of the publication of the Joint Select Committee Report, the Morning Post claimed that the Princes' group supporting Federation had been drastically reduced to leave only Bhopal and Bikaner.

It is a measure of the effect of the diehard propaganda that Hoare felt bound to warn the Viceroy about mounting pressure in the House which demanded that the Princes be sounded out:

'on no account must we be suspected of wishing to avoid consultation'. (6)

1. Hoare to Willingdon, 5th October, 1934, T.P.R., (1), 4, p. 1140.
3. Entitled 'The Voice of a Friend', the editorial stressed Dholpur's standing as 'a Prince who commands universal respect'. Readers were reminded that 'the Indian Prince lives for his people ... H.H. of Dholpur has the wisdom to foresee what misery, what cruelty, what carnage may spring from this rash experiment ... His Majesty's Ministers have the duty to consider his warnings'. See Morning Post, 6th November, 1934.
4. Morning Post, 8th November, 1934. The same charge was raised by Sir Alfred Knox, (Conservative), Wycombe Division of Bucks, since 1924, on 12th November. See Morning Post, 15th November, 1934.
Disturbing news reached Hoare from the Governor of Bombay: it seemed that the *Morning Post* agent had secured documentary proof, in the form of a manuscript letter from the Viceroy, that

'the Government of India have been and are using unfair means to force the Princes into Federation'. (1)

It seems more likely that official influence in this matter was intended to produce the opposite effect. At the very moment when Sapru was pressing prominent Anglo Indians to speed up Federal negotiations with the Princes, perhaps the most respected administrator in India gave a public lead to the Princes, markedly reactionary in character:

'autocracy is a principle which is infinitely seated in the Indian States. Round it burn the sacred fires of age-long tradition. I might venture to advise my friends among Indian Rulers to give autocracy its full chance first'. (3)

The Joint Select Committee reported to Parliament on 22nd November, 1934. The Report substantially retained the White Paper provisions except in three major respects; in place of direct election, the substitution of indirect election by the Provincial Chambers to the Central Assembly; strengthened provisions against terrorism; clarification of restrictions upon economic discrimination for political objects. The older-fashioned Maharajas might breath again since the Report declared itself opposed to any declaration of fundamental rights for the individual;

1. Brabourne had also been told that there was to be a *Morning Post* campaign specifically against Willingdon in which various 'ridiculous' incidents would be quoted i.e. the Viceroy's alleged refusal to allow Princes to subscribe to an Ex-Serviceman's charity at home but is allowing them to put up a statue to him here'. Brabourne to Hoare, 17th November, 1934, T.F. (c), vii: 4, p. 92.


4. The Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms: the Report, carried by 19 votes to 9, was the outcome of 159 meetings involving hearings with 120 witnesses. See Templewood, Lord, op. cit., p. 99.

it stipulated the inclusion of a rather vague anti-discriminatory clause on grounds of religion, descent, class or colour. (1) Naturally, the Report drew down upon itself the wrath of the Morning Post. Conservative misgivings had been confirmed and readers' attention was drawn to Salisbury's Minority Report which advocated only a Greater Indian Council with advisory powers. (2) Much play was made with the voting anomalies proposed under the Federation, election in British India, (3) nomination in the Indian States. Ever anxious to produce a Prince on the spot, the Morning Post raked around to find a representative of 'one of the most ancient Rajput dynasties in India' who duly testified to the Princes' 'growing apprehension' about the Federal scheme. As a clincher, the diehard organ fastened onto the joint opinion submitted by 'distinguished jurists' to the Chamber of Princes which recorded of the Federal proposals, as they currently stood, that

"the gap between what they foreshadow and what they require seems very wide." (5)

In more objective quarters, it was recognised that the alleged opposition of some Princes to the Bill might be based on other than constitutional grounds. The Daily Herald published, alongside a photograph of Patiala, the opinion that Princes' hostility to the White Paper policy had been

2. See the relevant disparaging headline ran, 'New Wine in Old Bottles'. See Morning Post, 22nd November, 1934.
3. See the lengthy article entitled 'The Case Against Federation', in Morning Post, 23rd November, 1934.
4. The Prince in question was the 'Jhalawar', a student at the School of Rural Economy, Oxford; Jhalawar may have been of an old lineage but the State only ran to 810 sq. miles, meriting a salute of 13 guns. Jhalawar's 'exclusive statement' to the Morning Post ran under the headline, 'Indian Princes Anxious, Menace of the White Paper', see the edition of 27th November, 1934.
5. The Jurists in question were Sir William Jowett, K.C., Professor J. H. Morgan, K.C., Mr. D. N. Pritt, K.C., and Mr. Ernest W. Edwards. See under the headline 'Princes' Fears Confirmed', Morning Post, 4th December, 1934.
secured by British diehards in return for lavish promises of increased status: the *Morning Post* immediately offered Patiala every opportunity to deny these 'baseless allegations'.

For those who supported Federation and wished for a speedy implementation of the Reforms, the long months from April 1933 to November 1934, when the Joint Select Committee was in session, brought in their train little of promise and much that was frustrating. Indian observers could not fail to grasp the manifest insensitivity and suspicion towards the Indian question in Conservative circles: reactionary sentiment was particularly prevalent at constituency level. Hoare and his colleagues in the India Office could only view with increasing alarm the unstinted efforts of the Page-Croft lobby to wreck the Bill and its enterprise in carrying the fight to India itself, and to the lairs of malleable Maharajas. Willingdon had done nothing to bring the Princes into line. Whatever the fate of the Bill in the House of Commons, the implementation of its provisions lay within the purview of the Delhi Secretariats and nothing had occurred, since Davidson's revelations, to diminish the cloud of uncertainty which masked the intentions of the Government of India, and in particular of the Foreign and Political Department, towards the Federal ideal.

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1. Patiala defended himself at length under the headline, 'A Maharaja's Denial': 'I have never claimed any personal quid pro quo either for myself or any of my brother Princes during my talks with certain Conservative leaders who recently visited India'. See *Morning Post*, 26th November, 1934. Everything was done to bolster Patiala's reputation. The *Morning Post* pressed Sir Michael O'Dwyer into service 'to support His Highness' dignified repudiation of the mean insinuation that he and other Princes were bribed by unauthorised (sic) persons to assist in defeating White Paper policy'. See 'A True Prince', *Morning Post*, 30th November, 1934. O'Dwyer solemnly warned against 'the alienation of those true friends of the Crown and Empire who, like the Maharaja of Patiala, have stood by us in every crisis and enabled us to ride the storm'. *Ibid.*
The India Bill in the Parliamentary Arena
The wooing of selected Princes by the diehards had not been without result, and this fact broke upon Willingdon as he ruminated on how best to hold the Princes steady on Federation at the next meeting of the Chamber, fixed for 21st January, 1935:

'the overtures of Winston and his friends have not failed to make their mark on the Chancellor of the Chamber and those Princes that form their coterie .... there is no doubt that they have been badly shaken by the Morning Post campaign'. (1)

The Viceroy appended to his transmission to Hoare copies of quite explicit and revealing documents which highlighted the anti-Federal influences brought to bear on the Princes from London. Prominent among these was a letter addressed to Patials from '42 Peers and Commoners' headed by the Dukes of Argyll and Buccleugh supported by such stalwarts as the Duchess of Atholl, Churchill himself, Page-Croft, Carson and O'Dwyer.

In rather lurid fashion, the signatories pressed the Princes to resist Federation,

'if you yield your destruction is certain; if you stand firm you have nothing to fear'.

Acceptance of Federation would be tantamount to imperial and domestic suicide: the fate of India rested with Their Highnesses since

'over and over again the British Government have stated that they will not proceed upon their course unless the Princes of India support the scheme'. (3)

Willingdon also enclosed a sympathetic reply to the diehard exhortation

2. The letter, dated July 1934, together with a list of its signatories is reproduced in full in appendix 5.
3. Ibid.
framed by Patiala and four other members of the Princes' Standing Committee, which made it apparent, as the Viceroy put it,

'that this group of 'diehard Princes' is quite prepared to flirt with the reactionary party at home'. (2)

The arrival at the India Office of documentary proof of the diehard overtures to Princes gave 'Hoare a much-needed boost:

'we intend to make a good deal of it here. It will help us to retaliate upon the critics who are constantly saying that it is we who are putting pressure on the Princes'. (3)

To meet the crisis of confidence in the Princes' intentions, Baldwin himself, at a meeting of the Conservative Central Council at the Queens Hall on 4th December, declared that the Princes were willing and anxious to join the Federation, a contention flatly denied by the Morning Post. Willingdon claimed that the Queens Hall declaration had lifted his spirits, 'it is heartening us much here'. Hoare strove to broadcast widely the success of Government spokesmen at the meeting: by comparison 'page-Croft and Salisbury made a very poor show'. For the first time Hoare thought he could detect signs of defection from the diehard camp. The Morning Post riposted by citing from the Patiala correspondence previously hawked round in high quarters by

1. This letter, addressed to Gwynne of the Morning Post and very similar in style to that given to Courtauld (see p.488), is reproduced in full in appendix 6. Not all traditionally-minded Princes rallied to the Morning Post call; old Rampur frankly advised Patiala to drop the diehard connection and negotiate through the Government of India and His Majesty's Government. See Rampur to Patiala, 2nd December, 1934, T.P.(r), 8, p. 609.

2. Willingdon to Hoare, 9th December, 1934, ibid., p. 601.

3. Hoare to Willingdon, 19th December, 1934, T.P.(r), 4, p. 1203.


7. Ibid. Hoare's impression of drift is likely to have been accurate; it is reflected in the attitude of an original diehard, Beaverbrook, who now 'had no interest in Churchill's campaign on behalf of the Indian Princes'. See Taylor, A. J., op. cit., p. 337.
Courtauld and eventually retailed to Gwynne, 'documents of the highest importance', which challenged the Government's Queens Hall declaration, and allegedly defined the real attitude of the Princes to Federation. (1)

A plausible Government counter was put forward by a leading U.B.I. spokesman who, in a public address, asked why the celebrated letters had not been produced at the Queens Hall.

The scene was thus set for a Parliamentary battle royal when the Joint Select Committee Report came up for debate in the Commons. In the question session prior to the debate proper, the diehards introduced the issue of the Patiali correspondence. (3) Page-Croft pressed for an undertaking that the Bill would not be introduced until the Chamber of Princes had pronounced in favour of Federation, a proposition on which the Under-Secretary of State would not be drawn. Hoare led off the debate by reminding the House that 'an All-India Federation without the Princes is a contradiction in terms' and that the Princes would only join in a Federation with responsible government by an Indian Legislature. (5) As for the diverse nature of the proposed Federation, Hoare referred to a rather unlikely precedent, 'the successful operation' of the old German Empire.

1. See under headlines, 'Government's Strange Self-Deception', 'Documents Ignored at Queens Hall Meeting', Morning Post, 6th December, 1934. Courtauld had succeeded in speaking last at the gathering; his theme was the Government's 'extraordinary ignorance of the facts'. Ibid.

2. Sir J. F. Thompson, address to the U.B.I. meeting at Slough as reported in the Windsor Express, 14th December, 1934. See J.P.T., Bundle B, cuttings. Thompson went on to say that the Patiali letters added nothing to what was already known, namely that the Princes would not decide whether they would come into Federation until they had seen the terms. This did not mean that they would refuse to come in. Ibid.

3. Question from Sir W. H. Davison (Unionist) South Kensington since 1918, H.C.D., 16th December, 1934, vol. 296, col. 4. The Morning Post report made much of Davison's question, the vague quality of Butler's reply, and Hoare's silence. See Morning Post, 11th December, 1934. The Patiali correspondence was also the subject of a sharp exchange between the Solicitor-General, Sir Donald Somerville and Churchill: the Government position maintained that the Report substantially met Patiali's qualifications. Ibid., p. 165-7.

4. Ibid., col. 5.

5. Ibid., 11th December, 1934, col. 50.

6. Ibid.
The well-briefed diehard challenge harped on Patiala's opposition and dangled the spectre of the Princes' withdrawal from a Legislature in which their presence was required to out-vote Congress:

'how long do you expect the Indian Princes to go on pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for you .... what is our position going to be if the Princes do not come in?' (2)

This was a shrewd thrust aimed at the very linchpin of the Bill, the vital role of the Princes as a stabilising agency. As Thompson had put it to a general audience during his promotional peregrinations for the Bill:

'the Princes were the greatest conservative force in India. They and the officials from amongst whom men would be sent to represent the States in the Central Legislature were all experienced administrators, and were devoted to the maintenance of the British connection'. (3)

But as the Duchess of Atholl reminded the House, the Princes were still at sixes and sevens over Confederation or Federation, they entertained doubts about their ability to stand up in debate against the representatives from British India, and hence the Princes' representatives in the Federal Assembly 'could hardly exercise the stabilising influence on which so many hopes have been built'. Hartington raised the old bogey of Federal anomalies which rendered representatives of British India powerless to vote taxation for the States while the States retained formal power to vote taxation for British India. Inevitably,

1. See interjections of Brendan Bracken (Unionist), North Paddington since 1929, H.C.D., vol. 296, col. 80.
2. Speech by Viscount Woolmer, (Unionist), Aldershot Division of Hampshire since 1923, ibid., cols. 96-8.
3. Sir J. F. Thompson, address to the U.B.I. meeting at Burnley, as reported in the Bournemouth Daily Echo, 5th December, 1934, J.P.T., Bundle 8, cuttings.
5. Speech by Marquess of Hartington (Unionist), Western Division of Derbyshire since 1923, ibid., col. 139.
Churchill's earlier charge, that 'the Princes are being subjected to enormous, subtle and improper pressures' re-emerged. In this context, the Duchess of Atholl supposed that the motives behind the proposed transfer of territory to Vysore and Travancore were quite transparent. Some curious bedfellows for the diehards emerged on the Labour benches where the entry of the Princes into Federation was also viewed with alarm:

'it is the pukka sahib who wants this scheme, in order to get rid of British control and to substitute the control of the millionaires and Rajas of India, the pukka sahibs who worship at the shrine of Mussolini and Hitler and do poojah to the old school tie'. (3)

Page-Croft led off the diehard attack on the second day of the debate. Any initial Princely enthusiasm for Federation could be put down to a fear for the future in view of H.G.'s determination to enforce Reforms; he cited the Maharaja of Burdwan:

'when the lion is running with its tail between its legs, can you blame the cubs if they follow'. (4)

1. The accusation in these precise terms first appeared in Churchill's speech at Gloucester on 24th June, 1934. See The Times, 26th June, 1934. A Government supporter cited an earlier denial, signed by leading Dewans, of this damaging charge; it had appeared under the signatures of Hyderi, Ismail, Pattani, Ramanasami Miyar, Krishnam Chari, Vehta. See The Times, 26th June, 1934. See speech by Sir John Wardlaw-Milne (Unionist), Midwinter Division of Worcestershire since 1922, in an exchange with the Duchess of Atholl, H.C.D., 1st December, 1934, vol. 296, col. 145, 6. It is instructive that Wardlaw-Milne had to go back 16 months to obtain a refutation of diehard allegations.

2. Ibid., col. 175. The Duchess had already raised the Bangalore issue, and the proposed transfer of the Tanjasseri district to Travancore affected a mere 99 acres as Butler pointed out. Ibid., cols. 173-8. Nevertheless, the bribery issue had to be handled with extreme care. Willingdon assured Hoare that he had written to Vysore stating that the retrocession of Bangalore was not a bargaining counter. The Travancore transfer would unite 2,000 Christians with one and a half million already in the State, hardly a case, as the diehards represented it, of dumping Christians in an exclusively Hindu state. See Willingdon to Hoare, 27th December, 1934, T.P. (1), 8, p. 624.


4. Ibid., 11th December, 1934, col. 252. It was at Hoare's insistence that Page-Croft reluctantly identified Burdwan, not an ideal witness since Burdwan was not a territorial Prince; as his Bengal estates were located within British India, his voice had no direct bearing on the Federal issue.
Page-Croft denied that the Joint Select Committee Report incorporated the Princes' safeguards, 'you cannot count upon the Princes assenting to come in'. Page-Croft went on to make a number of vague allegations concerning official douceurs which touched on territorial renditions, tribute remissions, enhanced salutes, all of which provoked a heated exchange with Hoare, who was hardly in a position to issue the flat denials which he did.

By far the most provocative, and in terms of parliamentary convention outrageous, speech emanated from Major Courtauld, fresh from his Indian experiences. In its preliminaries, this oration challenged Hoare and Butler on the required number of Princes necessary to Federate: this gave way to allegations of coercion by the Government of India applied to the Princes in favour of Federation and here his testimony included a version of a private conversation with Willingdon which implicated the Viceroy. In summing up, Courtauld urged, 'it is perfectly clear that today a substantial body of Princes, led by men of prestige and importance, do not accept the Report of the Joint Select Committee, and, if they are led to change their minds, it will be a case of further persuasion. I think, without being controversial in any way, that when the history of our retreat from India comes to be written, not the least unpleasant chapter will be that which deals with the persuasion of the Princes.'

2. Ibid., cols. 253, 4. Hoare and Willingdon had already examined the prospect of reviewing the salute list as a Federal bait, one week prior to this debate, Hoare had specifically linked Hydari's cooperation with the expectation of honours, having found Hydari 'most helpful and sensible... he will have to be remembered in the June list', the Viceroy was advised. See Hoare to Willingdon, 5th December, 1934, T.P.(1), 4, p. 1195. The following day, Hoare pressed for a Privy Councillorship for Hydari. See Hoare to Willingdon, 16th May, 1935, ibid., p. 1291.
4. Ibid., col. 294.
5. Ibid., col. 292.
Courtauld's speech attracted a good deal of attention: naturally, the Morning Post gave full publicity to 'Courtauld's Disclosures' which, it was claimed, mirrored a general dissatisfaction among MPs.

Hoare sent off a detailed complaint to Reuters since they had seized on the speech. Willingdon responded: 'I don't think I have ever been so angry in my life'. In his commiseration to the Viceroy, Hoare too deplored this 'outrageous speech' and conveyed the news that Courtauld had apologised to Baldwin for it, later, in the lobby of the House.

However, Courtauld's very serious charges required intervention at top level and on the final day of this momentous debate, Baldwin himself rose armed with a cable from the Viceroy from which he quoted directly:

'I deny absolutely using the words that he (Courtauld) puts into my mouth .... these words are a complete travesty of the truth'.

As to 'the substantial body of Princes' aligned against the Report, the cable continued,

'I do not know what is his authority for such a statement, since no Prince to my knowledge, either speaking himself or through his ministers, has declared himself in any way whatsoever about the Report which incidentally goes a long way further to meet their demands than the White Paper'.

1. Morning Post, 12th December, 1934.
3. Willingdon to Hoare, 16th December, 1934, T.P.(i), 8, p. 611.
4. Hoare to Willingdon, 13th December, 1934, T.P.(i), 4, p. 1199. This was supplemented by a written reply in which Courtauld declined to plead guilty to dishonesty, 'only to an inadvertent breach of good manners'. See Courtauld to Baldwin, 14th December, 1934, T.P., 106, p. 396.
5. Baldwin took the debate to be one of the most important which he had ever attended. See H.C.D., 12th December, 1934, vol. 296, col. 512.
6. Ibid., col. 512. Initially, Baldwin had made much play with what he held to be an unprecedented use of a private conversation by Courtauld. Ibid., col. 517.
7. Ibid., col. 518.
To counter further the impact of the diehard attack on Federation, the Government relied on two eminent speakers of particular influence with Conservative backbenchers, Simon and Austen Chamberlain. Of the two, Simon was the less effective. His speech did stress the artificiality of the frontiers between British India and the Indian States, but he wound up in very negative style by conceding that whether the Indian States came in or not remained to be seen.

Chamberlain struck a much more forceful tone: while confessing his limited competence to interpret the minds of Their Highnesses, he then launched on an exhortation which would impress both Maharajas and backbenchers:

'if I were an Indian Prince, I should join the Federation. I should join it because I should feel that it was in the interests of my dynasty and my State.'

Chamberlain delivered a veiled warning to the diehards:

'those who for their own purposes encourage the Indian Princes to hold aloof take a great responsibility'.

Summing up the debate at the end of the day, Hoare lapsed into characteristic gloom: 'the result had been not as good as I expected'.

Churchill's final barrage, widely regarded among the various lobby correspondents, as a veritable tour de force, was delivered with a good
deal of bombast;

'the idea that the Princes were enthusiastic about the proposal is arrant nonsense and humbug'. (1)

But the speech contained a number of subtle and plausible points which contrived to awaken doubts. Thus, with reference to the Princes' alleged insistence on responsible government, Churchill remarked with some justice:

'I thought it was a very odd thing that aristocratic Princes with lineages that go back for hundreds of years insisted that the Central Government must be responsible'. (2)

For the *Morning Post*, this had been 'the greatest debate for many years' and all credit should be accorded to Major Courtauld for 'the most notable speech of the whole debate'. (3) Possibly the most damaging allegation floated by the *Morning Post* was the repeated insinuation that Ministerial references in the debate reflected a growing official belief that the Princes would refuse to enter Federation when they saw the text of the Bill, thus providing His Majesty's Government with an honourable means to withdraw the Bill.

For a vastly thankful Hoare, the advent of 1935 seemed to presage the long-delayed launch of his 'monstrous boat'. (5) It now seemed the Cabinet would see the Bill through though

'it had certainly looked at one time as if Simon and Nairnsham would never come into line'. (6)

Yet fresh squalls blew up. The publication of the Statute of Westminster alerted Indians to the fine details of transferred constitutional functions:

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2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 14th December, 1934.
5. Templewood, Lord, *op. cit.*., p. 68.
'are States like Hyderabad likely to accept Indianisation of the Army?'
(1)
asked Hoare; a sensitive issue duly taken up later by Churchill in the Commons.

The most immediate matter of concern for Hoare was that the forthcoming meeting of the Chamber of Princes should endorse the Federal scheme. Willingdon confidently forecast that Their Highnesses would confirm their ultimate intention to federate, but early indications were not hopeful; only with the greatest difficulty could a quorum of 30 Princes be gathered together. Willingdon's opening speech had little of substance. He condemned those 'baseless insinuations' concerning official pressure on Princes and his text generally was composed of vague platitudes:

'in the new Constitution, no effort will be spared to protect the integrity of the States'. (6)

The subsequent proceedings of the Chamber showed that once again Willingdon's optimistic forecasts were quite without foundation. Patiala's resolution struck a violently anti-Federal tone:

'let me say it most emphatically, we are not enamoured by a federal constitution as such; we have never approached His Majesty's Government and requested them to devise a Federal constitution in order to safeguard our future'. (7)

Even Bikaner, for long thought to be the leading Princely Federationist,

3. Due to take place on 21st January, 1935.
   See also Sinh, R., op. cit., p. 149.
7. Ibid., p. 33
baulked at a positive public commitment to Federation and contented himself with denouncing the more far-fetched diehard allegations. (1)

Understandably, the main drift of the Chamber proceedings was a source of grave concern to Hoare:

'I am sure to be greatly pressed about the Princes' attitude';
the 'garbled' coverage of both the Morning Post and the Daily Mail had been very damaging. Willingdon, in some embarrassment, tried to play down the Chamber proceedings on the grounds that 'practically all the big Princes are now sitting entirely outside it'. (3)

One week later, a mood of sublime self-delusion returned as the Viceroy reviewed a Princes' gathering which 'went off on the whole very well ..... the Princes generally stand for Federation subject to their being satisfied with the clauses of the Bill'. (4)

He forecast the imminent demise of the Chamber and its replacement by a Council of Ministers, a development which Willingdon supposed would be suited to his somewhat languid style:

'I might have occasional Durbars and gather the Princes together and hear their particular wants, but really the Chamber business is a most unsatisfactory affair, and is, as you well know, run almost entirely by three or four of their order'. (5)

1. C.R.R., 8/1/20/130, pp. 39-40. Among the grosser allegations made in the Morning Post, Bikaner singled out the assertion that a Prince who took up an anti-Federal stance thereby demonstrated his loyalty to the King Emperor. Concerning the Courtauld mission, Bikaner sardonically observed that the absence of his State from the itinerary did not follow any official warning off: 'May it not be', argued Bikaner, 'that they did not visit me and several other Princes because they knew full well that our views were not likely to be swayed by all the horrors of Federation that were being depicted by them and their friends, or by this attempt to make our flesh creep by the various suggestions and efforts made to influence us by playing into their hands'. Ibid., p.40


4. Willingdon to Hoare, 28th January, 1935, ibid., p. 635. For confirmation that the meeting 'had passed off successfully' see Willingdon to Hoare, Private and Personal Telegram no. 329, C.R.R., 8/1/20/130, p. 40.

The 1935 Chamber of Princes session was the occasion for an especially extravagant approach by the diehards which took the form of a circular cable sent to a number of Princes by Rothermere. In the version sent to His Highness the Raja Sahib of Sawantwadi, Rothermere forecast doom and extinction for the Princely order; seven million followers of the Daily Mail would read of the Government of India's attempt to coerce the Princes into Federation:

'If they are so foolish as to give their consent to it, they will prepare their own destruction, which will follow at the hands of Congress extremists who would control the future Indian Government'.

An even more blood-curdling cable reached Rampur from Rothermere two days later:

'Should the Princes allow themselves to be caught, theirs will be the fate of the loyalists of southern Ireland who were told by much the same persons as those who are giving India away that under the Free State Government they would have equal treatment and fair play... if the Indian Princes sacrifice their privileges or position in any important respect they and their adherents will for a certainty within three years of the functioning of the new Government of India become bankrupt refugees in foreign lands'.

Possibly because Rampur was a much respected figure among the numerically strong ultra-conservative faction in his order, he was the recipient of a further cable pressing the Princes to reject the Bill at a 'secret ballot':

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1. See the interview given by Rampur to the representative of Associated Press, C.R.H. 8/20/1935, p. 64.
3. In no sense a major figure; Sawantwadi was a nine gun State of doubtful sovereignty.
Rampur and his peers were reminded of:

'firm friends here who are working for them but whose efforts will be paralysed were they to compromise with a scheme which they well know to be calamitous stop if the Princes show weakness they will assuredly meet the fate of the French aristocrats who were so simple as to welcome the Revolution of 1789 but were the first to be robbed of their estates and sent to the guillotine stop They will perish or be driven into exile as miserably as the Russian imperial family and nobility who surrendered to revolution'. (1)

Rampur's response, as conveyed to the Political Department, affected to scorn the diehard pressures:

'this sort of propaganda is not likely to change my views on the subject'. (2)

In a statement to the press, Rampur launched an uncompromising attack on the diehards:

'any attempt to drag the Princes into British party politics or to misrepresent the Viceroy who has done so much for India and the Empire, can only harm the cause of those who stand for ensuring stability in the new constitution'. (3)

Though Willingdon might have heeded the Princes' notorious penchant for saying the right thing in public one minute, and the wrong in private the next, he seized upon Rampur's testimony and wrote with relish to Hoare of

'a growing belief among the Princes, which we have not discouraged, that they are being used as pawns in the political game by the diehards at home .... as to Rothermere, we should, I think, be thankful to him for overcalling his hand. He has helped to destroy any faith that the Princes retained in the altruism of the diehard press'. (4)

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3. His Highness the Nawab of Rampur, interview given to the representative of Associated Press, ibid., p. 64.
Murmurings against the diehards, however, were of little immediate use to Hoare who urgently required a positive statement from the Princes about Federation. Here Willingdon had nothing to offer; indeed he lamely conveyed Their Highnesses’ objections

'at their being asked to give their opinion on the early clauses in such a short time'. (1)

Hoare’s reply reflected his continuing frustration and anxiety concerning the Princes’ intentions:

'we were much worried by the communications both from Patiala and Hyderabad asking for a postponement of the Committee stage of the Bill. This is quite impossible'. (2)

Hoare’s acerbity is quite understandable. Now, more than ever, he required support from the Princes as the diehard campaign was stepped up concurrently with the passage of the India Bill through the Second Reading Stage. Hoare had to counter a rumoured connection between the diehards and the Prince of Wales. The trepidation with which Hoare approached his key speech in the Commons may have been an indication of waning powers of endurance. Under pressure from the diehard lobby, the Secretary of State had to make a categorical pronouncement to the effect that the Princes

'in spite of the pressure upon them - not from me, nor from the Government, but from other directions - have in no way recoiled from the position that they took up four years ago... the House may rest assured that there is no evidence to show that the Princes, great or small or of medium position, have altered their general attitude towards the question of All-India Federation'. (6)

3. Churchill made a powerful speech at Bristol in which he placed particular emphasis on the Princes' alleged reluctance to participate in the Federal scheme. See Gilbert, K., op. cit., p. 594.
The diehard assault followed familiar ground. Insinuations of bribery underlay the Duchess of Atholl's persistent questioning of Hoare on recent payments made to the Indian States and ceded territories transferred since 1931. (1) Page-Croft reiterated the charge that the Viceroy was pressuring Princes and cited Patiala's statement to the Chamber in January to the effect that the Princes were 'not enamoured of a Federal constitution as such'. (2) One diehard spokesman poured scorn on the notion of a mystical transformation which, it was alleged, would follow from the Princes' entry:

'immediately the Princes said they would federate, everything was changed, as if by a magician's wand'. (4)

It was left to Commander Naraden to admit the spectre which haunted Hoare:

'what would be the position - I think this is very important - if the Princes do not come in? From the Parliamentary point of view that would be very interesting because the whole of the Bill would go by the board'. (5)

On the Labour benches, hostility to Federation found expression on several counts. The price to be paid for Princes' entry was altogether too high: attention was drawn to the 'determining influence' proposed for the Princes in both Assemblies and the manner of States' representation caused concern:

'eighty million people will be disfranchised and the power of nomination in the States will be entirely in favour of the Rulers'. (6)

3. Ibid., 7th February, 1935, col. 1370.
4. Speech by Vice-Admiral Taylor, (Ernest, Augustus, Empire Crusade, South Kensington 1930, I; Unionist since 1931). Ibid.
5. Ibid., 8th February, 1935, col. 1529.
Another Labour speaker envisaged the inevitable consequence of the Princes' entry into Federation as an erosion of the condition of life in India generally:

...the Princes, in a Federal Parliament, would naturally not desire to see a higher standard of life among the working people in the Provinces lest they might be compelled to do something to uplift with their own workers within their own States. (1)

The most romantic and certainly the most provocative speech, defending the Federal provisions, emanated from J. C. G. Davidson who reminded the House that he had recently travelled 10,000 miles through the States investigating their financial status. He accused the diehards of harbouring

...a desire to use terms almost of superciliousness and patronage in connection with the great Princes of India. Words like 'blackmail' and 'bribery' are used much too freely in connection with men who are governing their States, and whose ancestors before them were governing their States long before this country had emerged into civilisation. (3)

As to the diehards' attempts to convince the Indian Princes where their duty and interest lay,

...having stayed with them and talked with them, I consider that that is an extremely offensive and impertinent thing to do. (4)

Having cast the Princes in a suitably heroic mould, Davidson had to get round the undeniably primitive conditions in most States; here he would only offer a well-worn aphorism to the Labour Members, 'happiness is not always measured by material prosperity'.

2. Ibid., col. 1538.
3. Ibid., col. 1540.
4. Ibid., col. 1541.
5. Ibid., col. 1543. In anticipation of the manifest disbelief of Labour Members, Davidson expanded on this unlikely interpretation, though a very hallowed one, of peasant contentment: 'if they had seen the scenes that I did in the Indian States, they would have realised that, much as we on this side of the world may feel that low wages under our present economic system are a bad thing, there are people in India who would prefer to live under their father and their mother as they call their Prince than earn big money under a system that they have never understood'. Ibid.
The Bill passed its second reading by 404 votes to 133, a 'surprisingly good' result according to the Under Secretary of State. But the course of the debate had excited little enthusiasm in Hoare; Attlee's speech had been 'futile' and he deplored the style of Samuel's contribution, 'praising with faint damn and damning with faint praise'. Of the division list itself, Hoare supposed the 80 odd diehards in opposition to be 'irreconcilable', many driven by a detestation of the National Government. In the aftermath of the debate, a combination of Hoare's perpetual pessimism and the force of the diehard diatribes combined to deflate seriously Viceregal spirits and, for once, black out his eternal optimism. Willingdon conveyed his disillusionment directly to Baldwin:

'I am getting quite sick to death of the sound of the word "Reforms". It has been indeed a great tragedy that India should have been made a political pawn over at home, and what is a greater tragedy to me still is that certain individuals and the Press seem to have no moral or gentlemanly sense whatever when they get excited over a political subject. Winston and Randolph, Rummer, Beaverbrook and Gwynne of the Morning Post seem to me to be making our politics get down to the gutter, and I can honestly say that I shan't be very sorry when I finish off here and get quit of all the discomforts and annoyances of the efforts which have been made against me personally'.

This was but a temporary lifting of the veil; in his correspondence to Hoare, Willingdon resumed an optimistic pose: with regard to the delaying tactics of Patiala and Hyderabad:

'I think we can safely assure you that they are satisfied now that they will have full opportunity of putting in points they may wish to before the Committee in the House'.

2. Butler, op. cit., p. 56.
5. Willingdon to Baldwin, 24th February, 1935, ibid., 2., 107, p. 27.
But, inevitably, the Princes' intentions could never be uniform and Willingdon had to record Travancore's rejection of its allocation of seats under the proposed constitution. However, the friends of Federation in India had not lost hope; indeed Sapru forecast the successful working of the new constitution since, with the entry of the Princes,

'no question of accession can arise as they are bound by their treaties to the Crown and our wild men cannot secede without breaking up the Federation and thus they will never do'. (2)

With the Bill now reaching a critical stage in its Parliamentary progress, Hoare betrayed an increasing sense of tension and foreboding.

'Instinct', he warned the Viceroy,

'is saying anything that will make trouble between ourselves and the Princes and between ourselves and the British Indians. His present line is to make Federation appear to be a disreputable intrigue between a few Princes, who we are bribing, and ourselves'. (3)

News had reached the Secretary of State of a proposed meeting of Princes and States' Ministers to take place at Bombay in late February:

'I very much hope that the Princes will not embroil the situation in their meeting at Bombay. I can hold the situation here as long as there are no bolts from the Indian blue. If, however, the Princes raise new issues and give the impression that they are edging out, the position here will become extremely difficult. I know that you are doing your utmost to avoid this danger'. (5)

   Travancore had strenuously objected to its bracketing with States like Cochin, Rewa and Bahawalpur which, it was felt, put Travancore in a position of permanent inferiority to States like Baroda, Gwalior and Kashmir while it surpassed them in population and general education, advancement of the people and at least equalled them in revenue. Ibid.


4. Phadnis, I., op. cit., p. 77.

Hoare's anxieties were well founded. Largely due to the initiative of Bhopal, a strong committee of States' Ministers and counsel, under the chairmanship of Hydari, had been in session, on and off, since December 1934, when it had initially met in Bombay; it met again in January and February in Delhi. The committee produced a 'Hydari' report on the Bill which reached the Political Secretary of the Government of India on 21st February: its preamble contained the disturbing observation:

'that in some important respects the Bill departs from the agreed position arrived at during the meetings of States' representatives with His Majesty's Government' and that

'without satisfactory amendments on the lines indicated, it would not be possible for them to recommend to their Rulers and to the States generally, the acceptance of the proposed scheme'. (2)

The Ministers' findings gravely shook Willingdon; but the only positive action which he confessed to taking was to urge them

'to keep everything out of the Press until we hear from you .... a few of them would be only too ready, I fear, to let the Morning Post or the Daily Mail know that they considered that we were trying to intimidate or coerce them in some way with regard to their position'. (3)

As was customary with him, when in a tight spot, Willingdon attempted to shift responsibility for this setback to London:

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2. Hydari to Glancy, 21st February, 1935, Views of Indian States: Correspondence relating to a meeting of States' Rulers held at Bombay to discuss the Government of India Bill and a provisional draft Instrument of Accession, Cmd. 4324, p. 5. Strong objection was taken to no less than 10 clauses with particular reference to the form of Instrument of Accession, reservations regarding the administrative powers on the Federal List, definitions of privilege or immunity, surcharges on income tax and railways. See ibid., pp. 5-12.

'I very much hope that you will be able to meet them as far as you can, for Akbar Hydari and Ida, both of whom I have seen, are both very anxious to keep the Princes in and not let them run out, and they tell me - with what truth I am not prepared to assert - that what has been put in the Bill and the clauses is quite different in some cases to what was agreed in the Report'. (1)

The specially convened meeting of Princes and their Ministers at Patiala House, Bombay, duly took place on 25th February and, from the point of view of Hoare, its proceedings were in every way disastrous. Patiala, as Chancellor, led off with a solemn reminder about

'the grave importance of the occasion and the absolute necessity for a unanimous and unmistakable decision on the issue before us'. (2)

Bhopal pronounced that the scheme as put forward in the India Bill 'falls far short of many of our vital demands'. (3) Hydari's carefully worded speech accused His Majesty's Government of resiling from the definite position taken up in the Joint Select Committee Report in respect of finance. (4) C. R. Rameswami Aiyar spoke dramatically of 'most unacceptable and calamitous results' which would follow from the Princes' acceptance of the Bill as it stood:

'you begin to be bound not only by the bare provisions of the Act, but by what in law is called the 'implications'. (5)

1. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 662. In particular Bhopal questioned the absence of an escape clause, a provision 'which we had specifically asked for, namely, that if there is a change in the Constitution against our will and consent, we shall be free to resume our present relations with the Crown'. Ibid., p. 662. Bhopal disliked the arrangement which left the ultimate definition of States' rights in the hands of the Governor-General as opposed to an impartial authority and he rejected the Instrument of Accession as 'wholly unsatisfactory .... there is no mention in it of safeguarding by the Crown of the sovereignty and autonomy of the States outside the Federal sphere'. Ibid., pp. 663, 4, 5.
4. Ibid., p. 666.
5. Ibid., pp. 667, 8. Alone among the speakers, 'C.P.' calculated the cost of Federation in precise monetary terms. The chilling result in the case of Travancore, held that out of 250 lakhs of revenue raised, nearly 150 would go to the Federation. Ibid., p. 669.
Even Mikaner, the supposed stalwart in the Federationist camp, came round to the conclusion that

'several inexplicable and unacceptable provisions of the Bill as drafted, and the Instrument of Accession also as drafted, are such that they have come as a profound surprise and disappointment to us'. (1)

In rounding off this catalogue of woes, Patiala pointed to a 'progressive deterioration' in official attitudes towards the States and, in thoroughly melodramatic fashion, went on to suppose that

'the present Bill merely marks the culminations of that tendency, the attempts to write the final chapter of that tragic history which began in 1930 with the hope of a glorious dawn, but threatens to end today in a thunderous maelstrom'. (2)

The final resolution of the Princes was couched in quite unequivocal terms:

'the meeting is of the definite opinion that, in their present form, and without satisfactory modification and alteration on fundamental points, the Bill and Instrument of Accession cannot be regarded as acceptable to Indian States'. (3)

The Bombay denunciation of the Bill had an electrifying effect in London. Noore was required to make an immediate and detailed statement on the Bombay Resolution to the Cabinet and gave an undertaking 'to bring the matter to an issue at an early date'. Noore fulminated to the Vicerecy about the astonishing coincidence which saw a wire containing the anti-Federal views of States' ministers

'arrive on the day of your last letter to me in which you said things were going well. The telegram was bad enough, the hurried passing of the Resolution by the Princes and the leakage of their foolish speeches were much worse. Our enemies were delighted and our friends gravely perturbed'. (4)
As Hoare depicted the impact of the Princes' retreat, it had mightily imperilled the future of the Bill and revived lingering doubts about the bona fides of the Government of India:

'even my colleagues in the Cabinet were asking whether it was worth going on with the Bill at all. They and I were particularly worried over the unexpectedness of the development and my almost complete absence of information on the subject from India. Outside the Cabinet, friends like Austen Chamberlain were horrified at the state of affairs. He in particular insisted that we were getting little or no help from your end and that while the diehards were kept fully informed as to what was happening and were daily using great influence with their friends among the princes, we appear to be inert and helpless. Others are freely saying that the Government of India is lukewarm about Federation and that there is no one on your Council who is taking any active interest in it'.(1)

The King himself was 'deeply incensed at the Princes' intrigues', and Hoare was obliged to ride out what he described as

'a first-class Parliamentary crisis. As things turned out we got away with a big majority in the Commons. But the edge was very thin and we might just as well have had it against us'. (2)

Hoare's final blast to the Viceroy amplified the dire consequences which would follow if the Bill failed. Officials in Delhi, hoping for an end to Federation and a retreat to reforms for British India, should be speedily disabused:

'the dropping of the Bill might very well mean the fall of the Government but it would certainly mean the end of Indian legislation for this parliament and probably for many years to come'. (3)

1. Hoare to Willingdon, 1st March, 1937, R.I., 1(1), 4, pp. 1247-8. It seemed abundantly clear to Hoare that the diehard exertions were now bearing fruit: 'Iston and Courtauld will be continuing their daily pressure upon Patiala and Bhopur. I was told only yesterday that. Rothermere and they are spending large sums of money upon a daily correspondence with their friends and it is evident that they are obtaining much earlier information as to what is happening behind the scenes than I am. As to their early information, you will remember that within a few hours of the Princes' meeting Iston was able to quote in the House extracts from several of the speeches. The House was not unnaturally astonished that whilst he seemed to know everything that was happening, I seemed to know nothing'. Ibid., p. 1249.

2. Ibid., p. 1248.

3. Ibid., p. 1250.
In a personal sense, Hoare now felt close to capitulation to the forces of reaction:

'if there is another such bolt as that of this week, I certainly cannot carry on'. (1)

Clearly, the accumulating strain of piloting the Bill through the Parliamentary shoals had told on Hoare's nerves. He complained to the Governor of Bombay about

'the maddening it was to sit day after day listening to Winston's invective and Atholl's dismal repetition: The Duchess of Atholl is apparently now known as the Begum of Blair'. (2)

In the wake of the Princes' action, Hoare gloomily concluded that

'a nasty taste has been left in everyone's mouth ... even the best friends of the Bill were wondering whether it was worth going on with'. (3)

It is, then, a measure of the Secretary of State's powers of endurance and composure that his Parliamentary reply to the Bombay Resolution did a good deal to lower the temperature and scotch 'certain fantastic stories' concerning the imminent demise of Federation. (4) A particularly mischievous suggestion held that the Princes were proposing to send Ministers to London for 'discussions': Willingdon was directed to 'jump on' any such idea. Naturally, for the Morning Post group, the Bombay Resolution represented everything they had planned for and its text was paraded under the headline, 'Pulling Out the Linch Pin'. (5)

1. Ibid. See Hoare to Brabourne, 4th March, 1935, T.P. (3), viii: 4, p. 64.
3. Ibid.
4. The Times, 28th February, 1935. Hoare had referred with cynicism to the organs of the extreme Right and left 'singing together in glorious unison' to the effect that he had passed a sleepless night in preparing a 'reconciliation' of the Federal scheme. This drastic move was allegedly linked to a long-distance call between the Secretary of State and Petiai. To all of this, Hoare issued a flat denial. Ibid.
6. Morning Post, 27th February, 1935. The relevant leader entitled 'The Laird of Cockpen', referred to Hoare's supposed state of mind following his phone calls to Petiai, caught, as was the whimsical Cockpen, 'between indigination and credulity'. Ibid.
Churchill wrote to his wife in jubilation about the transformed situation which the Princes' volte face had brought about:

'they have made up their minds to stand out. This is a political fact of capital importance. It wrecks the Federal scheme against which I have been fighting for so long. It may also lead to the withdrawal of the whole Government policy'. (1)

The apparent success of the alliance between diehards and Princes was celebrated in a full-page Punch cartoon entitled 'The Raja Meri'.

What remained to be discovered was who or what had inspired the Princes' bombshell. Keane put it down to 'biased and ignorant' advice tendered by unscrupulous counsel, in particular J. R. Morgan, 'the constitutional jackal of the Morning Post and the diehards;

....... goers here, I do not know with what foundation, says that J. R. Morgan and the Morning Post actually sent the resolution out to India'. (2)

Explanations emanating from India were not, in the main, enlightening. The Viceroy's Secretary felt that the Princes' Ministers had been upset 'by the fact that they were given such a short time in which to give their views'. (3) Vyday was 'genuinely aggrieved' over the accession clause:

1. Churchill to Mrs. Churchill, 2nd March, 1935, cited in Gilbert M., op. cit. p. 606. Churchill's impression that the Princes had wrecked the Bill was strengthened when both Ormsby-Gore and J. C. C. Davidson himself, two of Hoare's most stalwart supporters, privately admitted to him that without the Princes, 'they themselves would have the gravest apprehension of going on with the Bill'. Ibid., p. 609.

2. See Punch, 6th March, 1935, reproduced overleaf. Beneath a depiction of Fothermore and a Maharaja standing shoulder to shoulder, the caption from Kipling reads, 'But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed nor Birth; when two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the end of the earth'.


5. Mivelle to Hailey, 21st March, 1935, Hailey's Papers, 28. This letter was shown to both Hoare and Mndlater Stewart at the India Office. See Hailey to Mivelle, 8th April, 1935, T.D.
THE RAJAHMERE.

"But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth."

[Lord Rothermere has sent telegrams to the native Princes, congratulating them "on their bold and decided action against the India Bill."]
C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer had promised the Maharaja a 21 gun salute and
feared for his position in Travancore in the face of popular agitation.

Only Krishnamachari had maintained that the difficulties
were being exaggerated. Brabourne, in Bombay, had been dining with
Bikaner and all that could be elucidated from that quarter was the
unremarkable disclosure that the Princes
had all become very jumpy following the Ministers' Delhi
meetings in mid February'.

Bikaner, when later faced by the Secretary of State, presented himself as
a keen Federationist and disassociated himself completely from the
proceedings at Bombay: a classic instance of Princely doubletalk.

Brabourne was inclined to trust to the advice of the Aga Khan, though
producing at best second-hand testimony to support it, 'go straight ahead
and present the Princes with a fait accompli'.

It is not clear to what extent the Princes' bombshell influenced
political opinion in India. Brabourne felt that it had swiftly receded
from popular interest in Bombay; Indian politicians were little
concerned and his own confidants saw it as 'a passing phase which will
disappear when the Bill is passed'. Support for this assessment came
from Sapru who confessed to being 'not very much disturbed by the situation
arising out of the Princes' meeting at Bombay', and he remained hopeful
that the Princes would come in. The Times of India also played down

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
   Brabourne, a good deal more energetic than Willingdon in these affairs,
   pressed Bikaner to write to the Viceroy at once stating that, whatever
   points remained to be cleared, the Princes did not intend to resile.
   Ibid.
the impact of the resolution. In one quarter, however, the events in Bombay were seen to have a special significance: a prominent Muslim politician assured Lothian that

'we are following the controversy between the Princes and the India office with the greatest interest. Sir Samuel Hoare has the support of every British Indian in his flight against the pretensions of the Princes'. (2)

A shrewd observer in India saw in the Bombay meeting an illustration of officialdom's ineptitude and, by implication, its remoteness from and indifference to the federal scheme:

'I was very surprised to learn that Viceregal circles here took a very gloomy view of the (Bombay) development; I anticipated it from the first'. (3)

Inglis was startled by the failure of the Government of India to monitor the Bombay meeting and indeed muzzle the resultant resolution. In this interpretation, the Princes had severely miscalculated:

'in making their resolution public they thought they had produced a sop for British Indian politicians; in reality the extremist press became more concerned about the home Government tightening up the Bill to suit the Princes than concerned about the Princes'. (4)

The very different priorities accorded by London and Delhi to Federation could scarcely be concealed much longer. The contrast in approach was underlined by Hailey when he wrote to the Viceroy's Private

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1. See The Times, 26th February, 1935.
2. Dr. Shafkat Ahmed Khan, a former Muslim Delegate to the Round Table Conference, to Lothian, 23rd March, 1935, _Lo.T._, GB/0/17/292, p. 375a.

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Inglis to Hoare, ibid. The Times correspondent in India shared this view: 'if by publishing the resolution, the Princes hoped to appease those British Indian elements who have been asking them to denounce Federation, the national press today must have disappointed them. While extremists welcome any complications likely to embarrass the Government they are also asking what are these amendments the Princes now seek? Are they in the interests of British India?'. See The Times, 26th February, 1935.
Secretary from the India Office:

'I think it has sometimes been difficult for us in India to realise the essential importance which the Federal issue occupies in the minds of the supporters of the Bill in England. To them, everything turns on the possibility of realising Federation with its revised Legislature at an early date'. (1)

The capacity of the Princes to destroy the reforms programme in its entirety was touched upon by Hailey when he postulated that, should hope of an early Federation evaporate,

'there will be an inevitable reaction regarding the scheme as a whole .... it is perhaps going too far to say that the Princes can, if they wish, prevent not only Federation but also Provincial Autonomy: but it is almost beginning to look a little like it'. (2)

The extreme delicacy of the Parliamentary position became, now more than ever, Hoare's leading theme to the Viceroy:

'Winston and his friends are convinced that Federation is dead, and many of our own supporters are seriously asking whether it is worth going on with the Bill'. (3)

At a specially convened meeting of the Joint Select Committee, the Members 'regarded the position with great apprehension'. Hoare found evidence both in the Committee and in the Commons of an increasing determination not to be blackmailed by Paramountcy questions not in themselves part of the Bill. The problem remained, how to call the Princes' bluff without creating a situation which would enable the Churchill bloc to torpedo the Bill. Hoare's solution lay in the publication as a White Paper of the Princes' correspondence following the Bombay meeting and the official response. This was a device

2. Ibid., pp. 6, 7.
4. Ibid., p. 1254.
5. Ibid. This impression was supported by Hailey's evidence: 'I think I could detect in the House generally a slight feeling that it would not be well to allow the Princes to exploit too far the position of advantage which they undoubtedly hold'. See Hailey to Neville, 4th March, 1935, Un., 28, p. 5.
7. Ibid.
forced upon Hoare by diehard pressure and the uncertainty in his own support:

'if I do not publish the correspondence myself, Winston and his friends are sure to publish it in the Morning Post ... the big majorities that I have had behind me in the debates are no guarantee of the position. If it looked as though I was withholding information from the House or misleading them upon essential matters, the Conservatives would go against me almost en masse'. (1)

In yet another attempt to stir the Viceroy into action on the Federal front, Hoare put forward a most sinister prognosis: should the Federal chapter have to be withdrawn, the Bill itself would be dropped to be followed by 'personal and political reactions of the most formidable character'. In his explanation of the Bombay fiasco to the Cabinet, Hoare did not dwell on any mismanagement in Delhi, but rather placed emphasis on that tendency of the Princes which

'has been to rake up every kind of difficulty including matters that had been settled long ago at the Round Table Conference and undue importance had been attached to details several of which were mere matter of drafting'. (2)

Hoare argued that the majority of points raised could be met by drafting amendments none of which would prejudice points of principle; indeed he proposed to stand firm on the method of accession. After a good deal of discussion, the Cabinet decided to take the Secretary of State's advice and proceed with the Bill, but Hoare warned the Viceroy that 'they were obviously disquieted by the recent developments'. (3)

1. Ibid., p. 1255. The relevant White Paper did contain an impressive range of documentary material relevant to the Princes' present position: the Hydari Committee's Report to Glancy; the Bombay Resolution; the subsequent letter from Intials et al. to the Viceroy; Hoare's subsequent despatch to the Viceroy together with a supporting memorandum meeting Princely objections; a provisional draft Instrument of Accession. See Views of Indian States: Correspondence relating to a Meeting of States' Rulers to discuss the Government of India Bill and a provisional draft Instrument of Accession, Cmd. 4263.

2. Ibid. to Willingdon, Ibid., p. 1255.
4. Ibid., p. 201, 2.
Willingdon's response smacked of a matchless effrontery: far from expressing remorse in connection with the Bombay fiasco, the Viceroy affected to be 'surprised at the general tone' of Hoare's letters and spoke out for his colleagues, 'I think we are blameless'. As to the charge that his advisers were lukewarm on All-India Federation, Willingdon protested

'really I must tell you that this is perfectly untrue, for we are all fully alive to the fact that if things go wrong with regard to the Princes, the whole Bill will have to disappear'.

Accustomed as Hoare was to contradictory statements from Delhi, even he might have looked askance at a particularly preposterous Viceroyal rejoinder:

'I assure you that I have always anticipated possible trouble when the Bill came out, I'm sure you will admit we have warned you of this for months past'.

Hoare felt the only course open to him was to reiterate the delicacy of his position in Parliament:

'so far as the Princes' Resolution goes, we are still walking on a volcano. Winston and his friends are honestly convinced that they have destroyed the Federation and their joy over it is really repulsive'.

The diehards continued to make hay with the Bombay Conference and spread rumours to the effect that Hoare was withholding information from the House. In consequence, the Commons were now very ready to scrutinise any deal concerning the Princes, particularly the Bangalore negotiations.

2. Ibid., p. 686.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 1262.
6. Hoare fretted over these proposed arrangements with Hoare: 'a very large number of Members are taking the closest possible interest in them and the opposition to the retrocession is by no means confined to the diehards'. Hoare advised Willingdon to slow drastically the negotiations until after the Bill was through. Ibid., p. 1263.
Hoare might well wonder where to turn for support in handling the
Princes. With evidence of chicanery on all sides, he was particularly
upset by the double-dealing of the influential Dewan of Travancore, now
very active in anti-Federal intrigue. While in London, the Dewan
repeatedly told Hoare 'that there was nothing he would not do to help
Federation on'; Willingdon was urged to stop M.very dangerous
activities'. The case of M.yer highlighted the extent to which the
Viceroy was out of touch:

'I had no idea, as you suggest in your letter, that he was actively
intriguing against Federation. I sometimes begin almost to despair
of the sincerity of people whom I have trusted for long years'. (2)

With a shrewd nose for what could be done to present Their
Highnesses as supporters of the Bill, and at the same time secure in
advance a favourable reception for the forthcoming White Paper on the
Bombay meeting, Butler prompted an approach, through Lothian, to the
more responsible press. (3) The editors of the 'Anchester Guardian' and
the News Chronicle were assured that

'the restlessness among the Princes is partly a put-up job through
Machavaram in the Morning Post and Mr. Churchill and partly a
bare-faced attempt on the part of a few to blackmail the Government
in order to relax 'Paramounty' which in effect is the power of the
Viceroy to intervene in the internal affairs of the States if
scandals occur'. (4)

1. Ibid., pp. 1264, 9.
duly despatched a written 'dressing down' to M. who he later
disclosed that certain 'unpleasant matters of a personal character'
were emerging. See Willingdon to Hoare, 6th April, 1936, ibid., p. 703.
Sir C.'s response was to flatly deny 'in any manner intriguing
against Federation: a man with his record 'was not going to be made
a cat's-paw of by the disheards'. See Sir C.'s sumasami M. to
Willingdon, 1st April, 1935, ibid., pp. 706-7.
4. Lothian to J. Bone, of the 'Anchester Guardian, and Sir W. Layton, of
Lothian argued strongly that the Federation represented an equitable arrangement and that it would materialise:

'the great majority of the Princes stand where they always have, namely, that if the Bill becomes law and is accepted by British India, they will adhere. Though I think the Princes are put in a very strong position the figures of their representation were agreed to by leaders of British India like Moti and Sapru and were not disputed by Gandhi at the First and Second Round Table Conferences'. (1)

Finally, the editors were exhorted to

'tell no support to what in effect has been a wrecking intrigue between a very small number of Princes and the diehard forces in this country'. (2)

Certainly, the publication of official papers relevant to the Bombay meeting had a steadying effect. Hoare's despatch to the Viceroy, the central document in the White Paper, exuded confidence and it concluded that the very detailed accompanying Memorandum would

'materially narrow the field of difference between the Princes' lawyers and the Parliamentary draftsmen'. (3)

This appeared to be a realistic forecast as Hailey subsequently reported making 'considerable progress with negotiations with the States' Lawyers'.

There remained, however, the sensitive question of Paramountcy to bedevil progress. The retired Political on the Council of India urged that the Princes should be given a hearing on this issue albeit outside the context of the Bill; otherwise, the Princes might combine in opposing Federation in the face of an unduly rigid official attitude. Hailey

1. Ibid. Congress, of course, were not represented at the First Round Table Conference either by Gandhi or by anyone else.

2. Ibid.

3. Despatch (Telegraphic) from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 11th March, 1935, Cmd. 1883, p. 28.

4. These were principally Walter Turner Monkton, M.C., O.O., subsequently Legal Adviser to the Viceroy; W.G. (Conservative) Bristol West, 1951-7; Minister of Labour and National Service 1951-5; Minister of Defence 1955, C. Alfred Green, K.C., O.C., O.C., Croix de Guerre; Standing Council to Oxford University since 1926. See Hailey to Vieville, 25th March, 1935, Hailey... 28. Hoare subsequently confirmed that the Princes' counsel had expressed satisfaction with the redraft of contentious clauses. See Hoare to Lothian, 25th March, 1935, Loth., 64/0/17/229, p. 39.

himself conceded that

'we might go a good deal further in regard to what the Secretary of State has called 'the clarifying of Paramountcy'.

Hoare too veered round to a move on Paramountcy to be effected through the channel of Political Agents dealing with individual Princes. In the event, Paramountcy did not emerge as a breaking point and Hydari now professed to dislike the idea of it being dragged into the controversy.

Hoare, in a rare moment of relaxation, confided to Lothian:

'it looks therefore, as if a very active intrigue between the opponents of the Bill in England and the opponents of it in India has, at any rate for the moment, been scotched'.

There was general agreement that Hoare had excelled himself in producing the Princes' white paper and very effectively defending it in the House despite a severe cold. Lothian waxed especially enthusiastic:

'more power to your elbow'.

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1. Hailey thought that the Government of India might do a good deal more to define the sorts of subjects where it might be possible to employ 'some form of arbitral treatment without invading the essential field of final discretion'. Hailey to Mieville, 25th March, 1935, *Unr...*, 28.


3. Hoare to Lothian, 25th March, 1935, *Unr...*, p. 319. The Paramountcy issue slipped from the limelight as the Princes in general came to appreciate the dangers in publishing their various prerogatives. As Willingdon put it: 'the great majority of Princes regard with considerable misgivings any attempt at defining Paramountcy; they fear that any such departure may handicap the Crown in protecting the States and they have come to realise that any acceptance of the underlying theory whereby a party to a dispute should be disqualified from being the "umpire" must, if carried to its logical conclusion, gravely embarrass their own relations with their Jagirdars and subordinates'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 2nd April, 1935, *Unr...*, 8, p. 696. Bhopal did publish a letter on the subject of suzerainty but this was not followed up by the big States and Hoare urged Willingdon to convey a strong hint to Bhopal through the local Political Officer 'that in bringing up the subject again in this form, he is treading on dangerous ground'. See Hoare to Willingdon, 16th May, 1935, *Unr...*, 4, pp. 1295, 6.


seemed to have improved substantially since the Bombay fiasco; yet Vierville, mulling over the events there, reached a realistic appraisal of the Princes' intentions:

'one fact has definitely emerged out of all this and that is that a large majority of the rulers themselves, for one reason or another, would do anything to get out of Federation'. (1)

But this was not to say that Federation was a dead duck, and Vierville concluded:

'I do not believe that they will run out - frankly I do not see how they can - their case will be a weak one and they realise it .... I incline to the view that being in the strong position that they are, they are playing the 'banya'.' (2)

Now, more than ever, it required a strong initiative from Delhi to whip the Princes into line. Moore kept up the pressure on the Viceroy by underplaying the impact of the Princes' bite paper and emphasising the 'uncomfortable' nature of the Parliamentary position:

The activities of the I. N. I. are more violent and ruthless than ever. Salisbury is again active and picketing both Baldwin and Neville. Many Conservatives who are doubtful about the Bill even wonder whether in the face of the German situation it is wise to go on with a programme which divides the party'. (3)

This failed to evoke any positive action from Willingdon beyond his reduction of Patiala to tears. Indeed, for the first time, the Viceroy discussed policy for India if and when the Bill went overboard, in itself a disquieting development. His general style soon resumed its contradictory blend of despondency and airy hopes:

'I am anticipating the worst and I still hope for the best and, as I say, I am inclined to think that if you tell the Princes quite definitely what they will get - go as far as you fairly can - and that they will get no more, I believe that they will ultimately come into Federation'. (4)

2. Ibid. Used in this sense 'banya' may be taken to represent a tightfisted businessman.
4. Willingdon to Moore, 18th March, 1935, Ibid., 8, p. 689. In his interview with the Viceroy, Patiala displayed monumental effrontery in effecting a pro-Federal stance. Willingdon told him straight out that 'we knew that he had been in the closest communication with the Morning Post and the diehards for the last two years'. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 690.
6. Ibid.
With the first shock of the Bombay crisis over, Willingdon moved from a position of 'I told you so' to one which ascribed the Princes' volte face to a collective capacity for base treachery:

'really, the more one hears of that gathering at Bombay, the more one almost despairs of the moral sense of any of them; and the lack of courage which was evidently shown by Bikaner and Bhopal, and also by several Ministers, in not refusing to agree to the Resolution which many of them disliked but which was carried by a majority consisting of Patiala and others, really makes one feel that you can have no trust or confidence in any of them. It is all very disappointing after 16 years of life here, of close association with nearly all these Princes, and of doing everything that I can to establish their position during the years I have lived amongst them'. (1)

Unfortunately for Willingdon, it was by no means clear that the Bombay Resolution emerged from a spontaneous princely reaction. It came to Hoare's notice that a senior Political, one Captain Colvin, had been closely associated with the Bombay proceedings and Hoare questioned, with some asperity,

'the impropriety of an active officer of the Political Department being associated in severe criticism of the Government of India'.(3)

In Colvin's defence, Willingdon advanced the curiously naive proposition that his secondment to Kashmir entitled Colvin to maintain a status having

'no relations with the Government of India and independent of us so long as we lend him to the State'. (4)

Willingdon used the same unlikely defence to counter Hoare's imputation that another Political Department recalcitrant was currently acting as Prime Minister of Jelhur.

2. Colvin, E. J. P., C.I.E. 1933, Central India House 1906; Political Department 1908; Resident Gwalior 1930; Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir State, 1932-37.
3. Hoare to Willingdon, 29th March, 1935, T.P.(1), 4, pp. 1278, 5. Colvin had been seconded from the Political Department to be Prime Minister of Kashmir, in the official version, at the request of the Ruler. See Willingdon to Hoare, 6th April, 1935, T.P.(1), 8, p. 704. He had been present at the meeting of States' Ministers in Delhi which had produced the Hydari Report hostile to Federation and, as Willingdon admitted, 'was involved in the unsavoury meeting in Bombay'. See Willingdon to Hoare, 24th March, 1935, ibid., p. 695.
As the Report Stage of the Bill neared its conclusion, even Churchill, a persistent critic between the beginning of business and cocktail time, conceded that 'of course the Government will get their beastly Bill through': he added with considerable prescience, 'but as the Princes will not come in, all the parts I have objected to will remain a dead letter'.

Supporters of the Bill could not afford to relax as rumours of further intrigues between diehards and Princes circulated. Hailey reported to the Viceroy's Secretary:

'there is a good deal of anxiety here lest the advent of some of the Princes for the Jubilee should be urged by the opposition as a ground for putting on some sort of Conference on Government in order to discuss Federal problems'.

Initially, three Princes had been invited to the Royal Jubilee Celebrations, but such was the King's wrath on receiving news of the Princes' Bombay volte face that he resolved to cancel the invitations. Hoare, regally summoned to Compton Place specifically to discuss the matter, found the King 'still deeply incensed against the Princes ..... he does not intend to have them over here'. In a very grudging fashion the King did finally relent and Willingdon warned the Princes concerned that they could anticipate a cool reception from His Majesty, once in England. Predictably, the bizarre activities of Patiala furnished a major embarrassment for the Secretary of State:

4. Bikaner, Bashrair and Patiala; this last represented a very curious choice in view of his notorious debauchery, the approaching bankruptcy of his State and his proven diehard affiliations.
'I hear that Patiala has taken most of the Savoy', complained Hoare, 'and is already giving orders for every kind of extravagance. I believe that he is at present in Rome intriguing at the Vatican for the Order of the Golden Spur'. (1)

News of Patiala's spectacular munificence was not well received in India: Willingdon purported to be 'filled with anxiety', since there were no funds available to back expenditure on this scale.

An ominous indication of the continuing diehard interest in the Princes was the alleged visit paid to Patiala in Paris by Courtauld and Gwynne. Gwynne had planned to stiffen up Patiala in Paris, 'before the wolves get at him'. Gwynne was forestalled by the Maharaja's sudden departure for Rome. Hoare, while very much on the alert, felt that the King's influence might be critical in averting more Princely pyrotechnics:

'we will keep our eyes and ears open. I would, however, guess that Patiala when he comes here and finds the atmosphere in the country and particularly in the Palace, will not burn his boats for favour of the diehards'. (5)

Hoare's prognostications appear to have been borne out by Patiala's subsequent demeanour in London. His Highness was to be found

'in most tearful mood .... he is, so far as we know, behaving quite well and is adopting a cautious attitude towards the diehards'. (6)

Willingdon took the precaution of writing directly to King George V, in advance of his audience with Patiala, forecasting that the Maharaja would declare himself, 'the strongest Federationist of anyone among the Princes'. (7)

2. A visit from Dholpur had confirmed the Viceroy's belief that Patiala's activities were to be charged to Chamber of Princes' expenses in London. Patiala had just wired Dholpur for a further lakh when only Rs 20,000 remained in the appropriate fund. See Willingdon to Hoare, 13th April, 1935, T.P.(1), 8, p. 711.
7. Willingdon to Hoare, 13th May, 1935, T.P.(1), 8, p. 756. In spite of his claimed intimacy over a long term with the Princes, Willingdon still did not know whether to view Patiala as 'a great fool - and a stupid one at that - or else he is the slipperiest customer that ever existed'. Ibid.
In the event, George V was not to be fobbed off with bland and absurd protestations: as Hoare described the character of the audience, the King 'seems to have given Patiala a proper dressing down. From what he told me he was very frank with him, saying that it was an outrageous affair for a great Indian Prince to intrigue with conspirators and a miserable correspondent of the Morning Post in India. Patiala seems to have been so overwhelmed with the audience that he asked leave at once to go off to Paris to keep clear of the diehards in London'. (1)

Thus it appeared that the likelihood of the diehards manufacturing another crisis through the medium of the Princes had greatly diminished; but it could not be entirely discounted as Hoare was reminded by the Governor of Bombay:

'I saw Madhava Rao, the little Morning Post rat, the day before yesterday, and whilst I gathered from him that they have now discharged most of their sudden bombshells, he hinted rather boastfully that he hoped they would be able to produce another alarmist connection with the Princes to coincide with the Debate in the Lords'. (2)

In general, the final drafting of the Bill made good progress. Hoare had expressed concern about certain issues which he regarded as approaching most closely to 'breaking points', but Hailey felt that agreement had been reached with Princes' counsel. Hoare confirmed that the amendments to be proposed at the Report Stage would cover the 'breaking points' as well as the many others to be raised by Monckton and Greene. As to the very sensitive question of inducements, Willingdon

3. These were as follows:-
   i) Finance - failure to provide that not more than 50 per cent of income tax should be given to the Provinces; and
   ii) Railways - provision that the Federal Railway Authority should have power to regulate (a) maximum and minimum fares, and (b) interchange of traffic.

Hoare also sought a formula whereby the States would not have to accept the Act as a whole. See Willingdon to Hoare, 29th April, 1935, T.P.(i), 8, p. 721.

4. As Hailey observed to Mieville, 'generally speaking I believe that we have met almost everything as far as drafting is concerned'. The only reservation concerned diehard intrigue: 'it is a little difficult to gather what is being done by Patiala and his friends'. See Hailey to Mieville, 16th May, 1935, Haie.P., 28.
urged that the support of Hydari, 'without doubt the leader from the Princes' point of view all through', would be cemented by granting him a Privy Councillorship in the New Year's Honours after the Reforms had been passed. The Viceroy rather naively observed,

'I know he would like it, for he blurted this out to me one day quite spontaneously'. (1) (2)

Hoare readily agreed to this douceur.

While one or two difficulties remained to be overcome, notably the claims of both Travancore and Hyderabad to an extra seat in the Council of State and two in the Assembly respectively, the India Bill seemed poised to enter the home straight with only the Third Reading ahead. Hoare was immensely cheered, on the eve of the debate, by news of the exclusion from the battery of Princes' counsel, of a known diehard influence, J. H. Morgan,

'a mischievous and conceited pedant. I am told at the Bar he is known as 'the artificial silk'. It was he who was chiefly responsible for the bad advice to the Princes when they first received the Committee Report. Since then he has been drafting the amendments for the diehards in the debates.' (4)

The Third Reading followed on predictable lines with the Secretary of State having to withstand a scarcely diminished onslaught from a well-drilled diehard faction. Allegations of bribery were again to the fore.

2. Hoare to Willingdon, 16th May, 1935, Ibid., 4, p. 1291. It did occur to Hoare then in canvassing for and accepting such an honour, Hydari might be courting the displeasure of his 'curious master', given the Nizam's notoriously suspicious and jealous nature. Ibid. See too Willingdon to Hoare, 27th May, 1925, T.P.(i), 8, p. 759.
4. For a biographical sketch of Morgan, see
5. On the eve of the Debate, Churchill gave a working dinner at Claridges to Page-Croft and their supporters; the coterie included Rothermere and Salisbury: 'a really remarkable dinner' enthused Page-Croft, which would 'steady the troops'. Cited in Gilbert, N., op. cit., p. 614.
A clause was picked up which appeared to grant exemption of Federal taxation, in respect of property in British India, only to a Federating Prince. An amendment to allow a Ruler the right to appeal to the Federal Court on the matter of tax assessment was interpreted by Page-Croft as 'a special privilege to the Rulers of Federated States'.

Sir Reginald Craddock harped on the lack of justification for the remission of States' tributes. The Duchess of Atholl was quite unable to understand 'how it can possibly be held that these proposed payments are not financial inducements - in other words, bribes'.

The amendments generally were described by Churchill as 'part of an attempt to sugar the pill for the Princes'. Sir Alfred Mond tabled a last ditch plea to summon the Chamber of Princes to give a decision on the Bill; Hoare swiftly jumped on this ploy.

Rather late in the day, a number of substantial points of criticism emanated from the Labour benches. Colonel Wedgewood noted an ambivalence in procedures which left options open to the Princes which were denied to British India. Attlee baulked at the drafting of clauses protecting the rights of Indian Rulers as distinct from States:

3. Ibid., col. 898.
4. Ibid., col. 901.
5. Ibid., 28th May, 1935, col. 959.
'are the Princes all going to be hedged about with some sanctity as if they are all kings?' (1)

A particularly telling observation was made by the Member for Caerphilly who argued that the dominant aim of the Government throughout had been to protect the Princes; 'the entrenchment of privilege' had materialised in the form of a Council of State artificially weighted in favour of the Princes:

'the effect of this instrument will be that progress in India will be utterly impossible except with the good will of this body of people who represent only autocratic individuals'. (3)

Perhaps the bleakest interpretation of the Bill was advanced by Colonel Wedgewood:

'If I were an Indian I should try to avoid this punishment, try to avoid being put forever under the control of Indian Princes, Indian Rajas, Indian millionaires, Brahmins so conservative that nothing on the Treasury Bench is so Conservative - put there forever without any possibility of freedom or democracy .... we are handing them the mummy of freedom, wrapped round in its cerements, endless bandage after endless bandage - dead for ever'. (4)

It is a reflection of the general ignorance in the House of Indian conditions that, in the course of this final grand airing of the India Bill, practically nothing was said relating to the interests of States' subjects.

It was left to the redoubtable Eleanor Rathbone to alert the House to:

1. Ibid., col. 630. Indeed the amendments accorded a spectacular degree of protection to 'ruling Families': as Attlee put it with some justice, 'why a member of a ruling family should be allowed to go into a Province and incite or be seditious or anything else, and no questions are to be asked, I do not know'. Ibid., 27th May, 1935, col. 851.


3. Ibid., col. 1728. Attlee too, remarked briefly on the over-representation of States at the Centre; ibid., 1927. Lansbury expressed amazement that a House of Commons at this time of day should pass a Bill giving the Princes such tremendous power over what was called a democratic constitution. Ibid., 5th June, 1935, col. 2002.

'the responsibilities that we have towards those 90,000 inhabitants of the Indian States, of whom we know so little and have heard so little, yet whose future will be inevitably and irrevocably affected'. (1)

Commenting on how rarely the powers of intervention had been exercised against Indian Princes, Miss Bathbone drew the very reasonable conclusion that once ancient treaties had been reaffirmed as part of a new bargain, and Princes became aware that the smooth working of the Federation depended on their good will, it would be all the more difficult to persuade the Viceroy to intervene on behalf of the subjects of Indian States.

A Government reply to the critics of the Bill had been worked out in some detail by Hoare and his colleagues. The Secretary of State held that the measures for the protection of Princes as specified in the Bill were privileges which had always existed and should go forward on that basis. (3) Congenitally irresolute Princes would note with pleasure that Sir Austen Chamberlain lent his very influential support to an amendment which voided the Princes' Instruments of Accession should the nature of the Federation alter in respect of protective clauses which affected the States. J. C. C. Davidson headed off the charge concerning financial inducements offered to Princes: proposals for compensation affected only four States and were made in return for the lapse of specific military guarantees. None of the Government spokesmen, however, could match

2. Ibid., col. 1812.
3. Hoare instanced as privileges of very long standing, the exemption of Princes from arrest in a civil suit under the Civil Procedure Code, Customs privileges, the maintenance of personal guards and escorts. Ibid., 23rd May, 1935, col. 631. An amendment protecting Rulers or members of their families from personal criticism was defended by the Attorney-General on the rather vague grounds that 'we are familiar with certain Rules in this House of an analogous character'. Ibid. p. 631.
4. Ibid., 27th May, 1935, col. 797.
5. Ibid., col. 906.
in terms of eloquence and majesty, the tour de force delivered by Churchill at the end of the debate. He forecast the future policy of the Princes with a fair degree of accuracy:

'even now I venture to hazard the opinion that the Princes of India will not come in and that the 50 per cent quota will not be achieved'. (2)

There was no question but that the Government would jump at getting a formal acceptance by a body of Princes, 'but they cannot get it and they know they cannot get it'. (3)

The Third Reading, which was carried by 386 votes to 122, had elucidated two starkly contrasting interpretations of the Bill for the consideration of the Princes. On the Government side, Captain Cazalet spoke with feeling of the 'Preservation of Princes Bill': 'isolated autocracy' surrounded by 'a sea of democratic Provinces' could hardly anticipate a secure future:

'I believe it will not be long before it will be seen how wise it has been on the part of the Princes, even at the cost of some small measure of their sovereign rights, to take a part in the All-India Federation, and how wise from our point of view it has been to set up a Federation which represents the autocratic Princes on one hand and the depressed classes on the other'. (5)

The opposite viewpoint emerged in the purple rhetoric of Page-Croft who, at two separate points in the debate described the Federation as 'the Princes' suicide club'. He reiterated the significance of the Princes' Bombay Resolution in its rejection of Federation:

'it is a fact that the Princes have never since met, much less reversed their unanimous decision. After all, why should the Princes take any other course when they remember the solemn pledge of successive Kings-Emperors to maintain their privileges, rights and dynasties, inviolate and inviolable - why should they enter the suicide club at Delhi, where they will find that their rule will be undermined and swamped and ultimately submerged by those who have made no secret of their determination to throw off any connection with Great Britain'. (7)

1. The House was packed to hear Churchill's speech; several hundred M.P.s made an exit immediately it ended, having heard, in the description of Christopher Addison, a former Labour Minister, 'a classic of Parliamentary oratory'. See Gilbert, W., op. cit., pp. 615, 6.
3. Ibid., col. 1918.
7. Ibid., 4th June, 1935, cols. 1747, 8.
Whichever path the Princes elected to follow, Hoare and Butler could safely assume that there was no shortage of evidence on which Their Highnesses might base a decision. By the time the Bill received the Royal Assent on 2nd August, 1935, following several low key debates in the Lords where the attendance 'was fewer than for rabbit snaring', no less than 1,951 speeches had been delivered on India filling 4,000 pages of Hansard with 15½ million words: Hoare himself had answered over 15,000 questions and made 600 speeches while shepherding the 473 clauses and 16 Schedules through all the critical stages; all in all the Bill occupied 40 sittings of the Commons and 61 days of detailed and often frenetic debate. The proceedings had their curious features: they produced (3) for Butler, 'some of the finest debates I have witnessed in the House'. But at least one or two Members shrewdly suspected that, regardless of the ostensibly Indian character of the debates, the real issues were concerned with domestic politics and linked to the ruination of Baldwin.

There has been a good deal of conjecture about Hoare's intentions for India. His biographer places special emphasis on Hoare's vision, his unique grasp of the full implications of the Federal ideal, so much the

4. R. J. Davies, the Labour Member for Westhoughton, Lancashire, commented on the surprising silence of the Members for his county, by tradition a bloc most sensitive to the Indian connection and numbering one tenth of the membership of the House. By contrast, the representatives of the South Coast, in particular Nipping, Bournemouth, Eastbourne and Chertsey, had repeatedly championed the cause of the Lancashire textile operatives. This 'India Pretence League' cut little ice with Davies: 'the Lancashire textile manufacturers and employees know that they are being used just as a pawn in the quarrel among the Tory party'. Davies' grasp of the political motives of his opponents was more certain than his grasp of English geography. H.C.D., 8th February, 1935, vol. 297, col. 1531.
prerequisite of Indian constitutional progress in the eyes of the Conservative Party. An authority with experience of both Indian and British politics testified to Hoare's role as the 'driving force' behind the Act; following his departure

'a blanket of inertia fell on both the India Office and the Government of India'. (2)

Without wishing to detract from Hoare's powers of endurance, these encomiums should be examined with care. On occasion his judgement had been disastrous, as with his selection of the personnel to serve with Davidson on the latter's States Enquiry Committee. It might also be urged that Hoare pressed on with Federation faut de mieux, and not expressly through any unique and visionary qualities which recognised positive and all-embracing merits in the formula which were hidden from others. The paucity of alternatives to Federation was graphically represented by Lothian:

'Taking the long view, I do not see any prospect of our being able to solve the Indian problem on our present lines of creating a gigantic parliamentary federation. We have got to proceed along these lines because we cannot go backwards and there are no other lines on which we can move forward'. (3)

The pursuit of Federation, however, should not be dismissed simply as the utilisation of the solitary exit from a constitutional impasse. An interpretation both sophisticated and scholarly, holds that Federation had been got up as a device to divert the demand for dominion status; this would go far to explain the promotion of the scheme by an overwhelmingly Conservative British Government. Indian observers were familiar with a cruder version of this theory which supposed that the granting of responsibility at the Centre conditional on Princely participation was the brainchild of Simon, who knew the Princes would

2. Reed, Sir S., op. cit., p. 198.
not come in and hence only provincial autonomy would come into operation. In truth, Hoare had no conception of a speedy Indian advance to nationhood. In dealing with one quite minor issue, Hoare lifted the veil to reveal an attitude of mind which could not contemplate the attainment of Indian sovereignty. Willingdon had requested that the Foreign Office should offer diplomatic training for Princes' younger relatives: in his refusal, Hoare made it clear that

'I do not contemplate that India will be able to assume control of her external relations within any measurable time'. (2)

Had Hoare been fired by a belief in Indian constitutional progress, the particular suitability of All-India Federation as its vehicle, and his mission to carry this through, then he would have accepted the Vicereignty rather than the Foreign Office, a choice offered by Baldwin in May 1935. (3)

One curious feature in the tale of the Indian Federation has remained relatively unremarked: the powerful and latent hostility of the Government of India to the Federal ideal. Converting Delhi to Federation may have struck Hoare ultimately as a task for Sisyphus. Initially, the Secretary of State ensconced in the India Office, 'neatly attired, sleek, with kid tops to his boots', felt himself to be the director of India's destiny. His sharp-eyed unofficial correspondent in India soon pointed out that

'he might push the tiller this way and that, but the ship would not respond'. (5)

Hoare's decision for the Foreign Office could well reflect alternating

5. Ibid.
sentiments of frustration and impotence vis-à-vis Indian affairs. Since
J. C. C. Davidson’s revelations, Willingdon’s bona fides had always been
in doubt. Throughout the period of his partnership with the Viceroy,
Hoare had met with endless stalling in the matter of consultation with
Princes and a long sequence of contradictory assessments of the Princes’
intentions which left the India Office totally unprepared for the Princes’
bombshell at Bombay in 1935. The involvement of a senior Political,
Colvin, in the notorious Bombay meeting was a pointer to the
reactionary influence of the Foreign and Political Department. Its
antagonism to Federation had been exposed initially by Keyes, confirmed
by Davidson, and repeatedly referred to with trepidation by both Makaar
and Sapru. There was good reason to believe that Willingdon was in the
pocket of a strong-willed Political Secretary. The disillusionment
of the Government of India with the Reforms coloured the reflections of its
leading light, Sir Malcolm Hailey, as the Bill entered its last stages:

'I begin to feel, that if we persist in the liberal policies for
India, our confidence must be in the strength of our principles
rather than in the capacity of India to turn them to good account
.... I often wish that I could turn round and oppose the Bill –
there would be far more fun in doing so' (3)

1. Willingdon was very cast down to find that no Garter was proposed for
him as just recompense for his constitutional labours: 'I came here
at a greater age than any other Viceroy, against my own wishes, but
because I thought it to be my duty .... this might have influenced
great minds'. Willingdon to Hoare, 22nd April, 1935, T.P. (c) vii: 3.

2. In the recollection of a well-placed witness within the Political
Department, Willingdon had 'implicit faith' in Sir Bertrand Glancy.
See too Keyes' supporting testimony to this effect, chapter 5, p. 409.
The first Indian to join the Political Department felt that Willingdon
was its creature. See Menon, K. P. S., Many Worlds, (1965), p. 131.

3. Hailey to Mieville, 8th April, 1935, Hailey's doubts about
Federation were expressed privately in a letter to a rising Political,
Terence Coen. See Coen, Sir T. C., op. cit., p. 102. Coen himself
favoured Partition rather than Federation as a constitutional solution.
Ibid., p. 102. Another leading Political, Sir William Barton, could
find little enthusiasm for the Reforms 'in any quarter'. See Barton,
One major consideration for Hoare, likely to influence his return to purely British politics, was the likelihood of a cool reception for the Reforms in India. Again and again the diehard lobby emphasised the resistance of political India to the new constitution. These charges were not without foundation. Quite striking testimony passed to Lothian by a South Indian missionary of some 30 years standing confirmed that 'most people in India are praying hard that the Bill may be wrecked on the rock of the Princes. The only people who really want the Bill are the Europeans who fear worse things are left. I never thought before that England could be so niggardly and reactionary in dealing with India. It is a bitter lesson for most of us. The only people who can make their voices heard seem to be the diehards and the Princes. Most people out here would like to see the Federal idea scrapped altogether. The more they see of it the less they like it. Let us have whatever measure of Swaraj we can get for British India they say and let us wait for the Federation till the people of the States come forward. We are tying a millstone round our necks, the weight of which we do not even know and how can we progress with this'. (1)

With the Bill almost on the Statute Book, these gloomy sentiments were echoed by Sapru:

'it continues to be attacked from practically all sides in India. The Indian liberals are particularly strong in their criticism of it mainly because of the association of the Princes and the narrow scope for responsibility at the Centre'. (2)

The final imponderable for any Secretary of State for India or indeed any potential Viceroy to reckon with was the mercurial disposition of the Princes themselves. In a limited sense it was true, as is urged in one monograph, that Their Highnesses constituted 'the principal party precluding the establishment of a Federation'. Closer investigation reveals that the Princes were very dependent on advice received and in

2. Sapru to Edward Thompson, 14th April, 1935, E.T.P.
this respect the diehard influence had been critical. The most telling evidence here is the extent to which the *Morning Post* group was able to stage-manage the Princes' Bombay Meeting in February, 1935. Willingdon let slip something of the Princes' grasp of evolving Indian constitutional change when he wrote to Hoare, at the end of five years of legalistic and political consultation in which Their Highnesses had been closely involved, that

'not more than 8 or 10 Princes know very much, or anything, about the Reforms Scheme. They rely entirely on their Ministers'.

These were the potentates to whom was entrusted a very substantial weightage in the new constitution, the much vaunted 'stabilising' force, the chosen arbiters of India's destiny, men for the most part medieval in disposition yet deputed to preside over India's political progress in the middle third of the twentieth century.

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1. The diehard success here rather outweighed the protestations of individual Princes that they had rejected the diehards' blandishments. There has been a tendency to play down the positive effect of diehard overtures to the Princes; it is apparent in oral evidence submitted by Sir Gerald Laithwaite, interviewed on 25th August, 1971.


3. The Act prescribed the following allocation of seats for the Federal Legislatures: Council of State, 156 from British India and not more than 104 from the Indian States - a permanent body, one third of whose Members retired every third year: Federal Assembly, 250 from British India and not more than 125 from the Indian States, to sit for five years if not dissolved earlier. See *The Government of India Act, 1935*, Part II, The Federation of India, clause 12.
Conclusion
In a recent examination of British policy towards the Indian States in the final years, it is supposed that the suspension of Federal negotiations with the Princes on 11th September, 1939, marked

'the beginning of a decline in the importance of the States in British thinking on the future of India'. (1)

But there are substantial grounds for assuming that this decline should be plotted from 1936 when an incoming Viceroy, keen to implement the Federal proposals, found himself confronted by a studied disinclination to move on the part of the bureaucracy of the Government of India. In requesting the Secretary of State to make it quite clear that Federation was the goal to which His Majesty's Government was committed, Linlithgow was not solely concerned to spur the Princes: he wished to

'take what steps are open to us in dealing with our own subordinates to quicken the pace'.

In particular, Linlithgow determined that Clancy and his senior men, together with 'the Simla whispering Gallery', should be well seized of his intentions and he rejected out of hand a Political Department timetable for Federation calculated along the lines of 'an almost indefinite series of six-monthly periods'. The Viceroy felt that the supporting telegram, when it came,

'has very greatly strengthened my hand here in dealing with the hesitant, whose numbers are sometimes somewhat surprising'. (3)

Over lunch with Federation's closest friend from British India, Sapru, in July 1936, Linlithgow confessed that while he was anxious to inaugurate Federation by 1938,

'he had to reckon with 'some people in Simla' (meaning thereby probably the Political Department) who visualised the Federation coming in 1939-40'. (4)

Given the conservatism of the Political Department, it may be doubted whether it was disposed to do anything to further Federation. That Linlithgow sensed this veiled hostility is implicit in his decision to bypass the Residents as his agency for negotiating with the Princes and

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3. Linlithgow to Zetland, 2nd August, 1936, ibid., p. 126.
employ three 'Special Representatives'. This move would stiffen resistance within the Political Department. Corfield later criticised the Viceroy for his lack of confidence in 'the personal touch'. At senior levels in the Government of India, outside the Political Department itself, confidence in Federation drained away. In August, 1938, Sapru reported that the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, was

'very doubtful about the Federation materialising. Some Governors and some members of the bureaucracy think that we shall have to wait till the Greek Kalends'.

Later that year the strong-willed Finance Member, P. J. Grigg, privately communicated the strongest objections to the general Federation offer which had at long last appeared. He argued that financial interests close to Congress had captured the Reserve Bank and emphasised the folly of handing over the Centre to a Congress 'implacably anti-British'.

A second major influence which doomed the Federation and, in consequence, left the Princes in an increasingly vulnerable situation, was the deadhand exercised by British diehards. Their Highnesses' habitual incapacity to recognise their safest route forward required that they be jostled into Federation. But it was abundantly clear to Linlithgow, at an early stage in his Viceroyalty, that a continuing diehard interest at Westminster stood on the qui vive for evidence of the exercise of pressure on Princes to Federate. Wetland felt a need


2. Sapru to Hakkar, 9th August, 1937, SAP., 2190, M. 154.

to keep a sharp eye on Parliament in all matters connected with
the establishment of the Federation. I have been warned more
than once by Salisbury and his friends that their acquiescence in
the passage of the various Orders in Council dealing with the
establishment of Provincial Autonomy must not be taken as an
indication of their attitude towards Federation which they regard
as the much more dangerous part of the scheme of self-government
embodied in the Act of 1935. And I do not doubt that everything
we do in the furtherance of Federation will be scrutinised with a
highly critical and jaundiced eye'. (1)

A recurring theme in Zetland's correspondence was his depiction of the
Princes as 'shy birds' likely to be scared off easily. At regular
intervals the Secretary of State emphasised the need to 'walk with
circumspection' in negotiations with the Princes and to steer well clear
of 'the accursed word 'bribe'". R. A. Butler had gone out of his
way to alert Zetland to the fact that

'Winston warns him from time to time that he and his friends will
keep a sharp look out for any indication that pressure is being
brought to bear on the Princes'. (4)

At the heart of the sensitivity of the British Government to styles
of negotiation with the Princes, was the fear that the diehards would
re-emerge to divide the Conservative Party once more should a whiff of
controversy taint the Federal transactions. Neville Chamberlain, in
particular, set himself against any such development. When, in the
summer of 1939, the Princes appeared to veer away from Federation,
Linlithgow requested as a matter of urgency that a declaration of intent
regarding Federation be made in Parliament by His Majesty's Government;
Zetland shied away. Such a move

'would very easily stimulate the diehards ..... speeches would almost
certainly be made by Salisbury, Rempellier, Lloyd and probably
others, which could be calculated to encourage the Princes in their
resistance; for as you know, it is most difficult to find speakers to
support the Government view in questions of this kind'. (6)

2. Zetland to Linlithgow, 20th December, 1936, ibid., p. 130.
Following the suspension of Federation on the outbreak of war, Zetland poured cold water on Linlithgow's suggestion that confidential negotiations with the Princes should be kept alive. Understandably, informed Indian opinion drew its own conclusions from the apparent lack of enthusiasm for Federation in both Delhi and Whitehall. Linlithgow was informed by the Indian representative of the Associated Press that 'the impression that we were lying back, and that the Federation was being allowed to recede into the background, was gaining ground markedly'. (2)

Much the same information reached Lord Lothian, on tour in India in 1938, from a source close to the Princes. For thirteen months the British had allegedly preserved an absolute silence regarding Federation, 'leaving us to perish by neglect in the outer darkness. I tried more than once to get them to talk, but the word accession was tabu both at the India Office and the Viceroy's House'. (3)

Whenever Linlithgow sensed the need to take a strong line, as with Hyderabad in late 1938, he was obliged to limit his pressure to short of the point

'at which Hydari would find ground for whistling up diehard support in London'. (4)

On the eve of a critical meeting of Princes in June 1939 to consider the Federal offer, news of diehard activities in London depressed Linlithgow. The Viceroy felt that he could contain the efforts of the O'Dwayers and Page Crofts,

'but I imagine that there may be beginning to grow a slight revival of interest among the new members'. (5)

Ultimately, Linlithgow came to feel that the scales were tipped against him:

1. Zetland to Linlithgow, 4th January, 1940, L.P., 12, p. 7; see too Zetland to Linlithgow, 21st February, 1940, ibid., p. 72.
2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 22nd December, 1937, L.P., 14, p. 487.
5. Linlithgow to Zetland, 26th May, 1939, L.P., 17, p. 238. A prominent Muslim guest at a diehard dinner briefed Zetland fully on points made, most of which charged the British authorities with forcing the Princes into Federation. See F. K. Noon to Zetland, 11th May, 1939, ibid., pp. 242, 3.
'I wish our hands were a little freer than they actually are as regards bringing some pressure to bear for the Princes are clearly turning to the fullest advantage our anxiety to let them make up their own minds'. (1)

Symptomatic of the extreme caution exercised by the Home Government in matters touching the States was Hoare's plea to Lord Lothian, during his 1938 peregrinations, to avoid raising the question of civil liberties in any discussions with Princes; they might then run from Federation for good.

Thus quite apart from the baleful influence of acknowledged British diehards, Linlithgow had to contend with obstruction from Zetland and the Cabinet. The Secretary of State contested the Viceroy's recommendation that the Federating States be allowed to retain the match and sugar excise. Only Linlithgow's insistence that the Princes would not federate on any other terms, backed up by the physical presence of the Viceroy in London, induced Zetland to take the excise concessions to the Cabinet. Although agreement to the proposal was eventually secured, it attracted much criticism particularly from Hoare. The sense of expediency which had directed Hoare's former championship of Federation had now evaporated. As to the implementation of the Federal sections of the India Act, its chief architect was now 'anxious to postpone the evil day as long as possible'.

On the eve of war, with the Princes once more shaping to resile, further unhelpful comment emanated from the Cabinet when Halifax, with the authority of a former Viceroy, expressed

5. The majority of the Cabinet were not greatly concerned one way or another. As Zetland concluded in resigned fashion: 'the average member of the Cabinet looks upon memoranda by the Secretary of State for India as tiresome if inevitable intrusions'. See Zetland to Brabourne, 2nd August, 1938, Z.P., 10, pp. 28, 9.
sympathy with the Nizam's objections and proposed to meet the Nizam and other Princes by conceding, for an initial term of years, that all federal subjects should be administered by Princes' Officers. No measure was more likely to excite wrath in British India and kill the appetite for Federation there.

Arguably, the single most powerful influence in scaling down the importance of the Princely bloc in British eyes was the switch in Congress policy which produced a rash of disorders in States of all descriptions, from Hyderabad to Kashmir and from Rajputana to the Orissa States, in late 1938 and early 1939. A traditional British conviction, which envisaged the States as massive bulwarks impervious to Congress vapourings, was discredited in a matter of weeks. Zetland felt that Gandhi's decision to organise a frontal attack on the States was due to the failure of Linlithgow, following his London leave, to announce substantial modifications of the Federal provisions in the 1935 Act. Gandhi now appeared to be bent on securing the introduction of responsible government in the States by a tour de force. As expressed to Linlithgow, in the interview of April, 1938, one of Gandhi's two cardinal points concerned the acceptance by the States of the principal of popular choice in the machinery for choosing their representatives at the Centre. The Mahatma chose his ground well: the British found that they could no longer control the accessibility of Indian States to leading Congressmen. In December 1938, Linlithgow learned 'with surprise and distaste' that Vallabhbhai Patel had visited Rajkot and concluded a settlement with the Ruler which 'completely concedes the Congress demands on every point'.

The subsequent wrigglings of the Thakore, and the arrival of Gandhi on the spot to commence a hunger strike, were developments which served to embarrass both the Viceroy and Secretary of State. Zetland felt profoundly uneasy about the whole affair: he took the Rajkot Ruler to be 'a worthless creature ... I am not certain that in this particular case we could say conscientiously that we had not attempted to stand in the way of the Ruler to take steps to liberalise the form of government in his State'. (1)

Nor did the disturbances in Hyderabad in 1939 show the Nizam in a very favourable light. Zetland, while suspecting that Congress had a hand in stirring things up, noted that the claims of the Hindu Arya Samaj regarding temples and schools seemed 'not unreasonable'. As the Secretary of State remarked whimsically to Linlithgow:

'90% of the population of Hyderabad are Hindu and even majorities have their rights'. (3)

For his part, the Viceroy, reviewing the disorders at Talcher in the Eastern States Agency and in Jaipur, and knowing something of the inadequacy of the Rulers and Durbars concerned, admitted privately that his sympathies lay with Gandhi and his supporters.

With the Princes fast losing ground as prestigious allies of the British, consideration was sure to be given to the potential of the third party in the Federal triangle as a counterweight to Congress. It was pointed out to Linlithgow by the Governor of the Punjab in October 1937

'that sufficient pressure brought upon Congress by a solid Muslim front may result in getting Congress to adopt a more reasonable attitude'. (5)

Face to face with Gandhi in 1938, the Viceroy countered his demands for popularly elected Federal Representatives from the States by arguing that

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1. Zetland to Linlithgow, 12th February, 1939, E.P., 11, p. 36.
2. Zetland to Linlithgow, 13th June, 1939, ibid., p. 142; see too Zetland to Linlithgow, 22nd May, 1939, ibid., p. 127.
'the Muslims would at once insist upon the introduction within the States of measures designed to ensure to them their due share of representatives'.

Was it wise to introduce communal politics to the States asked Linlithgow.

By the end of 1938, it seemed to the Viceroy to be very much in Congress interests to drop its insistence, as a preliminary to Federation, on the establishment of Parliamentary institutions in the States:

'the growing interest in issues such as Pakistan left the very strong impression on me that other parties too were looking to the future and making their plans'. (2)

With Linlithgow in London, the Acting Viceroy reported approaches from leading Muslim spokesmen, Jinnah and Sikander Hyat Khan, both of whom in their different ways expressed the conviction:

"that we are mad to go ahead with the Federal scheme, which is obviously playing straight into the hands of Congress, and that the Muslims' given a fair deal by us would stand by us through thick and thin". (3)

Naturally, the Muslims kept a close eye on the course of Congress-inspired disorders in the States. This attention influenced British policy. Linlithgow, noting the Muslim interest in Rajkot, felt that whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, the British Government should not throw over those Rulers under pressure:

'the Muslims would draw their own inference that as the British had abandoned those ancient and trusted valuable allies of the Crown, so the Muslims would be abandoned in due course'. (4)

Inevitably, the implacable opposition of Jinnah to Federation influenced the Muslim Princes. By July, 1939, Bhopal had come out against Federation. More importantly, the Nizam had taken up an uncompromising stance. Linlithgow surmised that 'Jinnah had been working on him'. This intelligence did not surprise the Secretary of State

2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 24th November, 1938, ibid., p. 547.
3. Brabourne to Zetland, 19th August, 1938, Z.E.P., 16, p. 41. Muslim suspicions of Federation were likely to be intensified as a result of declarations by the Hindu Mahasabha to the effect that the chance of Federation should not be missed. See Linlithgow to Zetland, 22nd December, 1937, Z.E.P., 14, p. 487.
5. Linlithgow to Zetland, 10th August, 1939, Z.E.P., 18, p. 55.
who took Junagadh's refusal to accept the Federal terms as further support for

'the fears that I have had for some time past as to the probable attitude of the Muslim Princes'. (1)

A shrewd analysis of the shifting balance of political power in India was composed for Lord Lothian's benefit in 1939 by the visiting author and historian, Guy Wint. His investigatory survey built up the potential of the Muslim alliance and correspondingly relegated the influence of the Princely bloc where there was an urgent need for administrative and constitutional reform. To secure this,

'coercion will be needed and this requires the reorganisation of the Political Department. So long as we do not run foul of the Nostrums we need not particularly fear alienating the sympathy of the Princes. Their power to aid us (over the long period) or harm us is small'. (2)

Thus, it may be established that three major influences behind the relative eclipse of the Princes as Britain's allies in India were respectively the unimaginative policies of British Conservatism, the advent of Congress aggression, and the appearance of Muslim opportunism. There remains to be considered one quite fundamental weakness in the Princes' position. This concerns the manifest lack of talent, leadership, political acumen, even instinct for survival, which so characterised the Princely Order of the later 'thirties. Of that clique of colourful potentates which so mesmerised Montagu and the more gullible Englishmen of the day, only Bikaner was still active by 1939. The decline of Bikaner was symbolic of the setting of the Princes star. Fo so long the prize Prince and respected statesman at Delhi and Geneva, Bikaner appeared to Wylie in 1937 as

'an out-of-date windbag whose capacity for self-advertisement is very nearly exhausted'. (4)

3. Of that glittering company, the Jam Sahib had died in 1933; Alwar, deposed that same year, died in 1937; Udaipur had passed away in his near bankrupt State in the following year.
This unflattering estimate of the Maharaja was confirmed by Linlithgow's impressions gathered at the 1937 Chamber of Princes session:

'he seems to me to have aged greatly in the last 4 or 5 years, and I have the feeling that there is not now very much left behind the impressive facade of shoulders and moustaches .... I am told that most of the Princes now regard him as a joke and this I can well believe'. (1)

Given the intellectual limitations of the Princes, they were very far from a real understanding of the opportunities offered to them by Federation. As one of Linlithgow's special emissaries, Wylie found that a first duty required the clearing away of

'a good many of the more blatant misconceptions which the States have been harbouring on the whole subject. So far - not even in the case of Baroda - has a State displayed any practical appreciation of the content of the Government of India Act'. (2)

The Princes' confusion was intensified by the retention, through the agency of Bikaner and some of the smaller Princes,

'of a whole battery of lawyers including some very loud-mouthed American experts'. (3)

The endless perorations of legal intermediaries did much to dull the receptivity of Princes to Federal propositions and a disgruntled Viceroy confided to Zetland that

'if we are ever to get going, you and I will be required to turn the lawyers out of the room and do the best we can in the light of our common sense'. (4)

In the Princes' defence, it might be said that their growing suspicions of British Indian intentions towards them were not entirely irrational. With the outbreak of Congress-inspired disorders, the Acting-Viceroy noted that both the Orissa and Bengal Governments refused to send police aid to the beleaguered State of Bhikkanal.

4. Linlithgow to Zetland, 16th December, 1937, Z.P., 14, p. 473. Both Viceroy and Secretary of State were convinced that the first interest of the Princes' legal advisers was monetary. See Zetland to Linlithgow, 2nd September, 1936, Z.P., 6, p. 71; Linlithgow to Zetland, 17th September, 1936, Z.P., 13, p. 177.
Brabourne subsequently commented:

'Congress Governments are unwilling to lend their police to assist the States in keeping order and are also unwilling to take overt steps such as the enforcement of the States Protection Act, to prevent agitation from being conducted from within their borders'. (1)

Zetland lighted upon the anomaly subsumed in the suggestion of a 'Common Police Force' with jurisdiction in both the Eastern States and adjoining British territories. The Viceroy and his advisers might feel

'that it would be a bad policy to be associated with forces whose principal functions is to suppress in the States agitation inspired by a party which is in power throughout the greater part of British India'. (2)

The Secretary of State believed that the hostility elicited by Princes towards Federation in evidence at the 1939 Bombay Conference

'was due very largely to fears generated by the Congress attack on the States last winter, and to inferences which they drew from the fact that no Governor had been willing to put the provisions of the States Protection Act into force against the advice of his Ministers'. (3)

The decision of the 1939 Princes Conference against Federation came as 'a surprise' to the Viceroy and his advisers. In its aftermath, Linlithgow dwelt on the serious shortcomings of the Rulers. With the recognition implanted now in the highest quarters, of the collective inadequacy of the Princes, their last chance of retaining a stake in the constitutional formula for the future slipped away. Linlithgow mused:

'by experience, I do not however attach too much importance to any sentiment which Their Highnesses may express. They are easily led and frightened one day but they are within 24 hours, if the situation improves, as full of hope as ever that they may be able to get away with an arrangement favourable to themselves ..... there are times when one feels that the material which you and I are given to work with is very difficult indeed'. (4)

Zetland fully reciprocated the Viceroy's sentiments regarding the difficulty of moulding the Princes into a responsible political force; a case of 'having to make bricks without straw' as the Secretary of State put it. (5)

4. Linlithgow to Zetland, 18th September, 1939, Z.P., 18, p. 129.
Of landed stock himself, Linlithgow entertained ambivalent feelings about the Princes. He was conscious of a degree of fellow-feeling for their predicament and indeed for that of the landed interest in India generally. However, this sympathy came to be tempered by a strong conviction that in the sphere of reforms:

'Federation or no Federation, there is no question about it that at the stage things have reached, Their Highnesses will have no choice but to buckle down in these matters'.

In early 1939, the Viceroy questioned Bikaner in the stiffest terms about where retiral into what Linlithgow called 'constitutional purdah' would leave the Princes? Bikaner lamely conceded that 'we must all do some hard thinking'. The Viceroy barely refrained from remarking that

'no degree of intellectual difficulty had so far been held to excuse any creature discovered in the act of devouring its own young'.

Looking back from the vantage point of 1939, Zetland realistically recognised that the suppositions of the British constitutional planners had gone drastically wrong. He believed that the framers of the India Bill had somehow been beguiled by

'previous experience of the conservatism and inertia of the immemorial East ..... the very first election had placed Congress in unchallenged control of the administration over a great part of the country'.

A second major expectation was

'in prospect of being falsified by the rapid capitulation of the Princes to the attacks upon them by Congress'.

This criticism of the flawed projections behind the 1935 Act may be extended, legitimately, to cover the longer term formulation of policy towards the

1. On the way back from Nepal in December 1936 with a bag of 14 tigers, a bear and three rhinoceros, Linlithgow spent a few hours with the Maharaja of Darbhanga at a vast house party of representatives of the landed interest from various provinces. 'I could not help feeling very real sympathy', Linlithgow remarked, 'with their perplexity in the face of a situation so different from any they have anticipated and so decisively sudden in its development'.

2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 7th March, 1939, _P., 17, pp. 111, 2.


Princes. The ill-conceived strategy, which resurrected the Princes as traditional allies, and batten onto their incorporation as key 'stabilising' elements in the new constitution, showed up British politicians and administrators generally in a bad light. So few on the British side had an accurate appreciation of how Princely rule operated. Montagu had been thoroughly duped by Alwar and his more plausible fellow-Rulers. From the Conservative benches little was glimpsed beyond the sporting feats of Ranji in one generation and Jaipur in the next. The Labour politicians were scarcely better placed, having an absurdly high appreciation of the Princes' worth. Irwin, who was as well drilled on conditions in Their Highnesses' territories as any Viceroy, did nothing to follow up his circular of 1926 on administrative reform in the States. Harcourt Butler, whose Report implausibly lauded the tide of progress surging through the States, knowingly stoked the fires of complacency. Willingdon's flamboyant paternalism encouraged the survival of medievalism both in Durbars and in the Political Department. Clancy and Hailey made known their confidence that the spell of autocracy was as effective as ever.

Among the small band in the British ranks who recognised the Princes' dilemma as political change in India accelerated, the excitable and indiscreet Resident at Hyderabad in the early 'thirties might be singled out. Keyes understood the positive opportunities which Federation held for the Princes and possessed the vision and tenacity necessary to steer them towards involvement in an All-Indian polity. His influence was systematically undermined by his own Department and by Hydari.

J. C. C. Davidson, too, had tendered shrewd advice to Their Highnesses directed towards the formation of an All-Indian aristocratic and landowning party, spearheaded by the best brains which the considerable resources of such a consortium could command. This far-sighted guidance was not acted upon.

The most striking conclusion to be drawn from the conduct of British policy towards the Princes is the extent to which it reflects a poverty of initiative and absence of foresight. While Linlithgow was later to declare that during the sittings of the Joint Select Committee on the India Bill he had not himself anticipated that the Princes would act as a permanent brake on Indian constitutional advance, this remained a major misconception held by most of his colleagues. The rise and fall of the Federal scheme serves as a striking indictment of the sterility of British constitutional planning for India. Only in the circumstances of drift and indecision in imperial councils could the leaderless and self-destructing Order of Indian Princes have emerged, even temporarily, as the apparently dominant force destined to preside in the future legislatures of India. The folly of it all broke on Linlithgow in April 1939 when, having denounced the latest extravagances of Holkar, he confided to the Secretary of State:

'sometimes at the end of a long and laborious day spent largely in the endeavour to keep these potentates on the thrones of their ancestors, one is tempted to wonder whether the game is worth the candle'. (2)

1. Linlithgow to Zetland, 12th April, 1939, Z.F., 17, p. 171.
2. Linlithgow to Zetland, 4th April, 1939, ibid., p. 150.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 2
Delegates and Advisers representing the Indian States at the First Round Table Conference: compiled from Indian Round Table Conference (First Session) 1930-1931, Proceedings, Cmd. 2778, pp. 11-24.

APPENDIX 3
Delegates and their staff representing the Indian States at the Second Round Table Conference: compiled from Indian Round Table Conference (Second Session), 1931, Proceedings, Cmd. 3997, pp. 7-11.

APPENDIX 4
Delegates and their staff representing the Indian States at the Third Round Table Conference: compiled from Indian Round Table Conference (Third Session) 1932, Proceedings, Cmd. 4238, pp. 6-8.

APPENDIX 5
Letter from His Grace the Duke of Argyll et al. to Patiala, July, 1934, T.P.(i), 8, pp. 605-7.

APPENDIX 6
Letter from Bhupinder Singh of Patiala et al. to H. A. Gwynne, 20th October, 1934, T.P.(i), 8, pp. 607, 8.

APPENDIX 7
Telegram from Rothermere to Sawatwadi, 23rd January, 1935, C.R.R., R/1/20/138

APPENDIX 8
Telegram from Rothermere to Rampur, 2nd January, 1935, C.R.R., R/1/20/138

APPENDIX 9
Telegram from Rothermere to Rampur, 31st January, 1935, C.R.R., R/1/20/138
## APPENDIX I

### STATEMENT SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE STATES, WITH PARTICULARS AS TO AREA, POPULATION, REVENUE, &c.

#### I. Five large States in direct Political Relations with the Government of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepal*</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>4,000,000 (approximate), Hindus and Buddhists</td>
<td>1,50</td>
<td>Maharaja, Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident in Nepal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>82,698</td>
<td>11,141,147, chiefly Hindus and Muhammadans.</td>
<td>2,99</td>
<td>Nizam, Turk; Suni Muhammadan.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident at Hyderabad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>29,444</td>
<td>5,539,399, chiefly Hindus</td>
<td>1,90</td>
<td>Maharaja, Kshattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident in Mysore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baroda</td>
<td>8,693</td>
<td>1,952,692</td>
<td>1,23</td>
<td>Maharaja, Marathia: Hindu.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident at Baroda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 155.141 | 15,538,811 | 9.09

---

* Nepal differs from the other Native States dealt with in this chapter in that it is independent in respect to its internal administration. Its foreign relations are, however, controlled by the Government of India; it is bound to receive a British Resident; and it cannot take Europeans into its service without the sanction of the Government of India.

† Excluding Berar.

#### II. 148 States, forming the Central India Agency, under the Agent to the Governor-General in Central India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gwalior</td>
<td>25,041</td>
<td>3,933,001, chiefly Hindus</td>
<td>1,63</td>
<td>Maharaja, Marathia: Hindu.</td>
<td>19 (21 within Gwalior territory).</td>
<td>Resident at Gwalior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indore</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>850,690</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Maharaja, Marathia: Hindu.</td>
<td>19 (21 within Indore territory).</td>
<td>Resident at Indore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhopāl</td>
<td>6,819</td>
<td>664,961</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Nawād (m.), Begam (f.), Afghān: Muhammadan.</td>
<td>19 (21 within Bhopāl territory).</td>
<td>Political Agent in Bhopāl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewah</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>1,327,385</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Maharaja, Baghel Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent in Baghel-khand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchha</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>321,634</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maharaja, Bundelā Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17 (including 2 guns personal to the present chief).</td>
<td>Political Agent in Bundel-khand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datāli</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>173,729</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maharaja, Bundelā Itajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Resident at Datāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhār</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>142,115</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rajā, Ponwār Marathā: Hindu.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Political Agent in Jhār.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaorā</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>84,202</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nawād, Pathān: Muhammadan.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Political Agent in Jaorā.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panna</td>
<td>2,492</td>
<td>191,096</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maharaja, Bundelā Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Political Agent in Panna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhatarpur.</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>155,139</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maharaja, Ponwār Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Political Agent in Chhatarpur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charchāri</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>123,284</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maharaja, Bundelā Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Political Agent in Charchāri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 Minor States*.</td>
<td>13,351</td>
<td>1,638,491</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Maharaja, Bundelā Rajput: Hindu.</td>
<td>8 (21 within Kashmir territory).</td>
<td>Distributed through the charges of the above-mentioned officers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 27,398 | 8,510,317 | 4.21

* Of these, however, sixteen are not really States, as their chiefs now possess no land but only guaranteed cash revenues.
III. Twenty States, forming the Rājputāna Agency, under the Agent to the Governor-General in Rājputāna—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate square revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Udaipur (Me¬</td>
<td>11,561</td>
<td>1,018,805, chiefly Hindus and Bhils.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Maharāṇā, Sesodia Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>21 (including 3 guns personal to the present chief).</td>
<td>Resident in Mewār.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaipur</td>
<td>13,579</td>
<td>2,638,666, chiefly Hindus</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Maharājā, Kachwāḥa Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>21 (including 4 guns personal to the present chief).</td>
<td>Resident at Jaipur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jodhpur (Mār¬</td>
<td>34,963</td>
<td>1,935,662</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Maharājā, Rathor Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Resident in the Western States of Rājputāna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikaner</td>
<td>12,311</td>
<td>845,17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Maharājā, Rathor Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent in Bikaner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kota</td>
<td>5,654</td>
<td>344,879</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Maharājā, Hāra Chauhān Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent in Kota and Jhālāwār.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonk (partly in Central India.)</td>
<td>9,553</td>
<td>373,201</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nanāb, Pathān: Hūman-mādan.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent in Haraoṭi and Tonk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96,753</td>
<td>7,642,408</td>
<td>2,46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brought forward 196,763 7,642,408 2,46

Bundi 2,220 1,71,347, chiefly Hindus. 7 Maharāṇā, Hāra Chauhān Rājput: Hindu. 17 Political Agent in Bikaner.
Karauli 1,362 165,786 5 Maharājā, Jālōn Rājput: Hindu. 17 Political Agent in the Eastern States of Rājputāna.
Dholpur 1,155 270,973 10 Maharājā Rānā, Jāt: Hindu. 15 Political Agent in the Eastern States of Rājputāna.
Hānsāwāra 1,046 165,280, chiefly Animists (Bhils). 14 Maharāṭhī, Sesodia Rājput: Hindu. 15 Assistant to the Resident in Mewār.
Sirohi 1,064 154,544, chiefly Hindus. 3 Maharāṇa, Deora Chauhān Rājput: Hindu. 15 Resident in the Western States of Rājputāna.
7 Minor States 20,857 451,090 172 | | Distributed through the charges of the above-mentioned officers. |
### IV. Two States included in the Baluchistân Agency, under the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistân

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalat</td>
<td>73,593</td>
<td>37,531*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Khân or Wâli, Brâhui: Sunni Muhammadan.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Political Agent in Kalât.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Bela</td>
<td>6,441</td>
<td>6,109</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jam, Kureshi Arab: Sunni Muhammadan.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>78,034</strong></td>
<td><strong>428,640</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is the census figure as modified with reference to a subsequent transfer of territory to British administration: the population of Khân and Makrân is estimated further at about 90,000.

### V. States in Political Relations with Local Governments

#### (a) Madras (Five States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travancore</td>
<td>7,091</td>
<td>2,954,157, chiefly Hindus and Christians</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>Mahârânjâ, Kashtriyâ: Hindu.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Resident in Travancore and Cochin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochin</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>812,025</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Râjâ, Kashtriyâ: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Collector of Trichinopoly (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudukottai</td>
<td>1,361</td>
<td>380,440, Hindus.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Râjâ, Kallar: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Minor States</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>43,464</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,069</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,188,886</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,41</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### (b) Bombay (354 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cutch</td>
<td>7,616</td>
<td>488,022</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Maharâoj, Jâdeja Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent in Cutch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharipur</td>
<td>6,029</td>
<td>199,313, chiefly Muhammadan.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mir, Tîlpur Baloch: Muhammadan.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Political Agent for Kharipur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idar</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>168,557, chiefly Hindu.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maharâoj, Râthor Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Political Agent for Mahi Kântha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhavnagar</td>
<td>1,860</td>
<td>412,664</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Thâkur Sîkî, Ghel Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Agent to the Governor in Kathiâwar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junârgâh</td>
<td>3,274</td>
<td>395,428</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Nanâb, Pathân: Muhammadan.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navângar</td>
<td>3,791</td>
<td>336,779</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Jana, Jâdeja Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pâlânâm</td>
<td>5,177</td>
<td>222,027</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dinâm, Pathân: Muhammadan.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondal</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>162,859</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Thâkur Sîkî, Jâdeja Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Agent to the Governor in Kathiâwar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajpâla</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>117,175</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Maharâoj, Ghel Râjput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Collector of Poona (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhor</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>137,268</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Funt Sâchî, Brâhman: Hindu.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Political Agent for the Southern Marâthi Country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sângli</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>226,138</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thâkur, Brâhman: Hindu.</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342 Minor States</td>
<td>29,887</td>
<td>3,131,817</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,751</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,908,648</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (c) Bengal (30 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>2,818</td>
<td>59,014, chiefly Buddhist and Hindus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maharajah, Tibetan: Buddhist.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Political Officer, Sikkim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td>166,975, chiefly Hindus and Muhammadans.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Maharajah, Khattriya: Brahmo.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Commissioner of Rājāshāhī (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill Tippera*</td>
<td>4,086</td>
<td>173,328, chiefly Hindustani.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rājā, Khattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Commissioner of Chittagong (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>20,000†</td>
<td>250,909, Buddhists.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Deb Rājā, Bhutāni: Buddhist.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Rājāshāhī (ex-officio Political Officer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayurbhanj</td>
<td>4,243</td>
<td>610,383, chiefly Hindustani.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rājā, Khattūliya: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Bhutan (ex-officio Superintendent of the Orissa Tributary Mahals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarguja</td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>381,011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rājā, Buxak Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Chittagong (ex-officio Superintendent of the Orissa Tributary Mahals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanchrā (Orissa Tributary Mahals)</td>
<td>3,096</td>
<td>95,755</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rājā, Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Chittagong (ex-officio Superintendent of the Orissa Tributary Mahals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dherākāl (Orissa Tributary Mahals)</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>273,663</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rājā, Khattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Chittagong (ex-officio Superintendent of the Orissa Tributary Mahals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangpur (Chotā Nagpur Tributary Mahals)</td>
<td>2518</td>
<td>258,896</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rājā, Khattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Chotā Nagpur (ex-officio Superintendent of the Chotā Nagpur Tributary Mahals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Minor States</td>
<td>12,666</td>
<td>1,189,511</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>58,612</td>
<td>7,998,844</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 1905 Hill Tippera was transferred to the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. 
† The figures for Bhutan are estimates only. 
* In 1905 Sarguja, with four other of the Chotā Nagpur Tributary Mahals (Jashpur, Udaipur, Koret, and Chāng Bhākār), was transferred to the Central Provinces.

### (d) United Provinces (2 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tehri (Garhwal)</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>268,856, chiefly Hindus.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rājā, Khattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of Kumaun (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,079</td>
<td>802,697</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

* THE INDIAN EMPIRE

---

THE NAIVE STATES
### Punjab (34 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahawalpur</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>720,877, chiefly Muhammadan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Nawab, Daudpata : Muhammadan.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Political Agent for the Phulkian States and Bahawalpur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patiala</td>
<td>5,412</td>
<td>1,856,692, chiefly Hindus and Sikhs</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Maharaj, Sidhu Jat : Sikh.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabha</td>
<td>2,828</td>
<td>197,049</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rajah, Sidhu Jat : Sikh.</td>
<td>15 (including 4 guns personal to the present chief)</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jind</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>582,009</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rajah, Akhiojia : Sikh.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Commissioner of the Jullundur Division (ex-officio Political Agent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapurthala</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>314,351, chiefly Muhammadan and Hindus</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Maharaj, Sidhu Jat : Sikh.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>174,042, chiefly Hindus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rajah, Chandrabansi Rajput : Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirmir (Nahan)</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>135,657</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajah, Rajput : Hindu.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clamba</td>
<td>3,216</td>
<td>127,834</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rajah, Baljot Jat : Sikh.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faridkot</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>124,912, Sikhs, Hindus, Muhammadan.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Minor States</td>
<td>7,047</td>
<td>652,048</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,532</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,424,398</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,365</strong></td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Raja of Kapurthala also holds large estates in Oudh (about 700 square miles).*

### Burma (52 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Northern Shan States.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsipaw (Thilaw)</td>
<td>5,086</td>
<td>120,700, Buddhists.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Superintendent, Northern Shan States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minor States</td>
<td>9,598</td>
<td>216,390</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Southern Shan States.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kengtung</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>150,608</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Superintendent, Southern Shan States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mognai</td>
<td>2,717</td>
<td>44,152</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yawngbew</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>52,329</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Minor States</td>
<td>21,574</td>
<td>448,379, Buddhists and Animists.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 3 Karen States</td>
<td>4,330</td>
<td>45,782</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 3 Minor States under separate political control.</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>49,543</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sawbwa, Shan : Buddhist.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (approximate)</strong></td>
<td><strong>67,011</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,177,987</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All these States, with the exception of the five Karen States forming Karenni, are included in British India, as defined on pp. 59, 60.

† Excluding population and revenue of Nansang, which are unknown.
(g) Central Provinces (15 States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kālāhāndi (or Karond)</td>
<td>3,745</td>
<td>350,529, chiefly Hindus.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rāja, Kshattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Political Agent for the Chhattisgarh Feudatories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bastar</td>
<td>13,062</td>
<td>306,501, chiefly Animists.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rāja, Kshattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrā</td>
<td>9,399</td>
<td>277,748, chiefly Hindus.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maharājā, Chauhan Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raigarh</td>
<td>1,486</td>
<td>174,029</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rājā, Gond (Aboriginal).</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonpur*</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>169,877</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rājā, Chauhan Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bāmra*</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>123,378</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rājā, Gangābānsee Rājput: Hindu.</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Minor States</td>
<td>5,849</td>
<td>593,421</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19,438</td>
<td>1,096,373</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 1905 Kālāhāndi, Patrā, Sonpur, and Bāmra (with the Minor State of Raīt Khol) were transferred to Bengal.

(h) Assam (26 States*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
<th>Population in 1901</th>
<th>Approximate revenue (in lakhs of rupees)</th>
<th>Title, race, and religion of Ruler</th>
<th>Salute of Ruler in guns</th>
<th>Designation of local Political Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>8,456</td>
<td>284,462, Hindus and Animists.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rājā, Kshattriya: Hindu.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Political Agent in Manipur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Khasi States (25)</td>
<td>3,905</td>
<td>110,519, Khasis and Christians.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, Khāsi and Jaintia Hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12,356</td>
<td>394,984</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL (approximate)</strong></td>
<td>824,833</td>
<td>63,210,660</td>
<td>25,79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 1905 Hill Tippera was transferred from Bengal to the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.
APPENDIX 2

INDIAN STATES DELEGATION

COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF ALWAR, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE NAWAB OF BHOPAL, G.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.V.O.
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF BIKAHNER, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA RANA OF DHOLPUR, G.C.I.E.,
K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.
COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, G.C.I.E., K.C.V.O.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF NAWANAGAR, G.C.S.I., G.B.E.
MAJOR-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
G.C.V.O., G.B.E., A.D.C.
HIS HIGHNESS THE CHIEF SAHIB OF SANGLI, K.C.I.E.
SIR FRABHASHANKAR PATANI, K.C.I.E.
SIR MANUBHAI MEHTA, C.S.I.
SARDAR SAHIRZADA SULTAN AHMED KHAN, C.I.E.
NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD AKBAR HYDARI
SIR MIRZA M. ISMAIL, C.I.E., O.B.E.
COLONEL K. N. HAKSAR, C.I.E.

INDIAN STATES ADVISERS

Advisers to the Delegate for Hyderabad,
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR RICHARD CHENEVIX-TRENCH, C.I.E., O.B.E.
NAWAB MAHTDI YAR JUNG
SIR AHMAD HUSAIN, AMIN JUNG, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.
SIR REGINALD GLANCY, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

Adviser to the Delegate for the S. Indian States,
DIWAN BAHADUR T. RACHAVIAH, C.S.I.

Adviser to His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda,
RAO BAHADUR KRISHNAMA CHARI, C.I.E.
Adviser for the Orissa States,

MR. K. C. NEOGY, M.I.A.

Advisers nominated by the Chamber of Princes Special Organisation,

MR. L. F. RUSHBROOK-WILLIAMS, C.B.E.

CAZI ALI HAIDAR ABBASI

SIRDAR JARNAMI DAS, C.B.E.

DIWAN BAHADUR A. B. LATTHE

RAO SAHIB D. A. SURVE
APPENDIX 3

INDIAN STATES' REPRESENTATIVES

COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF ALWAR, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE NAWAB OF BHIOPAL, G.C.I.E., G.C.I., G.V.O.
HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAO OF CUTCH, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA RANA OF DIHOLPUR, G.C.I.E.,
K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.
HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF INDORE
COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, G.C.I.E., K.C.V.O.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF NAWANAGAR, G.C.S.I., G.B.E.
MAJOR-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF PATTALA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
G.C.V.O., G.B.E., A.D.C.
HIS HIGHNESS THE CHIEF SAHI OF SANGLI, K.C.I.E.

THE RAJA OF KOREA

THE RAJA OF SARILA

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI, K.C.I.E.
SIR MANUBHAT NANDSHANKAR MEHTA, G.S.I.
SARDAR SAHTIBZADA SULTAN AHMED KHAN, G.I.E.
NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD AKBAR HYDARI
SIR MIRZA W. ISMAIL, C.I.E., G.B.E.
COLONEL K. N. HAKSAR, C.I.E.
DIWAN BAHADUR T. RAGHAVIAH, C.S.I.
NAWAB LIACAT HAYAT KHAN

INDIAN STATES DELEGATION STAFF

Adviser to His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda

RAO BAHADUR KRISHNAMA GHARI, G.I.E.
Advisers to the Delegate for Hyderabad

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIR RICHARD CHENEVIX-TRENCH, C.I.E., C.B.E.

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Adviser to Jaipur State

RAI BAHADUR PANDIT AMAR NATH ATAL
Adviser for Jodhpur State

MR. J. W. YOUNG, C.B.E.
Adviser for Kashmir State

PANDIT RAMACHANDRA KAK
Adviser for Rampur State

SAHIBZADA ABDUS SAMAD KHAN, C.I.E.
Adviser for the Crissa States

MR. K. C. NEOGY

Advisers nominated by the Chamber of Princes Special Organisation

MR. L. F. RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS, C.B.E.

SIRDAR JARMANI DASS, C.B.E.

Secretariat

MR. M. S. A. HYDARI, I.C.S.

MR. K. M. PANIKKAR

MR. N. MADHAVA RAO
APPENDIX 4

INDIAN STATES' REPRESENTATIVES

RAJA OF SARTILA (SMALL STATES)
RAI BAHADUR RAJA OUDH NARAIN BISARYA (BHOPAL)
RAO BAHADUR KRISHNAMA CHARI, C.I.E. (BARODA)
NAWAB LIACAT HYATKHAN (PATTALA)
MR. WAJAHAT HUSSAIN, I.C.S. (KASHMIR)
NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD AKBAR HYDART (HYDERABAD AND REWA)
SIR MIRZA W. ISMAIL, C.I.E., C.B.E. (MYSORE)
SIR MANUBHAI N. MEHTA, C.S.I. (BIKANER)
RAO BAHADUR PANDIT SIR SUKHDEO PRASAD, C.I.E., O.B.E. (UDAIPUR, JAIPUR AND JODHPUR)
RAO SAHIB D. A. SURVE (KOLHAPUR)
MR. L. F. RUSHTON WILLIAMS, C.B.E. (NAWANAGAR)

INDIAN STATES' DELEGATION STAFF

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SAHTBEZADA MUNTAZ ALI KHAN OF MALERKOTLA
RAI BAHADUR PANDIT AMAR NATH ATAL (JAIPUR)
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MR. C. G. HERBERT (COCHIN)
MR. M. S. A. HYDART, I.C.S. (HYDERABAD)
NAWAB MAHDI YAR JUNG (HYDERABAD)
PANDIT RAMACHANDRA KAK (KASHMIR)
YUVARAJ SHRI DIGVJAYA SINGHJI OF LIMBDI (NAWANAGAR)
MIR MACBUL MAHMOOD (PATTALA AND JHALAWAR)
MR. K. C. NEOGY, M.I.A.
MAJOR PANDE (ORCHHA)
MR. K. M. PANIKKAR (Secretary to His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes)
PANDIT P. N. PATHAK (SARILA)

SIR FRABHASHANKAR PATTANI, K.C.I.E. (BHAVNAGAR)

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MR. S. QURESHI (MYSORE)

MR. MADHAVA RAO (MYSORE)

MR. R. K. RANADIVE (BARODA)

MR. C. N. SEDDON (SANGLI)

MR. R. K. SORABJI (DATIA)

MR. J. W. YOUNG, C.B.E. (JODHPUR)

MR. B. H. ZAIDI (RAMPUR)
YOUR HIGHNESS,

We venture to write to you under the stress of a danger to both your country and our own. We understand that Your Highness, in common with most of the Ruling Princes, views the scheme for the government of India contained in the White Paper with considerable apprehension. We would like to assure you that this apprehension is shared by a large and growing number of people in this country who are determined to do everything in their power to prevent the scheme being passed by Parliament.

We recognise that Your Highness, as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, with the help of your Standing Committee, has the power to avert this great danger.

Over and over again the British Government have stated that they will not proceed upon their course unless the Princes of India support the scheme.

In our opinion, therefore, it is only necessary for the majority of the Princes to make it clear that they are against the scheme, for its promoters to be bound by their own pledges to withdraw it.

We can well understand the sort of pressure which is brought to bear upon you and your colleagues; but we venture to assure you that whereas, if you yield your destruction is certain; if you stand firm you have nothing to fear.

We have no hesitation in assuring you of the strong and increasing opposition to the White Paper in this country. Already the best part of the Conservative Party, which maintains the Government in power, is either openly opposed or secretly critical of the scheme.

They hesitate largely because it has been represented to them that Your Highness and your colleagues have declared in its favour. If they realise that the Princes are against it, their opposition to the scheme in Parliament can hardly fail to be successful.
In these circumstances we write to assure Your Highness and, through you, your colleagues of the Chamber, that, if you stand upon your convictions in this matter we on our side will guarantee our support; and will do all in our power to secure you and your fellow Princes against any attempt to encroach upon your rights and privileges under your Treaties with the Crown.

(Sd.)

His Grace The Duke of Argyll
His Grace The Duke of Buccleugh, K.T.
The Most Honorable The Marquess of Harrington, M.P.
The Right Honorable The Viscount Fitz Alan of Derwent, K.C., P.C., G.C.V.O., D.S.O.
The Right Honorable The Viscount Bertie of Thame
The Right Honorable The Viscount Lymington, M.P.
The Most Honorable The Marquess of Sligo
The Right Honorable The Viscount Chaplin
The Right Honorable The Earl of Kenmare, C.V.O.
Her Grace The Duchess of Atholl, D.B.E., M.P.
Lady Houston, D.B.E.
The Right Honorable Lord Carson, P.C.
The Right Honorable Lord Benbury of Southan, P.C.
The Right Honorable Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
The Right Honorable Lord Charnwood
The Right Honorable Lord Lawrence
The Right Honorable Lord Redesdale
Brigadier-General Sir Henry Page Croft, Bt., C.M.G., M.P.
Major-General Sir Alfred Knox, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.P.
Major J. S. Courtauld, M.C., M.P.
Sir Basil Feto, M.P.
Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Wayland, M.P.
Lieutenant-Commander Peter Agnew, M.P.
Lieutenant-Colonel R. V. K. Applin, D.S.O., M.P.
Major Sir Archibald Boyd-Carpenter, M.P.
The Right Honorable Lord Clifford of Chudleigh
The Right Honorable Lord Mount Temple, P.C.
Patrick Donner, M.P.
Herbert G. Williams, M.P.
A. A. Somerville, M.P.
Alan Chorlton, M.P.
His Grace The Duke of Westminster, G.C.V.O., D.S.O.
The Earl of Ypres
The Right Honorable The Viscount Wolmer, P.C., M.P.
The Right Honorable Lord Ledenfield
The Right Honorable Lord Islington, P.C., G.C.M.G., G.B.E., D.S.O.
The Right Honorable Lord Queenborough, G.B.E.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., D.S.O.
General Sir George de S. Barrow, G.C.B., K.C.M.G.

To
His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
G.C.V.O., G.B.E.
APPENDIX 6

Patiala House, New Delhi,
October 28th, 1934.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

We are very thankful to you for having written an important letter to us (through His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Patiala). We have perused this with great interest and we thank you sincerely for your expression of sympathy and goodwill.

The Chamber of Princes in 1932 laid down the conditions on which the Princes could consent to join an All-India Federation.

On the publication of the White Paper the Princes found that many of these conditions did not find a place in it. Naturally the White Paper proposals were received by us with grave concern. In the circumstances the Chamber, in March 1933, reiterated the specific conditions on which alone the Princes could accept the Federal proposals. Consequently you can see that the acceptance of the principle of Federation itself depends entirely on the fact whether the Report of the Joint Select Committee incorporates these conditions.

If the Report does not contain them, the Chamber of Princes will be absolutely free to consider the question de novo.

With kind regards.

We remain,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) Bhupinder Singh of Patiala
Udaibhan Singh of Dholpur
S. M. Abasi of Bahawalpur
Yadnandan Singh of Fanna
Rajendra Singh of Jhalawar.

To:
H. A. Gwynne, Esq.,
Editor, The Morning Post,
27, Tudor Street,
THE SAR DESAI OF SAVANTVADI CHAMBER OF PRINCES

More than seven million readers of the Daily Mail will today read the following pronouncement in that newspaper regarding the attitude of Indian Princes. Statement begins in view of approaching publication of India Constitution Bill, extraordinary efforts are being made by Executive Government in India to coax, cajole or coerce the Indian Princes into acceptance of its provisions. They are known to view White Paper policy with alarm and they have every reason for their fear. If they are so foolish as to give their consent to it, they will prepare their own destruction. Within three years or perhaps three months of the foundation of the New India, steps will be taken by the extremists of the Congress Party, who will control the future Indian Government to deprive them of their position and privileges and these steps beyond any question will be entirely successful. The Princes must act now and must save themselves and India. By refusing to associate themselves with the Government policy, they will render one more signal service to British Rule in India. Statement ends.

Rothermere.
To: The Nawab of Rampur, Rampur

I send you this further Cablegram giving extracts from today's pronouncement in The Daily Mail on the Indian Crisis. It will be read by over seven millions readers in Great Britain. Statement begins by showing caution in the face of the India Government's blandishments. The Indian princes are proving their wisdom. If they adopt the right course, they will have nothing to do with the Government of India. They will reject it entirely. Stop. Its safeguards are worthless. Stop. The princes should be careful to avoid traps set for them with promises of remissions of debts or extensions of territory to serve as bait. Stop. If they do allow themselves to be thus caught, theirs will be the fate of the loyalists of Southern Ireland who were told by much the same persons as those who are now giving India away that under the Free State Government, they would have equal treatment and fair play. Pussilanimity is the guiding principle of Indian Government today whether in London or in Delhi. Stop. If the Indian princes sacrifice their privileges or position in any important respect, they and their adherents will for a certainty within three years of the functioning of the new Government of India become bankrupt refugees in foreign lands. Stop. The mind of the British Nation is rapidly changing with regard to this Indian question. Stop. If the Indian princes hold fast to their present status and stand firmly side by side with the immense and rapidly increasing number of voters here who are determined to prevent the White Paper surrender, they will find that all their privileges and their exalted position will be retained and strengthened. Statement ends.

Rothermere.
To: The Nawab of Rampur State

I send you in this further Cablegram a passage quoted from a pronouncement in today's daily mail on the India crisis. It will be read by over seven million people in Great Britain. The statement begins: the reported decision of the Indian princes to hold a secret ballot as to the rejection of the India Bill Constitution is to be most warmly commended. By killing it at once they will render immense service to the Empire. They have firm friends here who are working for them but whose efforts will be paralysed were they to compromise with a scheme which they well know to be calamitous. If the princes show weakness they will assuredly meet the fate of the French aristocrats who were so simple as to welcome the revolution of 1789 but were the first to be robbed of their estates and sent to the guillotine. They will perish or be driven into exile as miserably as the Russian imperial family and nobility who surrendered to revolution. The extremists of the Congress party count on driving out every Indian prince within three years. If the princes flatly refuse to have anything more to do with the India Bill they will kill it dead and save India. Statement ends.

Rothermere.
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Christ Church College, Oxford:
Cambridge University Library:

India Office Library:

National Library of Scotland:
Public Record Office:
Scottish Record Office:
University of Warwick Library:

By courtesy of Mr. E. P. Thompson:

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Gwynne Papers
Salisbury Papers
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Crewe Papers
Hardinge Papers
Templewood Papers
Harcourt Butler Papers
Chelmsford Papers
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Reading Papers
Sapru Papers
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Also the following cuttings collections:

By courtesy of Lord Balerno:  Dr. George Smith Collection
India Office Library:  Political and Secret Collections
By courtesy of Mr. E. P. Thompson:  Edward Thompson Collection
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